

BizSmarts



Networking calendar Mix and mingle with our featured networking picks. **Page 28**

Executive Profile

Myron Boncarosky

Founder,
Virginia
Tire
& Auto



The basics

Background: At age 30, Boncarosky, who had spent most of his adulthood working for Texaco Oil Co., told his wife he wasn't doing what he was capable of. Four years later, in 1976, he opened his first Main Street Shell gas station in Fairfax. Eventually Boncarosky, now 70, built a car repair and tire company that boasts Goodyear and Bridgestone affiliations, 11 locations and a Top Shop in North America award from Tire Review Magazine.

Education: Bachelor's in industrial arts education, California University of Pennsylvania.

First job: Paper boy for the local newspaper, the Pittsburgh Press.

Family: Wife Carole, daughter Julie, dog Darcy; lives in Fairfax County.

Business strategy

How's business? I wanted to make the same money that I made with Texaco. I wanted to be happy, and I've exceeded that.

Next big goal: Transitions. Turning the business over to my daughter and son-in-law. My daughter always wanted to take over the business. This was her choice. She's a bright young lady. She's able to solve problems and come to a solution.

How do you keep a competitive edge? I know where I came from. My father worked at a steel mill with a seventh-grade education. I grew up in western Pennsylvania.

Best lesson from your mentor: I had a good physics teacher in college. I learned to have high standards. Do things with integrity. You can't compromise. When you're a leader in the business, you're on stage. People have to believe in you.

Judgment calls

Best business decision: Buying a service station in Fairfax City and taking that jump. My wife pushed me on that. She said, "Do it! You'll be very successful."

Hardest lesson learned: About 20 years ago, I was very profitable. I had a lease. It went up 30 percent the first year. I said we can't go on paying this

type of rent. I went out and bought land in Centreville. I worked with Goodyear. There are certain decisions you have to make. If you're not content, do something about it.

Most memorable deal: We were at our beach house, and I get a call from Shell. I was told, "I've got an opportunity for you." I took the opportunity even though I didn't need it. Shell turned the business in Vienna over to me. They could have called anyone.

Biggest missed opportunity: Worrying about where the dollars are coming from. Trying to control the whole project on my own.

True confessions

Guilty pleasure: I've always liked nice cars. Even when I couldn't afford it.

Car: Cadillac Escalade Hybrid.

If you had \$1 million, you would: Give it to my university for scholarships. Maybe give it to a church.

Businessperson you most admire: Warren Buffett – his full concentration. He focuses on

his business, people. You gotta admire someone like that.

Personality in high school: I was very focused on sports. We played football, basketball and baseball. We won the [Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League] in 1959 for football.

Your go-to karaoke song: No, that wouldn't be me.

Favorite or most influential book: "The Power of Positive Thinking" by Norman Vincent Peale.

Favorite restaurant: Sweetwater Tavern and Ruth's Chris Steak House.

Favorite place outside of the office: My beach house in Bethany. I love vacationing there with my wife.

One thing you cannot do without each day: Coffee. I like Starbucks with creamer.

Pet peeve: Not treating people the right way, taking advantage of people.

What's on your iPod? I usually just listen to NPR.

Interview by Adriana Scott

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