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Business leader's management philosophy shaped at OU

By Flori Meeks

Ask Keith Sorgeloos, SBA '81, where he lives, and he'll tell you he's at home in Atlanta, New York City or on an airplane.

The founder and president of Atlanta-based Home Source International (HSI) travels the globe to oversee the production of his company's home textiles, including sheets, blankets and towels.

The company develops and provides products for clients in the manufacturing, retail and wholesale sectors, along with individual consumers.

"It's very difficult to invent or build a better mousetrap," Sorgeloos says. "We bring products to market after a tremendous amount of research and development. We really press the envelope to make sure customers love our products."

Sorgeloos, who grew up in Grosse Pointe Woods, attributes much of his success to the education and experiences he gained as an Oakland University student. He was drawn to OU because of its affordability – he paid for his entire education.

Once he arrived, Sorgeloos grew to appreciate the small classes and individualized attention the SBA offered. "I got a great education there," he says, who majored in management with a concentration in economics and human resources. "I felt I was not just a number; the professors really cared where I was going."

It was during his years at Oakland when he developed the management philosophy he uses today. "I manage according to situations, or according to people," he says. "It has enabled me to manage whatever is thrown at me."

Sorgeloos further refined his management skills during the 16 years he spent working for WestPoint Stevens Inc., including a stint managing its operations in Hong Kong. The experience also gave him an international foundation, which has served him well since he established HSI in 2000.

Sorgeloos says he has found it especially rewarding to work with son Scott Sorgeloos, SBA '02, HSI's vice president of sales. From what Soegeloos has seen, Oakland's SBA gave his son the same solid foundation he received. "Scott also liked the class sizes and the hands-on teaching," he says. "That hasn't changed."

Sorgeloos sees great opportunities for business graduates who are prepared to enter the global market. "Without a doubt, they need international exposure and experience," he says. "The world is so small today."

SUMMARY

Ask Keith Sorgeloos, SBA '81, where he lives, and he'll tell you he's at home in Atlanta, New York City or on an airplane. The founder and president of Atlanta-based Home Source International (HSI) travels the globe to oversee the production of his company's home textiles, including sheets, blankets and towels.

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