When Human Capital Management Meets Inspiration: Reaching Delicious Heights

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Delicious Heights. If you live in the Berkeley Heights/Watchung area, you've heard of it. It's a place you've gone to pick up take-out, eat in with friends and family, or grab a drink. Delicious Heights has not just one location in Berkeley Heights but also offers additional locations in Bedminster and Basking Ridge. I was fortunate enough to sit down for lunch with the two of the owners of Delicious Heights, Ralph Acquaviva, and Alex Rubinstein, at their Berkeley Heights location. Ralph and Alex go all the way back to their teen years when they worked together at the Short Hills Hilton. They describe their time working there like two kids hanging out and talking about a dream of one day opening a restaurant. This dream came true when they, along with Ralph's brother Domenick, opened their first Delicious Heights takeout and delivery location at 264 Springfield Avenue in Berkeley Heights. Why focus on takeout and delivery? Well, at the time, the only local options for takeout or delivery were primarily pizza or Chinese food. No hate on pizza or Chinese, of course, but they wanted to offer more

refined meals for takeout or delivery. And so, Delicious Heights was born! Delicious Heights started out as a deli serving things like ribs, steak, salads, sandwiches, and has since expanded into three restaurant locations. They opened their first restaurant at 428 Springfield Avenue in Berkeley Heights, formerly the Gasoline Alley, in February of 2008. Being a Giants fan, I was happy to hear that they opened this location the year the New York Giants won the Superbowl. Is there any better time to open a New Jersey restaurant than when the Giants win the Superbowl? Beyond creating diverse takeout options, Ralph and Alex's mission in opening this restaurant was to be a friendly neighborhood bar and grill – and there's no question that they've achieved their goal. Delicious Heights brings in members of every generation, class year, and background. It's also a popular spot for Governor Livingston High School students and alumni, who come out to support their fellow GL alum, Alex. There's a lot to love about Ralph and Alex's jobs, but perhaps the best part for them is getting to be their own bosses and enjoying the entrepreneurial lifestyle. Ralph feels that he stopped working 15 years ago and started hanging out because it stopped being work for him. The two consider their staff their family. Although they can't physically be at each restaurant full-time, for the 20 hours they may be there each week, they make sure it's quality time with their employees. Ralph and Alex aren't sure what the future holds for Delicious Heights. If I would've asked them that 8 or 9 years ago, they would've said that the future is the one Delicious Heights location. Little did they know that they would open two more locations and that they would thrive just like the first. So who knows what's in store for these successful entrepreneurs? Of course, the one thing I had to ask about was Ralph and Alex's favorite item on the menu. Their response was a simultaneous "the ribs!" The ribs at Delicious Heights are an original dish with their own special BBQ sauce – and they stand out from the crowd just like the restaurant they belong to. Inspired? Check out the rest of our "When Human Capital Management Meets Inspiration" series here!

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