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By Andrew Lane

But Can He Sing?

Catching up with DCD's Stephen Madaffari.

Twenty minutes into the conversation Stephen Madaffari, principal of Data Centers Delivered and HTS New York, was done. He got it. He'd been through it in his head already. He did it. He peeked at his watch and was thinking about something or someone other than me. I caught him and I called him on it. Something about chopped liver? He wasn't being rude. He was being responsible to himself and the myriad of accountabilities he had over the course of the day.

My catching him and calling him out changed his disposition toward me and this article's tone became a full on reality. My interest in him, he noticed, was no longer pedestrian. He realized I actually cared and that was the game changer. Whatever it is that Stephen cares about is going to work out. Enter the Pitbull analogy and comparison. With a pair of aviator glasses on he has been mistaken more than once for the entertainer. But more relevant is the lock on ensuring success for what he cares for, starting with his family, business acquaintances, and his customers.

Stephen grew up in Cheshire, CT. He received his mechanical engineering degree from Louisiana State University as recently as 1998. He played soccer and dreamed of being an agent. He was an engineer who always wanted to be in front of clients understanding their requirements and needs and being creative to address and solve challenges. His first gig out of school was in sales and turnkey construction for Trane.

It was at Trane where Stephen learned his gift is his vision, not only looking forward, but around. He's made a career out of absorbing the theatre of a business circumstance better than the next guy. He looks around the room, recognizes the different parts and pieces involved, and the collective affect each has on the other in terms of alliances, competitors, complementary businesses, what's productive, and what's a threat. He's seen the water and now is building the roadmap to lead the horses to it.

Today, Stephen is principal of HTS New York and Data Centers Delivered. HTS is a premier HVAC equipment integrator in North America recognized for delivering real technical and design horsepower to owners, engineers, and general contractors in critical design build applications. Exposure to

the emerging data center infrastructure market organically created Data Centers Delivered as a specialty manufacturer of custom modular data centers. True to character, Stephen's current work involves a complex but purposeful ecosystem of products, customized services, and field know how. It took me a little while to catch on to the evolution and ecosystem he orchestrates, but I can be taught.



Stephen Madaffari

Data Centers Delivered utilizes off-site construction to custom build white space (IT modules), electrical infrastructure, and mechanical infrastructure. Their turnkey solutions can be a standalone building or skid mounted for installation in a traditional building. They are vendor agnostic, which allows their clients control over how they want their IT capacity to look and operate. They literally build and test their customers' data centers in a warehouse. They control the supply chain, the process, the procedure, and ultimately reduce the risk associated with projects built on site such as contractor variance, schedules, weather, etc. In the warehouse they build it without variables, break it down, put it on semi's, and ship the component pieces to the site. Can you see Pitbull sitting on a skid, waving a cowboy hat, riding down the highway!? Now that's service.

As Stephen puts it, "Data Centers Delivered realized itself. It just happened. It was so practically necessary. All these mechanical and electrical parts and pieces on one side ... and all these businesses that needed data centers on the other." This is Data Centers Delivered's value proposition for its customers. Stephen's value proposition to Data Centers Delivered is the charisma and moxie to consult with the business, understand core requirements, develop the vision, architect a solution, and then coordinate appropriate resources on a budget in a restricted timeframe and deliver nationwide time after time. Layup, right? Nothing but net.

Together, along with Epsilon industries, Data Centers Delivered's 'better mousetrap' standardization of process and

production techniques is made possible by their five principals: Stephen, Trey Austin, Eric Derasse, Brad Hughes, and Chris Wiederick, and provides a predictable deployment of mechanical and electrical engineering white space solutions. Customers requiring infrastructure growth on the colocation and enterprise side of the business are taking note and their business is growing.

By the time we got to my “What feeds your soul?” Steve Manos question, the answer was almost self-evident, but I asked it anyway. Sure enough, family first. I did gain a passionate education on what it means to grow up 100% Southern Italian. Everything matters — religion, politics, kids, neighborhood, ethics, loyalty, community — and is up for debate. I present for evidence article no. 1: His family arranged a blind date with a neighborhood girl. His marriage was essentially arranged. His aunt answered the door to the set-up his family orchestrated. Her whole family was there. Intense. Does that sound strange in this day and age? Nothing could be further from strange.

THREE WISHES

Stephen took the three wishes for the data center industry question with the Data Center Genie a little differently than my other subjects. What matters to him is the industry shapes in a

way that ensures success for the Data Centers Delivered and HTS New York people. In that vein, he’d obviously like to see:

- Mutual and social acceptance of modular data center deployment
- This would require an overachieving definition of what it is, for real
- Which would then result in continually replenished deal flow

This ecosystem of success would mean sound business that perpetuates for the benefit of his family, his employees, and their partner community. His secret to enduring success? Consider the people you are doing business with as the annuity.

Stephen is cruising through LaGuardia making his way to San Antonio for 7x24. He has his aviator glasses on, a sport coat, and likely some cool leather boots for comfortable travel. All dressed up, he’s a dead ringer for a dressed down famous celebrity. He hears a hipster kid whisper to his mom as he walks by, “Momma, momma ... that’s Pitbull!!”

He’ll do anything he sets his mind to that fulfills a purpose with a passion. But can he sing? ■

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