



Creating a Philanthropic Footprint™:
Scott Barr, Southwest Exteriors



"Focus on significance, rather than success"

There are times in life when we get that "a-ha" moment. A moment of clarity that brings everything into focus. Suddenly it all makes sense.

For Scott Barr of Southwest Exteriors, 2005 brought that moment. "I realized I was called to focus on significance, rather than success," Barr said. Ever since, he's been living his life with purpose.

The turning point came in December 2007, when his coach Jeff Thompson led him through a strategic life plan based on Tom Paterson's book *Living the Life You Were Meant to Live*. "The Life Plan" helped Barr find clarity in his purpose. "I looked at my entire life and the highs and lows, and what God was preparing me for," Barr said. Through that exercise, Barr started creating action steps to live out that plan.

Taking proven business practices that have helped his company succeed, Barr and his team started work on developing a new business model, with philanthropic goals at its heart. The mission of Our Father's Business: to convert their owner-operated organization into a team-operated model that develops Godly leaders as it supports local ministries with the profits from the business.

OFB is two years into its 30 year strategic plan. The goal is to fine tune the ministry model, ensure that it is self-sustaining, and then multiply it by bringing more contracting businesses into the fold. With approximately 20 Team Members working for Southwest Exteriors as part of the new concept, the team is motivated to make a difference in the community. "We connect their role on the team to the difference they will make in building this model that can be multiplied," Barr said. "We recruit and groom team members to further our mission and our philanthropic goals."

360 Degrees of Philanthropic Insight

Even as his own company continues its transition into a team-operated model, with Barr as the organization's "Steward," Barr's group is working with another owner-operated business that may be the next to make the transition. Transitions such as these can take anywhere from one to three years, a testament to the organization's focus on support and encouragement.

Strategic thinking is a key principal to success; Our Father's Business budgets each year in hopes of achieving its giving goals of donating 50% of the company's profits to its mission. The other 50% of the company's profits is budgeted to go to the team bonuses for compensation tied to results.

It isn't always easy.

Like so many businesses, the economic downturn has taken its toll. Barr had to reassess this year's budget, holding back 50% of his planned giving. Still, Barr believes everyone - no matter their financial circumstance - has the ability to make an impact on their community. "Don't just think in terms of money," Barr said. "Ministry leaders need emotional support and encouragement to keep them going. By walking alongside and encouraging a leader, you can make a big impact." Expanding on his passion for serving others, Barr explained, "We have time, talent and treasure... We may not have the financial resources to contribute, but we may know someone who does."

But financial support is only part of OFB's model for success. "Learn it. Live it. Teach it" is the company motto, and goes to the heart of OFB's mission. Barr says he and his team feel called to "develop leaders, develop best practices and help others discover what they're uniquely created and equipped to do." Currently, the group works with a small number of local ministries, including Young Life Alamo Heights. "We believe we are called to focus on a small number of ministries with significant leadership and financial support, versus supporting many different ministries in a limited way."

As Our Father's Business continues its journey toward a new way of doing business, Barr believes there are lessons for any group wanting to maximize their philanthropic mission. "We are using principals that can be overlaid onto other models," Barr said. "We want to share with anyone who wants to learn about what we're doing."

"Learn it. Live it. Teach it."

Words Barr and his team truly live by.