



Keith Chapman: Tannehill Child Development Center and Furnace Masters Restaurant

The Secrets to Success

From humble beginnings to long term success in business because of integrity, hard work and a strong work ethic. You might think this is the story of Cahaba Tractor, and it is. But it's also that of businessman and customer Keith Chapman.

Keith's story began when he joined a friend in the construction industry and learned the business through hands-on experience. Dissatisfied with the work ethic of the company, he decided to start his own business. "I believe honesty, integrity and a good work ethic are very important," Keith said. So, he put those principles to work in his own company, C&C Construction, and the business grew quickly.

Customers appreciated his integrity and referral business grew, not just through individuals, but through insurance companies who trusted Keith and his crew. "If we said we would do something for a customer, we did it," Keith said proudly. His principles extended to the workers he hired, as well. "I only hired people who were honest, dressed well, and showed up on time," he added. And it paid off in many ways for Keith and his company. "We started out small and before we knew it, the business made over one million dollars in a year." Soon, the phone was ringing constantly and Keith had to turn down jobs. "After ten years of working in construction, I wanted to do something different," he said. He closed the construction company and moved on to something entirely different .

In 2002, utilizing the same principles that helped his construction company succeed, Keith and his wife, Kelli, opened Tannehill Child Development Center in McCalla. Drawing on Kelli's education and prior experience in child development and using the same approach Keith used for the construction company, the day care center has grown substantially. At a whopping 12,000 square feet, it holds 250 children and has become the largest in the state of Alabama. "We use those same principles at the center and that's why it is so successful," said Keith.

He compares the family-like atmosphere Cahaba Tractor customers experience when visiting the Pelham store to his own business. "The day care center is like one big family. Everyone knows each other by name, just like they do at Cahaba Tractor."

That atmosphere combined with excellent customer service proves for a successful business. Keith sees that in his day care center and at Cahaba Tractor. "You have to recognize people for who they are. It's not always business," he said referring to the way customers should be treated as individuals, not just a sale. "Cahaba Tractor prices things fair," he added. "They'll sit with you and talk about it, not just hand you something and say that's it."

And, just as his own customers are loyal, that's why he continues to return to Cahaba Tractor. The fact that Kubota is his preferred brand of tractor keeps him coming back, too. "I like Kubota stuff," Keith said.

"The Kubota and Land Pride equipment are trouble-free. I know people who have Kubotas with up to 1,500 hours of use and they're still running strong," he stated. Keith owns a Kubota 7040, which remains at his green fields in Chilton County and recently purchased a Land Pride Zero-Turn Mower and bush hog for his son's business.

So, what's new for this successful businessman/entrepreneur? A restaurant called Furnace Masters in McCalla. Why the restaurant? "I wanted to do something different, in addition to the day care center," Keith explained. "So, I did some searching on the internet and found this steak restaurant and figured I'd give it a try." One year later, the restaurant is a local favorite and the day care facility is still growing. The reason? Take a wild guess.