



Mike Nuccitelli

CEO and President of Parlec, Inc

*"To exist is to change, to change is to mature,
to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."
Henri Louis Bergson*

Getting to the core of Mike Nuccitelli was as simple as mentioning the high school Mike graduated from in 1980, Aquinas Institute. If it hadn't been for his father, the "Aquinas Connection" would not be there. Growing up in the Jay Street, Orchard Street area in Rochester NY in the 1940s-1950s, going to Aquinas was a dream – one which came true when he approached the school and they invited him to attend. Of course, he could not pay the tuition, but they "worked it out" and his father graduated in 1955. Given Mike's background and upbringing, it can truly be said of him that he's no stranger to hard work. Since the age of five, he's been working in some capacity or another; it was this lifetime of experience working around other people, viewing their individual strengths and weaknesses, and seeing what business practices worked and which didn't that added up to become the "turning point" that has enabled him to go on to become the great success that he is today.

Born in Rochester, New York in 1962, Mike first began his career in his father's shop sweeping floors and then worked his way up to selling hot dogs, hamburgers and lemonade to workers putting in the new city sewer system at the age of seven. He began selling apples at the age of eight, cutting lawns and performing various other odd jobs from ages nine to eleven. But it was when he turned thirteen that he was given his first "real" job, an experience that would forever

change him. He was employed by his father to come and work at Nationwide Tool & Die on Exchange Street in Rochester. In this first job Mike was paid \$2.50 an hour to wash the windows, a figure that seemed astronomical to him at the time.

He still recalls the very first day working for pay in his father's shop. Mike spent several hours procuring all his cleaning supplies and setting up all the necessary buckets and ladders. He finally got to work and by the time he had washed only one window, he heard a bell. He was shocked when he realized that it was the bell signaling the morning coffee break for the shop's employees. The older workers called for Mike to come along with them, but he seemed confused at first, wondering how it was that he was expected to take a break when he had only washed one window so far! His dedication was noticed by his co-workers and won him immediate respect.

What really made this experience working in his father's shop such a turning point, however, is that Mike was able for the first time to see all kinds of different personalities at work, and perceive how they each helped to contribute to the overall success of the company.

From bottom to top, Mike realized that everyone had something to contribute, and that even the so-called "problem employees" had the ability to contribute if they were only put in positions where they could excel. This really helped to shape the managerial strategies that define Mike's approach to business and his almost uncanny knack for turning seemingly negative situations into wild successes. As he puts it:

"It is what it is."

A simple quote, but a very revealing one as Mike goes on to explain. He has always been able to look at mistakes and see the underlying value, the attempt at success that might have fallen just a little short. As he tells his employees, he always thinks it better to strive for a 7 to 10 win/loss

record, than a 3 to 3. Because he is able to see the value in any situation and take advantage of it, he is never afraid to take risks and this, he says, has made all the difference.

There are several instances throughout Mike's life where his risk-taking personality has won the day. The first occurrence was when he was preparing to enter college. Mike was a hockey player at the time and found himself with an offer to play for the Canadian Junior A team, as well as an offer to play for the University of Dayton on a full scholarship. On the other hand, he had the opportunity with no guarantees at all to go to Clarkson University, a school renowned for their engineering program, which is what Mike had always wanted to major in. In the end he opted for Clarkson, and although he was cut from the varsity hockey team and relegated to playing junior varsity, he would go on to graduate with honors.

From there, Mike had no immediate plans to go to work for his father's business, but at his uncle's behest he was eventually swayed. Although he would have to turn down two prestigious offers from GE in Syracuse and Texas Instruments in Dallas and accept a 33% cut in salary, Mike stayed with his father's company, certain that there was a place there for him with his new knowledge of sales and engineering, and that he could turn the already very successful company into something more than it was. This was another gamble, of course, but in the end it did pay off. Within three years of graduating from college, at age 26, Mike had been named President of the company and within five years, he had quadrupled their profits.

This resounding success was the result of yet another risky maneuver that Mike embarked upon. When he first joined his father's company, their primary client was Xerox, providing what Mike estimated was at least 95% of all the company's profits. Though most people were content with this situation that had admittedly been working quite well for many years, Mike became concerned that if anything were to ever happen to Xerox, their own company wouldn't be able to stay afloat. Of course, in the late 80s, Xerox did suffer

some major setbacks. Luckily, in the meantime Mike had spent several years on the road, going across the country in an attempt to gain new contracts. His skills gained observing different types of people and recognizing their value had won him quite a few friends at Chrysler Corporation, thanks in large part to Mike's spending a lot of personal time with them, joining them on outings to their favorite bars and restaurants and in general winning their trust. When the time came for Chrysler to look for a new supplier, the contract went to the most obvious choice, Mike. It was this multi-million dollar contract that Mike sought out that not only kept the company afloat throughout the collapse of Xerox, but also allowed it to prosper.

Mike has gone on to achieve one success after another throughout his career, from buying into the hugely successful Parlec, Inc. in 1990 with his partner, Ron Ricotta, and eventually selling his father's company in 1999. He still attributes all of his victories to those same primary factors: the understanding of people that a life in the workplace afforded him, the ability to see a good thing in the midst of a bad situation, and the willingness to take chances. When asked for advice he might give to others, Mike indicates that this formula for success is not unique to him:

"Most people have an opportunity to change their life. It's a matter of whether or not they recognize it and then take advantage of that opportunity... that's my core belief."