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NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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A Conversation With | Drew Nord, Harpeth Financial

Nashville Business Journal

*Drew Nord joined **Harpeth Financial Services** in early 2008 as the company's chief operating officer. Before that, he served as the president and COO of SourceMark LLC, a health care start-up. But Nord's first career was in law — he began his career as a contract attorney helping represent Columbia/HCA in the largest federal fraud case in U.S. history.*



What is the most outside-OF-the-box idea you have ever had in your professional career? Ending my legal career and jumping immediately into an executive operations role in an industry (premium cigars) I knew absolutely nothing about. I have Tim Ozgener at **CAO Cigars** to thank for that great opportunity. I still don't smoke, however.

What was the result? I found that I really enjoyed helping a small business grow into something significant and have built on those experiences since then.

What single thing makes your organization stand out? Our agility to adapt quickly to our market's changing demands, allowing us to capture market share where others can not easily do so.

What does your organization have in the works for 2009? Overall expansion — more products, more technology to further improve customer experience and more store locations — even while in a consolidating market.

How did you wind up in your current position? I'd been working as an operations-focused small business generalist for several years prior to joining Harpeth Financial. I was fortunate enough to meet our ownership when the time was right. ... It was a great fit.

What word best describes your leadership style? A mixture of “task-oriented” and “people-oriented.” And aspiring to be more “transformational.”

Goal yet to be achieved? Helping my young son and daughter find their passions and encouraging their relentless pursuit of same.

Professional pet peeve? People who are unwilling to jump through hoops to help themselves.

What do you do to relieve stress? I am occasionally fortunate enough to have some time to captain boats in the Florida Keys.

Favorite hobbies? Boating and playing drums ... been doing both since childhood.

Pets? Miss Kitty, our crazy cat with several “issues.”

Person outside of your family you would most like to spend time with on an island? Whoever are the marketing brains behind The Wiggles and Hannah Montana.

If you had a \$1 million windfall, you would: Give some immediately to my wife and to charity, buy a new boat, and then go back to work.

It is 11 A.M. on Saturday. Where are you? Fixing something or working in the yard.

What line of work would you pursue if you couldn't work in your present one?

Organizing large parties, a former passion of mine from high school.

Organization or company other than your own that you most admire? Habitat for Humanity for its mission and CAO Cigars for its inspiring success story.

CEO of another company whom you admire? Frank Jarman, formerly of Genesco, who hired me straight out of college and served as a great mentor.

What is there about you that people would be surprised to learn? I exercise. And I used to play in a few rock/blues bands back in the day.

Biggest professional mistake and how you overcame it? Not taking control of a clearly deteriorating personnel situation soon enough. I have worked since then to address issues more directly with people and help everyone involved see the big picture and how they fit inside it.

They're making a movie of your life. Is it a drama or comedy and who plays you?

Comedy likely. Mike Myers? ... Or maybe Jack Black.

Background

Name/Age: Drew Nord/38

Title: Chief operating officer

Company: Harpeth Financial Services LLC, d.b.a. Advance Financial

Address: 631 2nd Ave. South, Nashville 37210

Web: www.advancefinancialinc.com

Revenue: \$8 million - \$10 million

Most recently read book: "Listen to Your Work" by Collins Andrews

Favorite music artist: REM, Inspector 12 and many others

Education: Bachelor's degree from [Emory University](#); J.D. from [Samford University](#)

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