

TRANSCRIPT: DON KASPAR INTERVIEW

Mr. Don Kaspar · CEO, Kaspar Family Companies

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Interview with Mr. Don Kaspar, CEO of Kaspar Family Companies. Kaspar is a 1949 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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My name is Don Kaspar and my home is in Shiner, Texas. I was born and reared in Shiner.

Could you tell us how you first got started in your career?

When I finished college and when I got through with the army, I knew that my dad needed me at the business and I also saw business opportunity there. So, I had no, no doubts that that's what I wanted to do, so I went home and work, worked, worked around the factory some, but then my dad soon had me in the office handling inquiries, quoting process to customers and, and taught me how to estimate the cost of doing jobs, of custom work, and with wire and sheet metal and with the stripped steel and I was soon to be called a customer service person maybe or a certainly was active in sales and then... I would go to the big cities like Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, of Fort Worth, and maybe each one of those cities once a month and make sales calls on prospective customers and on existing customers, and they're... I learned to be something of a salesman and how, how to present your product to a prospect. Finally, my dad made me his partner in, in the business, and I had ownership in the business, and we made it, my father and I made a very good sales team. He was a little stronger mechanically and I, and I was little bit stronger in sales and organization than he was, but we were, we were made a beautiful team together. All our lifetime we never had any harsh words or any troubles whatever with each other.

What are your reflections from working in a family business?

My grandfather started the business. My father joined the business as his partner, and then my grandfather retired, and my dad ran the business by himself for a short while, and then and they got along beautifully, never any problems. I loved my grandfather I knew him when I was a young man and he was old man, and then my dad and I worked so, so well together and made a good team. We even have a stronger team now because there's more of us. My, my four sons are all working for the company, and they all have different talents, and they all fit in as exactly where they can do the most good, and everybody's working toward the goal, and we've had no real, real problems with, with the family ownership.

What experiences at Texas A&M most helped you in your career?

I guess being in the Cadet, Corps, getting the leadership training and then the, the professors were, the professor's were very conscientious and cared if you learned or not, and I was, I was ashamed to not do my best for all the various professors that I had, and... the train, the scholastics and the Cadet Corps training well I just, I just learned a great bit of self-discipline and discipline.

What advice do you have on leading a large company?

Learn, learn to appraise people for... pick helpers that... study, study their virtues that they have, if they're conscientious, they're honest, they're clean cut, they're truthful, and select those kind of people to, to work on your team. Avoid excessive debt, whether, whether it's personal or business. Save, save money so that you can then invest, and, and you don't need much debt. You may have to finish up an expansion program in your business, you may need to borrow some money, but handle debt cautiously. Don't plunge, don't be a plunger, okay.

What advice do you have for a student looking to first enter into a career?

Get yourself presentable and you'll fly. Be interested. Be sure you pick something that you like to do. Go into it with, with the utmost determination to succeed. Start at the bottom. Don't worry too much about the wages and fringe benefits to start with, but work your way up, and just make yourself indispensable, become a person, become a company man or woman, become a company person, or take ownership of it, so to speak, and do your best, and you will be recognized, and you will be promoted.

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