

Sam Arledge

Odessa, Florida



[Manufacturers Distributor, Inc.](#)

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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Sam Arledge:

Sam Arledge, founder of Manufacturers Distributor, Inc. (mdi), launched his company in 2002 partly as the result of being released by a new owner at his former company and partly as the result of the competitive fire Arledge felt to show that new owner he had made a mistake.

"My motivation stemmed from the new owner asking me to write a 26-page business plan, promising me a high level executive position, and then turning around and saying he no longer needed my services," Arledge explained. "I wanted to compete with him. He put \$500,000 into the old business and I launched mdi with \$8,500. He failed in 18 months and I'm still here today."

Today mdi thrives as the largest distributor of Transair Aluminum Pipe

in America. In addition, mdi also provides customers with all the different equipment options on either side of the compressed air pipe required to create a complete compressed air system. "Our competitive advantage is our speed and accessibility," Arledge said. "If you have a pump fail in the field and call us, we will act within three hours with price, delivery and full support. Whereas if you call the manufacturer, they will pass the call down a long line of supervisors to your local salesperson who will call you in two to three days after we have shipped your product."

Arledge advises aspiring entrepreneurs to follow their instincts while being realistic. You really need to listen to your heart and make your own decisions," he recommended. "It's critical to get counsel, but at the end of the day you have to make your own decisions and realize that counsel is just that and nothing more. Lastly, you need to understand that most small business owners don't make a lot of money. They take other benefits like building asset values, tax advantages and being able to work for themselves. So be realistic about having a large house and a fleet of cars. Just having a great idea is not enough to make a wildly profitable company."

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