

# GCC Q&A

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**Born:** I was born May 16, 1971, in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, but I mainly grew up in the Cincinnati area.

**Education:** I graduated in 1993 from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, with a BS in marketing and international business.

**Family:** My wife Dana and I have been married for four years, and we have a big, fun blended family of six kids, including my four daughters and Dana's one daughter and one son. My oldest daughter just graduated from college, and we will have three in college next year, with the last two kids a couple of years behind them.

**When and how did you enter the recycling industry?** I started my career in the recycling industry right out of college with The David J. Joseph Co. in 1993. I had no idea what the scrap business was about, but I liked the people I met. DJJ seemed like a good company and I got a company car, so I was a happy 22-year-old. I was assigned to the Birmingham, Alabama, office and spent five years in that region. The company then moved me to Houston and promoted me to district manager. I spent 10 years running around the Houston area and Texas as a whole. In 2008 I moved to Charleston, S.C., with DJJ and spent almost four years there before I decided to make a change. In 2012, I joined Tri Coastal Trading and started working with Larry Stein, and I moved back "home" to Texas.

**What was it about the industry that prompted you to build a career in it?** I was drawn to the entrepreneurial spirit of so many people in this business. There are so many great stories of small family businesses that started with next to nothing but grew into major companies thanks to their hard work and creative ideas. Also, you deal with such a variety of people every day, which really keeps you on your toes. You can be haggling over \$5 a ton with a small supplier on one phone call and then be negotiating a vessel of scrap with the CEO of a steel mill on the next call. Lastly, I love the characters in this

business who are still around. There aren't as many as there used to be, but I still get a huge kick out of dealing with some of the big personalities in the scrap/steel business.

**What have been your most rewarding personal achievements?**

**Professional achievements?** Personally, I have been blessed with four amazing daughters, and I am incredibly proud of them all. I am lucky I have a job/career that has given me the flexibility to be a big part of their lives, and I am pretty sure most of my customers heard them in the background on my phone calls for years. They are all smart, driven, caring young adults, and I am proud to be their dad. They also have a bond between them that is wonderful to see and, in my view, pretty unique. Professionally, I feel like joining Larry Stein at Tri Coastal Trading when it was a small brokerage company and then growing it to where it is today has been a real source of pride. The scope of our business has grown tremendously in 10 years to the point where we now have our own processing facility, and we will hopefully have the opportunity to make even greater strides.

**Tell us something about you that would surprise people.** I began boxing about two years ago. It started as a fun way to work out and mix it up with some pad work and heavy bag workouts. Now I spar one to two times a week and try not to show up to work with a black eye. I was surprised by how much I enjoy it and by what a great stress reliever it is, especially during a buy week.

**If you could improve anything about yourself, what would it be?** I would love to be able to unplug better and live in the moment. The blessings of being able to work remotely and live on the phone have also become a curse in that it's hard to turn off and spend time focused on other things. Working for a smaller company means wearing lots of hats and quickly responding to issues and opportunities.

**What do you like to do in your free time?** My kids are slowly leaving the nest, but for years I have spent many a day chasing them around soccer fields, volleyball courts, stables, and more. That life seemed overwhelming at times, but I am missing some of the craziness already. I also like to golf and look forward to playing more in the next few years. Dana and I enjoy traveling as well, and we hope—after the pandemic is over—to see some spots in Europe that are on our bucket list.

**When did your company decide to join ISRI and the Gulf Coast Chapter?** Tri Coastal Trading joined the GCC early on when the company started and has been a member for over 10 years.

**Have you held any GCC leadership positions?** I have been on the GCC board on and off over the past eight years, serving three two-year terms overall. When I first joined the board, Charles Johnson [of M. Lipsitz & Co.] and Becky Proler [of SCR Recycling] told me I had to be on it, and I couldn't tell them no.

**What benefits have you received from your GCC involvement?**

The relationships and networking with other board members and the chapter members as a whole have been a huge help to me and to Tri Coastal Trading. There are many, many colleagues just a phone call away who are willing to help you work through an issue or capitalize on an opportunity.

**What are the major challenges facing your company and the overall recycling industry today?** For most of the past 10 years, Tri

Coastal Trading has been primarily a brokerage company, so it has been fortunate to avoid many of the challenges that scrap processing companies have faced. As we have entered the operations side of the business, however, our eyes are really opening up to all of the regulations, the bureaucracy, and the costs to run a scrap processing business. For years I have heard how challenging it is, but we are now starting to live it.