50 ON FIRE IN PHILLY
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JEFF FUSCO

6 RODAN ENTERPRISES t/a SURESHADE

Philadelphia-based Rodan Enterprises provides shade options for over 30 different boat models through its signature brand SureShade.

A FEW MINUTES WITH ...

FOUNDERS RON AND DANA RUSSIKOFF

Describe the competitive landscape of your industry? We serve the marine industry and specifically the recreational boating industry. We're very proud to say that the competitive landscape is limited. We are the only U.S. manufacturer to provide the recreational boating industry with a retractable shade. We are the only company in the world that uses telescopic framework. We have a patented technology.

In your opinion, what are the main reasons for your rapid growth? We went to the original equipment manufacturers, directly to the boat builders and manufacturers. That was our go-to market strategy back in 2007. We made our initial splash at an event where key decision-makers of the industry were attending and that decision is what has enabled us to grow. The timing of our market entry also helped. It was right at the downturn and so at that time, boat builders were looking for ways to remain competitive and differentiate themselves. Our product did that. If you put a boat with our product against a boat without our product, it's a clear visual of what differentiates them.

What are the biggest challenges facing your company? The biggest is the phone keeps ringing and ringing, which is a great thing but managing the growth and recognizing when you step it up again can be a challenge. We went from scrappy startup to early-stage growth, which is where we think we are now. We are going to take that next transition from early stage to sustaining even more growth, but it's knowing at each stage that you have the right systems, processes and people in place to handle increased demand and take it to the next stage. We don't want to grow too fast where we can't keep up with it.

Since you are growing so fast, have you encountered any difficulties in filling available jobs? We work with a staffing company that focuses on industrial jobs and we've put in a unique interviewing process. We ask candidates if they know how to read a tape measure, have good eye/hand coordination. If they don't have basic skills, we look to see if they have other skills and we can teach them. What we have been very successful with is getting the folks right out of college such as Temple's engineering program.