



Michael Agri

Port Orange, Florida



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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Michael Agri:

Originally from Wakefield, MA, Michael Agri, Founder of North Atlantic Consultants, was faced with uncertainty and change, like so many others, in the fall of 2009. He was laid off from his position with a Silicon Valley based Managed Service Provider and found himself looking for employment. Fortunately, as Agri shared, he discovered the perfect opportunity to start a business utilizing his skills and experience in the telecom industry.

"I knew a friend that was doing what I'm doing now," Agri said. "He did really well and I always thought it was brilliant to be able to work for yourself. I wanted his lifestyle and the ability to work from home. I took him out to dinner one night to pick his brain. The idea of using my skills and helping other businesses was very appealing. After that

conversation, I decided to go for it."

Agri described his first few years in business as challenging. Regardless, he was committed to the long-haul and determined to make it work.

"In this business, it takes a long time to make money," he said. "You have to find a client, get them into a contract with a provider, get them installed and then, after they pay their bill, you get paid. My first commission check came at month five, but I was prepared for that. Even though it took three years before I started making money, I kept pushing and wouldn't give up. Eventually I signed some big accounts that changed everything."

As a Telecommunications Consultant, Agri works as a broker between businesses that need telecommunication services and telecommunication companies. Whether it's Business Phone Systems, Internet Access, Call Centers, Hosted Exchange or Virtual Desktop services, Agri has a solution and the right carrier for any size business.

"I can help any business customer anywhere in North America," he said. "However, the two types of businesses I've sold the most to are banks and restaurant chains. These businesses have multiple locations with a need for phone, internet service and POS systems. Everything flows through a central connection back to corporate headquarters. We help them with procurement, planning and writing RFPs. We then go through the process of vendor selection and help them negotiate their contract."

In October 2013, Agri relocated to Volusia County. His in-laws are from Orlando and he and his wife would visit often. They grew to love the area

and the great weather and eventually settled in Port Orange.

"Since moving to Florida, I've joined several business groups in the area," he said. "I'm part of a local BNI chapter, The Daytona Beach Quarterback Club, and I belong to the Southeast Volusia Chamber of Commerce and the Port Orange and South Daytona Chamber of Commerce. Networking with other local business owners has been a lot of fun and has taught me a lot."

Agri continued, "Working for myself has been harder than I expected, but a lot more fun than working for someone else. Since I'm considered independent, I can offer any solution or provider to help my clients solve complex problems. I'm also able to bring integrity to an industry that ranks as the worst for customer service, year over year. If you can bring integrity to a business filled with broken promises, it makes you different."

Looking ahead, Agri is focused on growing his business and serving more customers. His goal is to increase monthly billing revenue from \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 while maintaining exceptional customer service and providing world-class telecommunications solutions.

What advice does Agri have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Never give up," he said. "Also, focus on helping your customer and providing real value. If you can delight them, it helps you stand out. People will find you."

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