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Reaching for the skies

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It may sound like a cliché to describe someone who has risen to the heights of becoming SuzoHapp's Vice President of Sales for the Americas as a 'highflyer' but in the case of Todd Sims, this is literally the case as he is a private pilot, having held a US Federal Aviation Administration License since 2019.

As exciting as it is up in amongst the clouds, Todd sat down to tell us where things are at within SuzoHapp back down on 'terra firma'. We begin with the brief back story, on both the company and the man himself.

"SuzoHapp has served the gaming, amusement and sports betting industries as a global manufacturer and distributor of components for over 60 years. However, we are so much more than just a ready supply of aftermarket parts and quick customisation capabilities. We are a trusted hardware partner with relevant expertise and a global network of partnerships eager to help your business succeed."

As for Todd himself, the University of Alabama alumni has certainly risen with the 'crimson tide', with a career that began in business finance, before evolving into of over 15 years serving the industry's aristocracy, with Bally Technologies, Four Winds Interactive, Interblock and now, SuzoHapp.

Credibility and experience are the keys

In terms of what SuzoHapp brings to the industry that so sets it apart, Todd has no doubt that credibility and experience are the keys. "SuzoHapp has years of experience, a global network of partnerships and a broad offering. This ensures that we are the only call you need to make to simplify your sourcing. Our expertise ensures industry-tested, high-quality products to keep operations running smoothly and lowering the total cost of ownership."

In terms of new products, the past year has seen SuzoHapp launch its complete sports betting ecosystem to help sports books make a seamless transition to the retail space. As Todd explains, the company has been working to help ease the hardware burden by offering a self-service ecosystem to support the entire life cycle of a bet

"The sports betting ecosystem is designed so that whether at the bar, behind the counter or on the sports book floor, customers can place their bets how they want, where they want, with minimal impact to operations. And the reason why clients choose SuzoHapp is because our industry experience and relevant expertise means they trust us to tailor a custom solution to suit their needs without adding cost. We are flexible by nature but know the ins and outs of the industry to offer the best, high-quality products at reasonable prices."

Adaptability and flexibility are also vital

Todd is also adamant that in an industry that evolves so rapidly, adaptability and flexibility are also vital. "We learned this during the pandemic," he says. "One of the key elements of our designs in sports betting solutions is that it is fully customisable to suit specific needs. As regulations and customer trends shift as the industry grows and develops, it is very easy for us to get our clients to market quickly with adaptable designs."

And in terms of these shifting trends and preferences, it is very what is presently standing out. "Cashless has taken off as the payment method of choice. In a post-covid world, people prefer less touch points and more self-service options, and cashless payments provide these. SuzoHapp has recently launched its new Dual Change Cashless to help support this need."

Moving with the times can often be slow

In an industry that can so often be unpredictable, it is always interesting to understand what prominent players believe will be key challenges as we all move forwards. Although there is no suggestion of resistance to change, Todd is of the view that heavyweights are not always the quickest.

"The majority of market share within the industry is held by large players, with slot machines and traditional methods of play entrenched in how they do business. Going forward, the ability to react quickly to market changes that are potentially away from traditional gaming could be difficult, as change within large companies tends to take place slowly. As these larger players hold so much power in the market, it could trickle down to affect the industry as a whole and slow down overall growth potential."

Collaboration to achieve common goals

With the sales pitch almost over, we return to a more general discussion, as Todd outlines what he looks for in both colleagues and business partners. "As a company, I think what we look for in colleagues is what customers look for in us. We all have our own individual priorities and objectives, but we must be able to collaborate to achieve a common goal and collectively be willing to put in the work to achieve it."

And is this sense of collaboration important for leaders?

"Leadership is not about the leader but empowering a team to achieve an objective. Remaining humble and being willing to learn builds trust and credibility. Most importantly, a successful leader must take ownership of his/her mistakes and hold themselves accountable just as they hold their team accountable. If my team can't trust me, they have no reason to work with me to achieve our goals. That trust must be earned through transparency and honesty, to clearly define what needs to be done and how."



Bravery is obviously important too...

When interviewing, it is always interesting to throw a curveball, and ask a question that you suspect certain interviewees may wish to avoid answering. For example, which career choice do you think would have been better avoiding? Thankfully, this gets a laugh, and Todd is happy to jump in and swim.

"That's a great question! Years ago, my wife and I bought a retail bakery and somehow, despite all the challenges that we faced, we are still married! To truly understand the importance of cashflow, finance, marketing, customer service (and marital compromise), there is no more effective way than to own your own family business. I am certainly better for having done it, just as I am glad it is over... gaming is definitely where I belong!"

But you fly small aircraft for fun, surely you are something of a risk-taker?

"To be successful in business, or anything in life, we have to take risks. We all take calculated risks every day and fortunately, most pay off. Some don't, and we learn from those mistakes. But it's easy for me to remember the greatest risk I've ever taken... buying a bakery and working in it with my wife, obviously!"

Having established that Todd is brave – unless he doesn't show her this – we must also point out that when asked what makes him most proud, there was not a moment's hesitation. "My family. My wife and I recently celebrated our 23rd year of marriage and I could not be prouder, just as we could not be prouder of our sons."

Hands very much full

Returning to the business of the day, we closed by asking Todd what we can expect from SuzoHapp over the remainder of 2022 and, predictably, he assures us it will be busy.

"We will be participating in quite a few trade shows globally and are very much looking forward to seeing our customers again there. Additionally, we are hoping to launch a new product at G2E this year – although I can't spill the beans about it yet! We are working hard to plan out as far as possible, in order to navigate the supply chain issues that have been plaguing the world and so overall, our hands are thankfully very full indeed."