

James Harhi

Windermere, Florida



Innovative Attraction Management

Learn about Florida Entrepreneur James Harhi:

James Harhi, co-founder of Innovative Attraction Management (IAM) is a serial entrepreneur who parlayed the proceeds of the sale of his first business into additional ventures, including IAM. "After college, I entered the corporate world with Disney where I realized I was more entrepreneurial and not the corporate type," Harhi said. "A friend's family was selling their manufacturing plant that made cable assemblies and electronic boxes, which I bought in 2005. I was able to turn it around from a mom and pop operation into a growing company, which I sold in 2010. I launched IAM with some old Disney colleagues who identified an underserved niche in the amusement park industry."

Critical to Harhi's first step into entrepreneurship was the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund or HBIF. "They helped me find a lender willing to work with me to purchase the manufacturing plant," he said. "I was not

receiving warm welcomes at banks before I met with the HBIF. Now the HBIF assists my business with marketing and networking through its matchmaking and referral services."

IAM has two distinct sides to the business: one is attraction management and the other is aquatic risk prevention. "We actively manage amusement facilities for investors or owners who either do not want to operate the facility or want to turn around its performance,"

Harhi said. "We have 20 plus years of executive experience in the amusement industry going back to Disney. We also provide lifeguard training and services through our Star Guard Elite program. We have 80 clients in the Star Guard Elite program worldwide and 4 parks under active management including one in Trinidad and one in Oman."

Harhi's advice to aspiring entrepreneurs never waivers. "I always say you have to find something you're passionate about," he said. "The really lucky people are those that make money on their own doing something they're passionate about. You need to have a good stomach and fortitude because it is difficult, but if you can make it work, it is fulfilling. I like that I can better myself and reap the benefits of my hard work."

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