

Dan Galvin's Journey: An American Success Story

A New Englander starts small, then learns how to build a solid power wash business.

By Allison Hester



Dan and his wife Heather

Dan Galvin spent a long time searching for the right career.

After high school in Plymouth, Massachusetts, he joined the U.S. Navy where he was a strike force team leader, a missile technician, and a rescue swimmer on board ships. He found the Navy a lot of fun, but knew it wasn't for him.

Next, he became a broker for the family insurance business. "I worked on my own but I had to wear a suit and tie every day. I was stuck in an office, and I absolutely hated it," he said. So in 2000, Dan went out on his own and started selling insurance software. "I was still stuck in a suit but, at least it got me outside, talking to people. But it still just wasn't me."

Lost on what to do next, Dan got a phone call from his uncle, who said, "Hey, do I have a deal for you!" The uncle had been in the pressure washing business since 1977 and was ready to retire.

Dan realized the offer might actually have some potential.

So Dan paid \$10,000 for "about \$2000 worth of equipment, including an old, beat-up pressure washer." But the main thing he was buying was his uncle's knowledge, which he knew was priceless. He also got his uncle's two accounts; one was for an electric company's vehicles, and the other was for graffiti removal at Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox. "That was all I had. I think the monthly income was around \$500 between the two of them."

Dan's wife Heather was less than thrilled. "She said, 'How the hell are you going to make money with a garden hose?'" Dan laughed. "Like so many people, she was clueless to what power washing was and how to make money from it."

Dan said his uncle was the best around, but he didn't know how to mar-

ket to make that six figure income. "It took me less than three months to make my \$10,000 back, so my wife was happy," he said. "And that was with me having no clue how to market. I was ecstatic."

Growing and Changing

In the neighborhoods surrounding his home, Dan noticed a lot of vinyl houses that were moldy. So he hit them hard with a home-made postcard. "I was just spraying and praying," sending out postcards to anyone and everyone and praying he'd get some jobs.

By 2007, after buying out a couple of competitors, Dan's East Coast Power Washing had moved on to cleaning heavy equipment for large construction companies. Then the economy hit all those companies hard and he lost most of his accounts. So he had to go back to where he started...house washing.

Dan knew that house washing means