



# FLAGEL HUBER FLAGEL

Certified Public Accountants | Business Advisors

## CASE STUDY: AHLER'S CATERING

### Helping Clients Master New Ventures

Flagel Huber Flagel (FHF) helped long-time clients Mike and Lisa Burke navigate the learning curve of their new business.

#### HISTORY

After being in the franchise pizza business for 30+ years, Mike and Lisa Burke are veteran entrepreneurs. So, in 2019 after deciding to get out of the pizza business it didn't take long before they decided to start a new adventure and bought Ahler's Catering. Despite the name, Ahler's is not a caterer at all, but rather a meal delivery company serving the elderly and aligned with Medicaid, The Area Agency on Aging, and Catholic Social Services. Ahler's was started more than 40 years ago when Mary Ann Wallace began cooking and delivering meals out of her small restaurant kitchen on Troy Street in Dayton.

The Burkes turned to long time accounting partners at FHF for help navigating the purchase. Says Joe Gordon, FHF Partner, "It was a complex deal that included many entities – an operating company, a side company that owned real estate, and various financing sources." The deal moved quickly - done start to finish in 90 days.



Owners, Mike & Lisa Burke



Warehouse

The learning curve ramped up just as quickly. Mike Burke says, "Unlike the pizza business, account receivables are critical – and even more critical during the first four months when we were delivering services but weren't getting paid because of government contracts that needed to be transferred. FHF played such a critical role in those months." Gordon adds, "Ahler's has great customers, no bad debts, a large warehouse and lots of product – they needed to focus on learning, running and leading a new organization. We were there to help make sure that learning curve was easier."



### Situation at a Glance

- Mike and Lisa Burke transitioned from owning a pizza franchise to owning Ahler's Catering in 2019
- FHF helped the Burkes navigate the new business model
- Today, Ahler's employs 24 people and serves 500,000 custom selected meals to 1,000 clients in Montgomery, Greene, Clark and Miami counties



Meals Ready for Delivery

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### LEARNING AND GROWING

Once the learning curve stabilized, the Burkes began reflecting on their new venture. Burke adds, "This company and the family have an incredible history. Mary Ann Wallace started Ahler's 40+ years ago, then sold it to her son-in-law, Jim Harvey. They are amazing people. When we bought the company from Jim our goal was to figure out how to honor the family by keeping their traditions alive, and also grow in new ways."

One way they are keeping those traditions alive is by going all in on a program the previous owners started after they noticed that their elderly clients were sharing their meals with their pets. Ahler's Angels was started as a way to provide free pet food so that customers could keep both themselves and their pets nourished. The Burke's have embraced the program and now support over 25% of their client base with free pet food.



*Program supplying free pet food for Elderly Customers*

Now, they can begin looking to the future. Says Burke "FHF has been critical in sharing their knowledge, helping us with systems, thinking through payroll and retirement planning. Now we are shifting to thinking about what, when and how to invest and grow in a financially sound way."

According to Burke, "There is so much need, and it feels so good to know we make a difference. Honestly, we bought a financial statement and growth potential, but we got so much more."

This community is so very glad that you did.



**Interested in learning how Flagel Huber Flagel can help you navigate a new business learning curve?**

**Joe Gordon says, "Give us a call. We want to help you so you can focus on your dreams."**

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