

In 2010 I received a layoff as did many others. This is a collection of emails from the people I was responsible for supporting after I notified them of my impending layoff from the United Franchise Group. My position was that of a field Operations Advisor for the Sign-A-Rama and Embroidme brands. I was primarily responsible for sales and marketing support. Not a word has been changed.

Jim North - Overland park, KS SAR

Sorry to hear this. We appreciate the expertise and guidance you have provided as we continue to get our marketing and sales on track. We have been pretty good students in following your advice and are confident we will see success. Our business is holding steady in a tough economy and at the traditionally weakest time of the year. Thanks for the part you have played in making that happen.

Best wishes in your future endeavors. Let me know if/how I might help.

Bill Albert - Chesterfield, MO EME

Never fails, every time they hire someone who has the right ideas and personality they don't keep them around! If any perspective employer wants a franchisee's opinion of your efforts please feel free to give my number. Bill

Sherwood Quiring - Maple Grove, MN EME

You got a raw deal buddy.

You will be missed. You did make an impact, at least with me. I appreciate the help you've given me over the last couple of years. I'll miss your marketing insights and enthusiasm.

If you need a reference, or I can be of help in any way, let me know. All the best, Wood & Mary

Tony Angle - Wildwood, MO EME

Sorry to hear that, I enjoyed learning from you. I guess that's par for the course with them. Good luck in what ever you do!

Tom Polson - Vadnais Heights, MN SAR

To whom it may concern,

Robert Thomas has been a great asset to the Midwest region. I realize that this decision has already been made and our praise is probably too late, but it should be noted that Robert has done an excellent job. Robert has done a lot of work to bring the local nine or ten stores together so that we now have a good working relationship and can offer each other ideas, backup, and even joint initiatives. We at Signarama Vadnais Heights also have concerns about what this means for our future support from SAR Corporate. We do not wish to be supported in only a tertiary sense by the support staff of Chicago SAR's. Basically, without a representative like Robert locally, we feel cut off and on our own from the Signarama family. Thank you, Tom Polson

Lee and Bard Lyons - Eden Prairie, MN SAR

Barb & I are appalled that this has happened. To our way of thinking, you are the best thing that has happened, from a Marketing Support perspective, to this region in 4 years. I can't believe that Corporate can be so short sighted as to think that this is going to help anything "Sign*A*Rama" in this region. I don't know who Stewart Hamilton is - He has never been out here to ask us how we are doing or how much you are helping us, but he needs to get his head out of the Florida Sand and realize what an asset you are to the Franchisees up here and the MidWest. You have played a major role in enabling all of the SARs in MN and most of ND to be able to work together and accomplish things that are unheard of in other areas of the country. If there is anything that we can do to help you, please do not hesitate to ask. Thanks for all of your help - you will be greatly missed!!!!

Chuck Stampfle - St Paul, MN SAR

I am really sorry to hear this. I am once again disappointed.

Do you have a "non compete"? Can we talk? Are you willing to talk?

Richard Heir - Roseville, MN SAR

I am truly stunned. I've told you in the past how helpful you have been. You have always been a team player and always loyal to UFG's business model. I think you should work as a sales rep for all the local Sign A Rama's. You could choose which store to send the work to. I don't think that's a bad idea.

If there is anything I can do please don't hesitate to call. I wish you all the best. You are the best. Thank you, Rick Heir

Pat Badell - Crystal, MN SAR

I am shocked and sadden to hear about your termination. I am sure you will rebound, and it maybe a good thing, not so much travel anymore. Thank you very much for everything you did and your patience with me. I will miss you. You are always welcome to come in when you go to get your coffee from Caribou. Don't be a stranger. Good Luck, you know I am looking for Outside Sales Reps. :)

Dawn North - Overland Park, KS SAR

What a kick in the pants, huh? You are the best marketing rep we've ever had, seriously. I appreciate the time that you gave us and your expertise in marketing. I'm not sure what the leadership of the company is trying to do...but I hope you find something better. :) Very sincerely, Dawn North

Jill Wolf - Springfield, MO SAR

I hate this terribly and I'm sure you do a thousand times over. Please don't tell anyone that when they come to Springfield, that's the end of the line! Or is that the typical lifespan of the sales & mktg reps from corporate???

