

Chris Giarla Case Study

Building a Strong Relationship and a Strong Business

Challenge

Chris Giarla and his wife owned several McDonald's restaurants, but they felt they weren't getting the help they needed from their accounting firm to address their business needs and to help guide them through some complex issues they were facing at the time. "We weren't happy," says Chris. "We had five restaurants at the time and they weren't equipped to provide the service we needed as we were growing." The Giarlas were referred to Sparkmon & Associates, CPAs, about 15 years ago. The firm's reputation and vast experience working with McDonald's owner/operators convinced the couple to work with the team at Sparkmon & Associates. "The references we received for Sparkmon & Associates were very good and we could tell they would be a great fit to help us out," Chris says. "Because they did a good amount of McDonald's work and had experience in our industry's unique situations, we knew working with Sparkmon & Associates would be the right choice."

Solution

The team at Sparkmon & Associates stepped in and helped the Giarlas with their ownership transfer issues as well as assisted with their day-to-day accounting and planning for the long-term. "They provide monthly financial statements and work with my wife, who is in charge of our bookkeeping and payroll, helping make her workday and more efficient," explains Chris. The couple also meets with the Sparkmon & Associates team a few times a year to work on succession planning, tax planning and restaurant purchase evaluations. "Those areas have really shown their expertise," Chris says. In addition, Sparkmon & Associates monitors the Giarlas' "big picture" and helps the couple make the best decisions for their business as it evolves. Chris reports, "We've made some adjustments to our corporate structure to address some of the tax benefits we weren't aware we could qualify for. As tax laws and our situation change, we know Sparkmon & Associates will reexamine the situation and look at different scenarios to minimize our taxes."

Result

Chris and his wife have been very pleased with the service Sparkmon & Associates has delivered, pointing out that team members are well-organized and easy to approach. "They've always been outstanding," Chris says. "The firm is very experienced with our industry and has an understanding of it that others can't match." The Giarlas also value the relationship they've built with the Sparkmon & Associates team over the years. "As an owner/operator I'm in the grind every day, working with staff, serving customers and spending money," Chris says. "I've always appreciate my conversations with Emmitt White, as he gets me to step back and look at things from a broader perspective. He helps me realize that we're growing a business and helps me remember why we got into it in the first place. When you are in it so deep you can lose sight of that. The people at Sparkmon & Associates have been great partners and friends that we have recommended to others many times."

Testimonial

"The nice thing is that they not only have the professional knowledge to help you succeed, they also treat you like a friend and a partner. We have a real rapport and they never lose sight of the importance of that relationship."