

BUSINESS PARTNERS: FOR BETTER OR WORSE

BY LISA ALLEN

Starting or buying a business is scary. Add the variable of an equal partner, and it could either soothe the stress or add to it. Here are words of wisdom from those who make partnerships a breeze. The keys, they say, are spelling out defined areas of expertise and good communication.

NRA GROUP

SWATARA TOWNSHIP, DAUPHIN COUNTY

Steve Kusic, 43, owns the revenue collection company with his wife, Jill, but also considers Shell Sharma, chief operating officer and director of operations, an equal partner.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT WORKING WITH A PARTNER? "You can go on vacation and never worry about the company," Steve Kusic said. "I do sales, and I'm out of the office at least two days a week; and we have offices in Panama and India, so I'm gone a lot. Shell takes care of the local issues. Our relationship is spectacular. We have mutual trust, and we pull our own weight."

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF BEING IN BUSINESS WITH YOUR SPOUSE? "You have to keep everything segregated and lay out whose responsibility is what. My wife does a lot of unique things for the company — community issues, government work. I handle the operations."



PHOTO/AMY SPANGLER

Shell Sharma, left, is chief operating officer and director of operations of Swatara Township, Dauphin County-based revenue collection company NRA Group. Sharma works in partnership with owners Steve and Jill Kusic.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHERS CONSIDERING A PARTNERSHIP? "The partnership has to be built on mutual respect. You don't just meet someone and say, hey, let's go into business."

DO EMPLOYEES TRY TO PLAY YOU AND SHELL OFF OF EACH OTHER? "Not really. On HR issues, I tell people, if

you come to me to complain about your boss, I'm just going to fire you," he said in jest. "They don't bother me much."

LANDMARK BUILDERS INC.
CLAY TOWNSHIP, LANCASTER COUNTY

Brothers Clair and Cliff Weaver started their homebuilding business in 1998 pretty comfortable with their business



Brothers Clair and Cliff Weaver started the homebuilding business in 1998. Landmark Builders Inc. is a Clay Township-based homebuilding business.

partners. They have nearly all of the projects mentored on

DID YOU EVER HAVE A BROTHER-IN-LAW COMPANY? "We've worked with them. They both want to be left to try so

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT WORKING WITH A PARTNER? "I get input into the business. Weaver said, 'I'll look at it from a different angle. I'll bring solutions to the table. We'll work each other, and we'll have a bit of a re

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF WORKING WITH A PARTNER? "I disagree. I disagree. Neither of us wants to come to a decision. A plan does not exist. It's possible with ea

DO EMPLOYEES TRY TO PLAY YOU AND SHELL OFF OF EACH OTHER? "The offices are right. We communicate. We decide the in-command. He sees first