

LEOMINSTER CHAMPION

LEOMINSTER'S OWN WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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Leominster Small Business Association's Spotlight on Business

2011-02-25 / Business

Atlantic Tent Rental – a local small business success story

BY MICHELLE BLANCHETTE



Pictured (left to right) are Barry Perla, Nate Miley and David Miley.

The advent of Atlantic Tent Rental began one sunny day when Barry Perla, the company's co-founder, attended a birthday party for his mother-in-law in May 1992. A relative, who owned a tent rental business in Dedham, provided a tent for the occasion. Barry was intrigued by the notion of tent rental as a business he could start initially on a part time basis to supplement his income as a buyer for Digital Equipment Corporation.

Barry asked his friend, David Miley, to join him in the venture. It started out small, with one tent purchased from an auction.

They made flyers and hung them wherever anyone would let them – grocery stores, pizza shops and corner stores. Before they knew it, the phone started ringing and a company was born.

Today, Atlantic Tent rental is a full-time enterprise with many product offerings and plenty of satisfied customers. In addition to fulltime temporary staff members in peak summer months, the company employs Barry, his wife, David, and David's two sons.

After moving several times to accommodate their growing business and increased product offerings, today the business is located at 12 Middle St., Leominster, in an unassuming steel building.

In fact, everything about the business is unpretentious: Barry and David are very approachable and laid-back. They have wisely reinvested in the business, which started in Barry's barn using their personal pick-up trucks. Their long list of repeat clients includes the Leominster High School graduation, the Sterling Fair, the motion picture industry, area restaurants, businesses and catering companies. They also provide personalized service to non-business consumers planning a backyard wedding, graduation party, or family reunion.

With tents of all sizes, dance floors and stages, chandeliers, eight different styles of tables, several styles of chairs, linens, generators, heaters, grills, coolers, and portable bars, the combinations for event sizes and styles are endless.

In addition to acquiring two box trucks to accommodate their growing business and purchasing many items related to party planning, they have invested in professional washers and repair equipment so that their tents are always clean and wellmaintained. They also utilize the washers to provide cleaning and repair services to other tent rental companies as well as offering cleaning and repair of awnings and horse blankets for consumers and businesses.

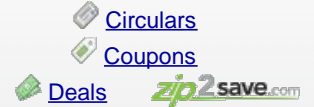
By providing outstanding customer service, the business has grown significantly through referral. When asked what differentiates them from other tent rental companies, Barry said, "It's our focus on pristine tents, competitive pricing, and outstanding customer service," adding that they will gladly go on site to measure grounds in order to provide the optimal tent. They accept all major credit cards and deliver and set up on time and remove the tents in a timely manner as well.

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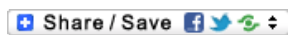
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Atlantic Tent also credits the Internet as a useful, affordable tool for promoting the business. As Barry said, "The Internet allows us to be transparent to the customer in terms of our offerings and pricing, which allows them to pre-plan and budget before they ever pick up the phone and call." When asked why he joined the Leominster Small Business Association, Barry said that in addition to providing the small business owner with valuable information and opportunities for visibility, he understood the value of having links to his website from other reputable websites, such as the LSBA's shoplocalleominster.com. He further clarified that links from other websites improve his ranking on search engines such as Google.

To learn more about Atlantic Tent and the many offerings available to make your next party or event a memorable one, visit their website at atlantictent.com or call them at 1-800-750-TENT.

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