

# Michael Leo Langston

Williston, Florida



Turning Point Fitness

## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Michael Leo Langston:*

Buying an existing business, in good standing, is a challenging proposition for even the most seasoned of entrepreneurs. Buying an unprofitable existing business with a less than favorable reputation is an entirely different situation. For Michael Leo Langston, owner of Turning Point Fitness and someone with no prior experience operating such a business, the decision to buy a gym, whose clientele dropped by 50% in the time it took to thoroughly research the opportunity, was bold, brave and fueled by a vision to create a local community hub for wellness.

"When I bought the gym in January of 2017, I was working as a Service and Inspections Coordinator for a Fire Protection Company out of Gainesville," he said. "I'd been with the company for 10 years. My wife is a teacher in Williston and she worked with the wife of the guy who previously owned the gym. I became a member and soon after the

owner asked if I would be interested in purchasing the business. At first I said no, but kept the idea logged in the back of my mind. Eventually I asked to look at the financials. They didn't look great, but I knew that if we gave it the attention it needed the clientele would shoot back up and we'd be profitable."

That's exactly what Langston did. He took the best of what was available, fixed what needed to be repaired, cleaned up the Facebook page, began working to improve the gym's reputation and moved into a smaller unit to cut down on overhead. As a result, membership more than doubled, quickly putting Langston in a position where he needed more space. Fortunately, there was an available unit right next door that he ended up acquiring. An improved reputation and more space meant more customers, increased demand and a need for even more room. An additional unit was added and now Turning Point Fitness occupies three continuous units in the same building.

Like most entrepreneurial journeys, Langston's had its fair share of scares and challenges. "The day after handing over a cashier's check for the business, literally while signing various 2-year contracts with vendors, I learn that an Anytime Fitness was coming to Williston," he said. "I couldn't sleep that night. I had been married only 6 months, I thought to myself, 'what have I done'? Fortunately, my wife was very encouraging and reassured me that whatever happens we would be okay. After that experience, I just put my head down and focused on the customary challenges of running a business."

Looking ahead, Langston has thought about a second location, but wants to keep things fluid for now. He's candid about the fact that he

doesn't know what two years from now looks like. In the interim, he'll continue to build his membership base, provide outstanding customer service and providing a superior product. A recent trip to Europe also has Langston thinking about his role in the community and what kind of impact he can make. Regardless of what comes tomorrow, Langston shared that he's committed to living in the now, sowing good seeds and having faith in the process."

When it comes to advice for aspiring entrepreneurs, Langston offers up a really unique and insightful perspective. "I read a lot about wilderness, and military survival," he said. "Survival, much like in the business world, depends on setting clear objectives, assessing your immediate surroundings for any tools at your disposal, and then formulating a plan of attack based on those tools to accomplish the set objectives. By following these steps, your plan becomes much more practical and attainable. I'd also encourage anyone considering starting a business to first work on clearing debt and setting aside an emergency fund. Had I not been diligent with putting money away and paying off debt, I never would have purchased the gym. Finally, practice delayed gratification. I didn't pay myself for the first year and a half of the business. I put all the earnings back into the business. By not making emotional-based decisions and by delaying gratification you're more likely to set yourself up for success."

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