

Local shipping company keeps growing with family's support

Daughters join their father in running the business

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GARY STELZER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jackie Hamilton, account manager, Jessica Hutzel, office manager, and Robert Daniels, owner of Star Packaging and Distribution pictured Tuesday, Jan 25, 2011 inside their Lebanon, Ohio facility. The family owned and operated business went from a small office in the basement of Daniels home to a twelve thousand square foot facility, with a yearly gross of over seven-hundred thousand dollars in twelve years.

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By Justin McClelland, Staff Writer

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LEBANON — A Lebanon startup business is proving a family can work together and prosper, even in a stagnant economy.

When Robert Daniels' twin daughters, Jackie and Jessica, told him they wanted to work for him, he thought they were just looking for some quick money and an easy boss.

"I was shocked," Daniels said. At the time, Daniels was working out of a small building without heat, bathrooms, or running water. "These were daddy's little girls. I couldn't see them breaking a nail, let alone driving nails. Well, they proved me wrong."

Twelve years later, Daniels and his daughters continue to run Star Packaging and Distribution, a Lebanon-based specialty shipping business that last year grossed \$700,000, manufacturing wooden boxes, crates, pallets and other shipping instruments as well as handling distribution and warehousing needs for customers.

"From the beginning, I didn't want to be the biggest guy on the block, I just wanted a comfortable living for my family," Daniels said. "But I never expected my family to be with me."

"Working with Dad is great," said Jessica Hutzel, who is the office manager. "People ask if we ever get sick of each other and I honestly say no. Of course, we all go to different homes at night now, and that might help."

Daniels said his daughters were eager learners and hard workers.

"Their skills really complimented each other," Daniels said. "Jackie was good at cutting lumber and Jessica would build the boxes."

"He taught us to do everything but drive the fork lift," said Jackie Hamilton, who doubles as the accounts manager. "No matter how much we asked and demanded, he wouldn't let us go near them."

Daniels had been a long-time employee for a large manufacturer in Cincinnati, when in 1999, he decided to go on his own.

"I really didn't know if it was the right decision to make," Daniels said. "So I sat down to pray one night and I opened my Bible and it came right to Proverbs 16:8. 'Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.' Then I knew God was telling me I was doing the right thing."

Daniels bought a chair, desk, phone and fax machine the next day and two days later was selling wooden pallets. That summer his daughter's joined him in the new family business.

Over the years, the entire family has pitched in to help, including Rob's wife, Pam, their older daughter Lisa and both Jackie and Jessica's husbands, both named Ryan.

In 2004, the family (who had long since gained facilities with both running water and heat), opened a 12,000-square-foot facility on Columbia Drive, where they continue operations.

"I thank God every day for Star Packaging," Daniels said. "The opportunity to work with my children and be successful is more than I could have hoped for."

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