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President of rEvolution John Rowady (right) and Evan Vladem (left) go inside a renovated Chicago Blackhawks locker room.

Why I Left the Dream Job to Work with My Father

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Ever since I can remember, I've been the type of person looking to open doors. If it was locked, I'd find a way to pry it open. If it was heavy, I wouldn't stop pushing until it was wide open.

While there is plenty of calculation and preparation ahead of time, until the door is open, you'll never know how great the opportunity is that's waiting behind it. And most importantly, you'll never know where that opportunity will lead.

It was several months ago when my father's longtime partner, Steve Fraidstern, asked me to consider joining their firm, Associated Group – a leading financial services company, which specializes in the conservation of lifetime assets; comprehensive financial advice; and employee benefits, in South Florida. My father, Paul Vladem, has been the President of Associated Investor Services (practically my entire life) and although the idea always sat in the back of my mind, I had other career ideas. Until that moment, it seemed unrealistic.



I was deep into pursuing my passion in the sports industry. I was literally chasing it – moving from city to city – opening doors anyway possible and building as many relationships along the way.

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During that time, I was doing more than just finding new doors... I was finding myself.

In 2013, I grew into a nice niche within the sports industry – sports business, marketing and sponsorship. At rEvolution, I soon developed my abilities into a relationship driven role – build, develop and utilize. As a motivated, self-starter, the position fit with my outgoing personality.

Soon, I found myself on the road at events across the country.

I attended the ESPYs in LA, multiple Super Bowls, college national championships, Final Fours and more. Still the same goal – build, develop and utilize those relationships at major events, which were essentially massive industry conferences and corporate networking events.

I learned how to create angles, openings for communication and, most importantly, I learned to never shy away from approaching strangers. It didn't matter if it was the NBA Commissioner, the President of a global brand or iconic celebrity.

I knew my passion points were sports and that gave me the ability to open natural conversations. I knew my stuff. When I wasn't at sporting events, I was most likely watching the game on TV.

The motto at rEvolution is *Communication Through Sport* – something I truly believe in. The vision is building authentic relationships around what people are truly passionate about. The methodology was something I found vast success living by.

Before Fraidstern approached me, the door to joining Associated, in a completely different industry, was never really tangible. Then, in a single stop at my father's office when I was visiting South Florida, it suddenly appeared.

Why couldn't I take that same approach in doing business and apply it in different industries? Why couldn't I utilize my relationship building skills and take it to the next level? Why couldn't my knowledge and experience translate?

That's when I knew this door could be a real possibility. What's behind it? Some unknown (like every other door), plenty of certifications, learning curves and challenges... But what I did know was my father was sitting on the other side. His background within the industry, combined with the team at Associated Group, was robust. It was something I felt confident in and I was literally given the opportunity to take the spare keys, if I wanted to take them.

On Tuesday, May 9, 2017, I made the decision to unlock the door. In the middle of June, I'll be relocating from Chicago to South Florida to expand upon my career and



experience with Associated Group. While it was an extremely difficult decision to leave my full-time role at rEvolution, the company is giving me the opportunity to continue a working, business relationship. In addition, my future work at Associated will combine the passions of the sports and financial industries.

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I'm looking forward to sharing with you everything behind this door and I would love to keep in touch. For updates, I can be reached directly at evladem@gmail.com and/or evan@afc-ais.com or on my cell at 954.242.7908.

I truly hope to see you soon.

-Evan Vladem

ABOUT ASSOCIATED GROUP

Dedicated to the creation and conservation of lifetime assets; comprehensive financial advice; and employee benefits by a Team of Experienced Professionals, Associated Group exist to work with you as your financial partner. We will help analyze your situation, creating a synergistic team of uniquely qualified professionals. Together, we will design a coordinated action plan that matches your investment and insurance needs with your objectives, while communicating the benefits to interested parties. We will work closely with your other professional advisors as a team to meet your varied needs. Utilizing a long term perspective, together we will design solutions that work best for you. Our team at Associated Group focuses on providing dynamic planning, bringing a unique approach to planning using a holistic “one-stop shop” approach to solve complex issues. Our team includes professionals with licenses such as CFP (Certified Financial Planner™), CPA (Certified Public Accountant), PFS (Personal Financial Specialist), CLU (Chartered Financial Consultant), RHU (Registered Professional Disability and Health Insurance Underwriter). The professionals at Associated Group believe that for wealth to be preserved, communication, conviction, accountability, and support need to be ongoing. Find more at www.afc-ais.com.

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