

Member Highlight

Sam Card, Cards Technology, HTG28

Sam Card began his road to success right out of high school repairing computers in the basement of his house in Ocean Pines, Maryland. Soon after, he began marketing himself as a full service computer solutions provider when some acquaintances, who were also business owners, began asking him to set up their networks. He learned quickly how to set up servers, hired a couple high school buddies, and through word of mouth, Cards Technology took off. In 2007, the business moved into a retail location.

At the end of 2014, Sam realized that business was slowing down and they had hit a ceiling in revenue. Although they were frequently adding new business clients and completing repairs, the company wasn't growing. He made the decision to close the repair shop in January of 2015 (knowing he'd lose a couple hundred clients) so the business could focus on larger network projects. But Sam wasn't sure what his next step would be. In November of 2015, he was approached by HTG's Dennis O'Connell at IT Nation where he quickly decided to join a peer group, not realizing how helpful it was going to be to his business.

We took a minute to talk with Sam about the impact HTG has had on his professional and personal life.

Since your involvement with HTG, what has changed in your business?

"Our biggest change has been that we now write down our goals and are able to execute them. We'd talked about ways to plan before but never wrote them down, so we didn't know when we were getting somewhere, once we were there. I now have the internal motivation to plan the business because I see firsthand how well it works. Also, the structure of our company has changed. The leadership team has blossomed in a way that I couldn't imagine a couple years ago. Everyone is taking accountability for things. We read books together, discuss the teachings, and meet every week religiously."

Have there been changes to your personal side as well?

"I did a LifePlan in June 2015 with Rich Anderson. Growing up in a small beach town, I liked to party and didn't take things too seriously. I never went to college. But I learned a lot about my past and how it plays to where I am today. I identified my core talents and my passions. I went through a divorce in 2015. While I was married, my wife didn't want much to do with my dysfunctional family, so I ignored them for a while. Since the LifePlan, I have improved relationships with my company, employees, family, girlfriend and am now building a close relationship with my niece and nephew, with the goal of getting full custody of them."

Where do you see yourself and business in the next 3 years?

"I want to be closer to a point to exit off the org chart within the next three to five years. In three years, our leadership team should be as strong or stronger than it is today. In addition, I'd like to have \$3.5 million in revenue, increase our client base, and have solutions and offerings fully documented and developed."

What are you proudest of in your life or business?

"Making the transition from the everyday doer into running the business. I tell my guys sometimes, 'I will never stop trying to become qualified for the job I have today,' because I didn't go to business school."

What motivates you?

"Years ago it was making a bazillion dollars and retiring early. But now I want to do a lot in my community because I am very aware of the addiction problems in our small resort town. I am also motivated about using the business to educate people on how technology can accelerate their business."

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Above all, it's the pride I have with my high school buddies who have been with me since the beginning. It's nice seeing how they have grown and are fostering growth within our team."

What's the toughest decision you had to make as a business owner?

"Getting out of the way! I kind of got fired from my own job in 2015. Three of my employees insisted we weren't going to grow unless I stop working with computers and let them handle the day to day and come up with solutions.

That's really how you feel as a business owner, you don't trust anyone else to run your company but you aren't going to grow any farther if you don't."

What's makes you really happy?

"Seeing my team continue to develop and grow. It used to be more about what's the 'newest thing we can buy' and it has now transformed into 'what good can we do.' I can help my family and community out. I can utilize my resources and talents to bring about change and make others happy. It gives me a great sense of pride."

Sam's hobbies include:

- going to the beach
- riding bikes
- exercising
- target shooting
- and all the things that come along with living in a beach town!

What's the latest book you are reading now?

"I'm reading, *Leaders Eat Last*, by Simon Sinek. My Services Manager came back from a meeting after hearing about it and told us we NEEDED to read it."

Anything else you want fellow HTG members to know?

"My advice is: The quarterly meetings are a fun place to go and exchange ideas, but you are failing yourself if you are not doing the plans and the things that HTG teaches you to do. Initially, I didn't think I was joining to be working on my plans!

You have to go to the meetings for the purpose of developing your business, yourself, and working on your leadership skills. Leadership is very much a craft and a skill that's not something you are born with. It requires practice and dedication. I think the more you work on that, yourself, and your organization, the better off you will be.

The biggest thing that HTG teaches in the LifePlan are the risks along the way. Keep those in view because there are lots of things that can cause problems and get you off track. But it's how you pick yourself up from those that matters."

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