



Fifteen years ago I was trying to help my client find a solution to a problem.

Goodwill Industries of Lower SC wanted to expand retail operations, not only to add new locations but also to upgrade the image of their operations. The upgraded image and improved store locations were the most important part of their planned retail expansion program. Goodwill did not want to just add worn-out square footage in an old shopping center as was done in the past.

Goodwill wanted sites selected based on specific, enhanced demographics in order to maximize donations. They wanted the store designed and built to their specifications and engineered for their unique operations. In essence they wanted the new store location, design and construction to provide a better retail and donor experience for the customer.

The problem was that local developers did not realize the potential, nor grasp the vision, of Goodwill growth. They did not realize the economic viability of Goodwill's plan for the future with renewed, improved and expanded retail operations.

After several frustrating attempts to engage local developers I called Piedmont Companies LLC. Their extensive development work in the Charlotte NC area for Goodwill Industries of Southern Piedmont had been recognized and admired by our local Goodwill leadership and it seemed to be a possible solution to our local problem.

Was it ever! Piedmont understood every aspect of the Goodwill growth dilemma and made an early commitment to provide the assistance and means for Goodwill growth. Goodwill of Lower SC has grown from a few stores in the local area to a presence in almost every county in Lower SC. And now with almost thirty retail stores they are setting retail sales records every year.

The key factor has been Piedmont Companies and how their development expertise has been applied to Goodwill's growth plan. It is clear now that when Piedmont first used the word "partnership" they really meant it. From site selection, to design services and throughout the building phase and completion of construction the approach is to do what is best for Goodwill. The planning process is done in complete agreement with Goodwill staff as sites are planned and work flow is projected. Piedmont projects are completed on time and on budget. After construction follow-up for any issue is immediate and effective. Again the approach to problems has always been to pursue the course which benefits the client.

In all dealings with the CEO of Piedmont Companies, Willie Heafner, and Vice President, Sandy Cashion, their integrity, professionalism and expertise is readily apparent and they have the network and experience to take on any project.

For over fifteen years I have been impressed with the abilities and staff of Piedmont Companies. I have seen the operations of Goodwill expand and improve and made much better by their partnership with Piedmont Companies.

Piedmont Companies has been the major factor in the growth and success of Goodwill Industries of Lower SC. This growth allowed Goodwill to continue to expand their services and good works to the many new communities they are now able to serve. This mission expansion to help those in need has always been the ultimate objective of the Goodwill growth plan and the partnership with Piedmont Companies made that plan a success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael K Schmitt".

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