

## Achieving Goals and Setting New Ones

Marty Hayes, Dave Hayes' father, founded Apogee Industries as a commercial printing company in 1961. By the mid to late 1970s, the company had transitioned into the label business and has never looked back.

"My wife, Elaine, and I took over the company in 1999," Hayes said. "The company continued to grow. In 2012, as we each turned 50, we purchased our current location and began discussing what our exit would look like."

The couple attended the Flexo Label Advantage Group (FLAG) conference in 2017, where they met Jim Russell of New Direction Partners. "He spent a little time with us explaining the metrics that buyers look at when examining the financial statements of a company," Hayes said. "He gave us an estimate of what we could sell our business for based on then-current revenues. So we set a revenue goal we expected to hit when we were in our early 60s that would make us more attractive to a potential buyer. We got there much sooner than expected. And in 2019 we engaged New Direction Partners to help us sell Apogee."

Elaine added, "Jim was extremely helpful, walking us through the whole process of selling a business. I was tasked with most of the due diligence. Jim was always ready to explain the what and why of all we were asked to provide to potential buyers. He never got tired or frustrated with my many questions! He made the whole process manageable. He is part accountant, part social worker!"

## Finding the Right Buyer

Hayes had a number of requirements for a potential buyer, not the least of which was a commitment to continuing the company's successful business strategies and taking good care of Apogee's 20+ employees and loyal customers. "Jim brought us a few options that we ultimately nixed because we were not comfortable with them, for a variety of reasons. He was very patient with us, and we really appreciated that. In addition to finding the right buyer for the business, we also had some family issues that also caused delays. But ultimately, he connected us with Brian West and Richard Reyes, who ended up acquiring the company."

Both Brian and Richard had strong backgrounds in the label industry, according to Hayes, and their approach to business, customers and employees was well aligned with the vision held by Dave and Elaine. Brian had spent a number of years with a flexo prepress company and knows the industry, including prepress and how plates are made. Hayes says, "When you talk to him about industry-specific terms like gear chatter and moiré and process work, he totally gets it. And Richard was the plant manager for a corrugated box printing company. So we were pleased that both were so immersed in the industry. They fit our customer base well, and I am thankful for that."

## Working Through the Transition

Both Dave and Elaine have a one-year contractual commitment to transition the company to its new ownership. "Elaine does a little bit of everything in the company," Dave said. "She is an accountant by background and does the bookkeeping. She also implemented new accounting software and handles customer service for the largest customers. Brian and Richard are delighted to have her help, and I'm sure they would like her to stay on longer." As for Dave, he continues to work with the company four or

five days a week. “I am enjoying helping them with the transition, and we have continued to be unbelievably busy.”

### What’s Next?

Dave is big into ice hockey, still playing regularly. He also got back into coaching ice hockey about three years ago, coaching a girls’ team of 15- and 16-year-olds. “Elaine and I always enjoy going to the tournaments,” he says, “even though they aren’t always the most exciting destinations. But we recently went to a tournament in Nashville, and I got to play on the NHL rink – probably as close as I will ever get to the NHL!”

Continuing with the hockey theme, Dave added, “Elaine and I are looking forward to the third period. We haven’t decided exactly what we will do once our employment contract has ended. There are plenty of options, including hockey coaching and teaching Sunday school in our church. There is no question that we will both stay busy!”

### The Perfect Partner

“Again, I have to say, we really appreciated Jim’s patience throughout the entire process. New Direction Partners, with its industry-specific knowledge and wealth of contacts, was the perfect partner for us. And if I wasn’t sure what or how to communicate something to a potential buyer, Jim would step right in and say it or write it for me. He’s a great communicator and really helped us move things forward. The bottom line is, I was really glad they were there to help us through this.”