

Kevin Dickinson: A family tradition of service

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



Kevin Dickinson, 35

CFO/Business Development, Preferred Office Technologies, Fort Smith and Fayetteville

- Category: Small Business

“We went through and we created four values that we uphold and strive for within the company.” Kevin Dickinson

- Parish: St. Raphael Church, Springdale
- Family: Wife Tiffany and six children

- What book would you recommend for ways to grow in spirituality or leadership?
“EntreLeadership” by Dave Ramsey and “Good to Great” by Jim Collins

When it comes to treating people with dignity and respect, Kevin Dickinson had great examples in his father and grandfather who operated the family business he now co-owns with his older brother, Alan.

That company, Preferred Office Technologies, based in Fort Smith and Fayetteville, reached 50 years in business in 2018, and the level of attention and fair treatment extended to clients large and small has never been higher.

“We went through and we created four values that we uphold and strive for within the company,” Dickinson said. “These four pillars are Principled, which means to perform actions that inspire trust and confidence; People, as in treat people the way you want to be treated; Purpose, which is family values enriching the community, and Pride, which we demonstrate through personal accountability.”

Focusing on these principles daily has helped make customer service second nature at Preferred Office Technologies, as is the brothers’ untiring work ethic. The duo started out cleaning the company bathroom and worked up from there, something Dickinson expects his own children to do one day.

“Work ethic, that’s something I learned from my father and I’m sure he learned from his father,” Dickinson said. “It was just being uncompromising in that approach that they built such a reputation over the past 50 years. My brother and I got to ride those coattails and now we’re looking to keep that open for the next 50 years.”

Then there’s the generosity that the Dickinson family has shown to Catholic entities throughout its service area, often donating equipment or providing it at cost as a means of supporting the work of the Church. Most often, these gestures are made quietly and without fanfare, but occasionally the Dickinson brothers add a little pizzazz.

“We had a big 50-year celebration where we were going to drop a copier from a crane,” Kevin Dickinson said. “We ended up selecting the nuns from St. Scholastica; they had an old copier machine that needed to be replaced so we dropped it and replaced it with a brand-new color copier machine.”

“My buddy is a photographer and videographer and he came up here and took some cool pictures of it. We raised these nuns’ machine up 50 feet on a crane. They did the last rites on it. And we just smashed it from 50 feet up. That was kind of cool.”

— *Dwain Hebda*