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# SUPPLY

ANTIGUA WINDS | BY ALEX HARRELL

## FEELS LIKE SUMMER

Mike Summers doesn't believe in titles. Since taking over Antigua Winds last September as the director of sales, the San Antonio, Texas-based company has embraced a hive mind mentality to maximize profitability.

"I try to emphasize a team environment here where we all wear many hats and we're all able to participate in what goes on," Summers said. "I believe everybody has a good idea somewhere, no matter what their title is. I think that ultimately generates more enthusiasm with employees when they feel like they can participate more in what they're doing."

Since Summers joined the five-person team, the manufacturer of professional saxophones and school instruments has released a trumpet with stainless steel valves, a trombone with a nickel silver outer slide as well as a euphonium.

"Our biggest launch, however, was the release of our Model 25 alto and tenor saxophones," Summers said. "These pro saxophones are very resonant and have a well-balanced tone — and they look neat."

It has also reinvigorated social media efforts and continues to push forward as more than just an alternative saxophone supplier.



From left, Beth Fly, Mike Summers and Amanda Arnold.

### A year into the restructuring of Antigua Winds, Mike Summers brings the sax supplier to new heights

"If you enjoy what you do, then I think in general you'll be a happier person; I've always been," Summers said. "I try to instill that into our dynamic."

#### WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER

So even if Summers doesn't get lost on titles and has his staff bounce around from logistics to advertising to inspecting instruments for quality control, every

employee has a position based on their professional skills and individual backgrounds.

"I believe everyone at Antigua is clear on what they are supposed to do every day," Summers explained. "I surround myself with people who are self-motivated and don't require constant direction [and] that aren't afraid to ask if they need direction or help with an issue."

Still, Summers still runs a tight ship at Antigua Winds.

"Some people, I'm sure, think that it's a more lackadaisical or lazy approach to management," he said. "But things don't fall through the cracks too much; I get up every morning and figure out how I can be more productive than I was the day before."

And that's a skill Summers was taught from various indus-

try members he's worked with and worked for throughout the years. Twenty years, to be exact. With that much experience — including once owning a full-line shop in Florida — Summers said he owes a lot of his success to his peers.

"I'm not where I am today because of who I am," he said. "I'm who I am because of who I've worked with over the years."

Which might be why he stresses the importance of removing unnecessary barriers from the equation.

"I want to be able to do everybody else's job so if someone is out sick or gets overwhelmed with a project, they can count on me to help them out," Summers continued. "Everywhere I've been, I've always felt that if I'm able to do somebody else's job, I should learn how to do that person's job without stepping on their toes and telling them

how to do it better."

And now, with a year under his belt and a self-motivated team behind him, Summers has big plans for Antigua Winds.

#### ON THE UPSWING

"I'd like to see us have a larger influence on the music industry as far as what we have to offer," Summers said. "A lot of educators don't really know about who we are and what we do."

The biggest initiative for the company is increasing brand awareness — something Antigua has struggled with, despite having a 20-plus year history.

"Facts are facts, and the fact is that we haven't been known to be a recognized brand in our field, he said. "I just want to make us more recognized."

Summers is quick to extinguish any blame-based flames; he stressed that it's no one's fault for this lack of familiar-

ity. As an alternative pro-sax and wind instruments supplier, the niche market has changed rapidly throughout the years and requires a constant appraisal to compete with main stream companies.

"In the past, we've marketed to the school band dealer and tried to convince them that our product is great — because our product is great — and tried to convince them to carry our product," Summers explained. "In the past, the school band and orchestral dealer has really relied on their team to push a brand. But they don't have time to do that now."

So, Antigua refocused who it markets to.

"As a distributor and a manufacturer, it's really our job to let the educator know how great our product is so that they ask for it more," Summers continued. "What I've changed this year is directing our [at-

tention toward] marketing and advertising to the educator and professional musician."

Within the last six months, Antigua has increased its social media footprint through Facebook and Instagram in efforts to bolster communication with this targeted audience as well as music directors.

"We produce great products, we have a fantastic team and an excellent infrastructure," he said. "We just need to continue to make music stores, educators, and musicians as aware of it as we are."

Though it sounds like a lofty goal (what company *isn't* trying to grow?), Antigua is confident that increasing awareness will be easier than it seems. Everything is already in place, according to Summers.

"It's not like we're trying to fix a problem," he said. "We've got nowhere to go but up." **MI**



# B&G

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