If there is any consolation in knowing:

- 1) I am getting ready to launch my 2 mth plan having embellished a little on the visuals and rewards planned. I am expecting great results.
- 2) I heard from Johnny Mac (sporting goods stores) today that we got their account! It will create an even greater need to get a garment printer.
- 3) I had that talk with my screen printer about why their business went away and learned some things that needed to be said.
- 4) Josh & I have that meeting with Reckitt Benkiser (French's as we know it) tomorrow thanks to you and your encouragement and eagerness to help us hone our skills.

Again, I am so beside myself at this turn of events. Your visit to the store last week was certainly ideal timing for me – to stir me out of my despair. I know I didn't do a good job of demonstrating it, but my faith in God is the only thing that has kept me sane and able to function in the midst of every business owners nightmare. Thank You for Everything,

Karen Isreal - Bluesprings, MO SAR

I am sorry to hear that you will no longer be working with us through UFG. Do you want a job? I just happen to need a sales person!!!

I think that you have probably been one of the most helpful of UFG staff that we have had the pleasure to meet. You know how hard it was to win Dave over, and he even said you were actually one of the people he feels that have helped us most. We would like to stay in touch.

We met the new RVP today (I did not get the email about his assignment) and I asked him if you would still be our marketing support. He was "uncertain". Now we know why.

Please stay in touch. We have benefited greatly from your support. Best wishes - I always look at this type of situation as a window of opportunity for something new and exciting - a fresh perspective.

Steve Reichman - Westport, MO EME

Robert, Thanks for your note. I did enjoy our meetings and conversations. Please know that we do wish you well. I feel sure you'll "land on your feet". If we can be of any additional help to you in the future, please let us know. Best Regards, Steven L Reichman

Tom and Anne Ames - Eagan, MN EME

I am concerned about the termination of Robert Thomas. As a FOCUS store, we received a lot of help from Robert, which we are going to miss quite a lot. Robert was at our store, physically, on a monthly basis and phoned us about once a week to check in and see how we were doing. Robert helped us develop a marketing plan, gave us tips about PR calls (and went out on PR calls with Anne whenever he could) made other suggestions in the marketing of our business and generally did whatever he could to keep us accountable. Far and away, Robert has been more helpful to us than any of his predecessors. The fact that Robert is local (even though he was on the road quite a bit) has been very helpful for us. When our production computer crashed, the support we received from UFG was disappointing. While the tech department was ultimately helpful, to an extent, it was frustrating trying to get their attention or to get them to return our calls on a timely basis. Robert, on the other hand, was at our shop the same day we called. He stayed until 8:00 that evening trying to get the problem identified and he called us several times a day over the next week and a half as we sorted out the unfolding problems one-by-one.

It's my understanding that UFG feels that with Jolyn and Thad there is overlap and Robert's position is not necessary. However, I'm concerned that Jolyn and Thad are not going to be as helpful to us as Robert has been. Don't get me wrong, I really like Jolyn. She's an incredible asset to UGF. She's professional, knowledgeable and helpful. She knows her embroidery and she knows her machines. Every time Jolyn has been here I've picked up tips and learned a great deal from her. However, her territory is vast and her job duties are many. Since we've moved to our new location in November of '08, Jolyn's territory has been increased and she's only been able to get to our store once. And, while she is incredibly helpful as far as embroidery and the machines go, her focus is not marketing. Thad is an unknown. I'm concerned that his experience is with Sign-a Rama, and that he is not local.

With Robert's help in the past 9 months, we are finally starting to see our monthly sales increasing. We are hopeful that we've finally turned the corner. To lose Robert at this time is discouraging at best. I'm hoping that you are planning on filling his position with a dedicated Operations/Marketing Consultant whose job description/expertise /territory will allow him or her to provide us with the high level of service we've come to expect. Please let me know what your plans are for a future replacement.

I feel confident that these emails represents my ability to train, communicate, and represent the job that I am tasked with. All of the contacts here should be easily found on the internet if you want more of a character reference.

