



From the Bottom to the TOP



One man's drive to build a business from nothing made happen with boom truck financing

One man's pursuit for the American dream gave him a roof over his head and a sign business to call his own. Chris Wicks, the owner and founder of Global Sign & Awning, went plaza-to-plaza selling sign installations to commercial businesses back in 2007. He would drive all the way to Orlando, FL, have a friend print out the signs, and haul a rented tow-behind lift back to install them. Wicks was homeless, sleeping in his car until he made enough money to buy his own sign printing machine. Now GS&A is a renowned sign business with 15 employees serving the greater Florida area. With the help of Beacon Funding, GS&A is able to provide high quality service with the best boom trucks in the industry.

Quality Services from Quality Employees

Established in Clearwater, FL, Global Sign and Awning offers sign design, production, installation, and maintenance services for commercial businesses. The company aims to not be a typical sign business, putting an artistic spin on each request. "I'm sick of seeing these companies doing the same lettering over and over," Wicks says. "We're creative and different than our competitors."

Not only does GS&A value quality in its services, but also in its employees' work and customer relations.

Wicks has hired 15 employees over the years, including three boom truck operators. "I worked hard to find the best installers and project managers that don't have bad habits," the owner says. "They have to be able to go up into a \$100,000 truck."

Modeling itself after the service industry, GS&A's business has been through word-of-mouth and its stellar reputation. "I tell my team there's no difference between us and a restaurant," Wicks says. "We take a piece of aluminum and make it into a sign, much how a restaurant takes food and puts it on a plate." GS&A emphasizes this by keeping their offices in order and trucks clean with vehicle inspections every day.

Global Sign & Awning Snapshot

- Sign business established in 2007 in Clearwater, FL
- Offers sign design, production, installation, and maintenance services for Clearwater and the greater Florida area
- Started as a one-man-job renting a lift trying to make ends meet
- Expanded to managing 15 employees, including 3 high quality installers
- Beacon Funding financed 2 boom trucks and financed the sale of a used boom truck
- Acquired 2 boom trucks, 1 bucket, 1 sign boom, now can do less work by hand
- After financing, business revenue increased 25%, handling larger accounts

Humble Beginnings for a Tenacious Dream

Wicks didn't always have this reputation and developed business. He was in a crisis, sleeping in his car before living in a one-bedroom apartment with his then girlfriend, trying to make ends meet. He had a friend who was familiar with sign software, so his buddy suggested he go into the sign business.

Wicks would draw designs on his laptop, printing them out at the library. After, he would drive two hours to Orlando, pay for his friend to print the sign, then haul a tow-behind lift back to Clearwater to install the sign for a local business.

"I saw the first design on my friend's printer and fell in love in that moment," Wicks says.

After about a year, he saved up \$20,000 and bought his first sign printer. He sold his car to get a three-bedroom house. Then he bought his first bucket truck.

"I don't give up," he says. "If you give up that will stay with you forever."

Consequently, his then girlfriend, now wife, was expecting a child, so he had to keep going harder and faster than everyone else. "It's about how much you can take before you throw in the towel," Wicks says.

Wicks would sell jobs all day long and print/install all night long. "I would fall asleep while designs were printing," the owner says. "It would beep when it ran out of ink and would wake me up. I'd be awake for days or on a few hours of sleep just to keep it coming."



Global Sign & Awning's newly financed Elliot sign boom truck. Beacon Funding also financed the sale of their old used truck to acquire this truck.

How He Got the "Rolls Royce of the Sign Industry"

Once established, GS&A had two boom trucks, but wanted to upgrade their equipment due to increased business. Wicks needed financing fast. In early January 2015, Chris applied to finance an 8-year-old sign boom truck with Beacon Funding and was quickly approved, but thought the approval would not work for him. After the owner shopped around for financing and negotiated terms with Beacon over the next 60 days, they came to an agreement and funded Chris' acquisition of the truck. Beacon earned his trust with being upfront about what it was going to take to get financing.

The following month, Wicks asked the lender about financing a replacement for one of his bucket trucks, which was a lot easier now that there was a standing agreement of terms/pricing and a trusting relationship. The owner first had to sell

the bucket truck that he was replacing, so he recommended Beacon to his potential buyer for financing the non-dealer sale of that older bucket.

“We wouldn't have been able to do most of the jobs we do without the new equipment we financed, the sign boom truck. It's the Rolls Royce of the sign industry.” - **CHRIS WICKS**

Once he was funded by Beacon for his sale, he financed his acquisition of the newer replacement bucket truck for his business with Beacon as well. Beacon was there when it mattered most because of a full understanding of the collateral value of boom trucks.

“We wouldn't have been able to do most of the jobs we do without the new sign boom truck. It's the Rolls Royce of the sign industry,” Wicks says.

About the Success Spotlight Program

The Success Spotlight Program gives Beacon customers and partners a chance to shine with recognition of their equipment financing success. This is achieved through enhanced exposure and free nationwide publicity through Beacon's online channels.

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Chris and the rest of the Global Sign & Awning team. They have 15 employees working for the company.

These trucks were the key to Global Sign & Awning's rapid growth. The sign boom especially is made for sign businesses and rises to the occasion with the capabilities it possesses.

"It allowed us to not only service more clientele, but also do it more efficiently and with more ease," he says.

Chris' business revenues have increased approximately 25% since he financed the sign boom truck in April 2015. Having enjoyed the increased business after financing, Wicks decided to continue the expansion and was approved for a digger derrick truck with Beacon as well. This allows him to eliminate another subcontractor and increase his profits even further.

“ I don't give up, If you give up that will stay with you forever.” - **CHRIS WICKS**

Global Sign & Awning After Financing

With the new trucks, one bucket and one sign boom, Global Sign and Awning is able to do more heavy lifting that was originally done by hand. They can take on larger accounts more efficiently and cost-effectively. They provide signs to a multitude of commercial businesses, including Gallo Wines, Radisson, Mattress Firm, Subway, Great 38, Chili's, and Denny's.

With the thanks of Beacon Funding's transparency and the owner's determination, GS&A is able to reach new heights through newly acquired bucket and boom trucks.

"We have created something great," Wicks says. "With all the trials and tribulations, we enjoy what we do and take care of our customers."

You could say business is booming.



Global Sign & Awning's staff installing a sign with their new Elliot boom truck.

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