

TRANSCRIPT: **STEVE LAMANTIA** **INTERVIEW**

Mr. Steve LaMantia · Vice President and General Manager of L&F Distributors

TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Mr. Steve LaMantia, Vice President and General Manager of L&F Distributors. LaMantia is a Class of 1981 Agricultural Economics graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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Mr. Steve LaMantia | Transcript
Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

Please introduce yourself and tell us about your career.

My name is Steve LaMantia. I'm from Laredo, Texas. I'm in the alcohol distribution business and the ranching business.

What do you value most about your experiences at Texas A&M?

I guess what I value most about being here at A&M was the, the tradition and the maturity that had been distilled in me by being up here, going to school, working when I was going to school, and, and the academic information that I received to help me later years in life.

What impact has your degree from Texas A&M had on your professional career?

I, you know, it's hard to describe it singularly because there are so many things that it provides, but yes, there are a million things that A&M provided for me to, to do the things that I have done in my life. What A&M has given me, given me more than anything else was not necessarily the answers but the ability to find the answers and the ability to, to figure out how to find those answers, and that is probably, in a nutshell, that's probably the best thing I got out of A&M.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career, and how have you faced it?

You know, we all have challenges throughout our career, and the '80s were very difficult for my family because we're a family-owned business. With high interest rates and, and, and difficulty progressing in the agriculture business, it was a very trying time economically for us, but for our family and our family business, but we were able to get through it, and, and I honestly believe we are better for it because we realized that it is a ... success is fleeting, and you have to stay on top of it. Otherwise, it's not gonna be there for you.

What is your proudest accomplishment within your career?

I don't think I have one singular accomplishment. I have a couple of them — my father is a first generation American who did not graduate from high school. I was the first one in my family to graduate from college. You know, my family, together, we had built a business that is successful in the eyes of our peers and enabled us to do things that, that, that maybe everybody can't do or — what, no I shouldn't say that. Everybody can do it, but it enabled us to have some success, and that success comes through dedication, hard work, and basically core values.

Besides hard work, what does it take to be a successful professional?

I hate to lose.

I mean, bottom line is, is to be successful, I think, in this business, and what we tell our job applicants, they ask all the time, "What do you look for in a new employee?" and it's really simple. We look for people who hate to lose and you have to have a drive and a want-to attitude. The experience side you can get and you can teach anybody just about any job function you have out there, but they have to be willing to not wanna lose.

What kind of goals do you continue to set, and how do they help you to grow?

You know, it's interesting. I, I think as you go through life, you set different goals, and as you attain those goals, you typically... it's kinda, it's kind of... a set back because by the time you reach the goal you set, you probably have two or three goals in front of you, and so there are goals, whether they be physically, whether they're monetarily, whether they be business-wise, and a lot of what I've experienced in successful people, their goals are not monetary. It's not to get another dollar in the bank. It's, it's to be successful, it's to create something, it's to, to, to branch out and help people. So, those goals change constantly, and I think those goals stair-step. As you hit one, you're already stepping up to the next goal that you have.

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How do you balance your career with your family life?

Having a great wife. I — there, there is no question. I have five children, I have 2 son-in-laws, I have two grand-children, and there is no question that there is no way I could have been successful in my chosen field of endeavor without a tremendous wife. It just, it doesn't work. You have to have that partner — if you are going to have a family, you have to have a partner. And that doesn't mean that, that she stays home and washing dishes and you go to work everyday and you come home and you expect to have a drink and a meal on the table. That means that you work together. That means that you share those responsibilities on both sides, and unless you have that partner, you, you could be great at business, but I don't think you're gonna have a great family life.

What advice do you have for Agricultural Economics students who are about to graduate and start their careers?

Well, the obvious is enjoy your college life. Enjoy, enjoy the time you have with this experience. Try to take the time to stop every once in a while and, and soak it all in. But, but realize that you are building a foundation of friendship and professionals around you at Texas A&M that will never, ever, ever go away, and you will always be able to reach back into that bag, that bag I call Texas A&M to find help. It will always be there, and remember that no matter how far out from school you get or how long since it's been since you've come back here.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I, you know, I would like to, to say that, that Texas A&M's agriculture department, ag eco department was a tremendous help to me. I was not the best student in the world, but it, but it taught me a lot and helped me get over the hump, and I was very, I'm very proud to be able to come back to Texas A&M and offer a little bit of input moving forward, so thank you.

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Transcribed by
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