



Stephen Weed, CEO of Interior Contract Services,
pictured at Montaluce Winery

STEPHEN WEED

*Orlando's Office
Furniture Disrupter*

Stephen Weed is a guy who spends his time torn between two cities. He'll admit it's difficult to dismiss Winter Park's Hillstones and indulging in a nice glass of red by the lake. We caught up with him during a recent trip, just north of Atlanta, at Montaluce Winery in Dahlonega, Georgia. He was hunting new showroom space for his latest venture, Georgia Office Interiors, a replica of his powerhouse dealership in Orlando, Interior Contract Services (ICS), located off John Young Parkway.

At age 34, Weed recently assumed the role of CEO of Orlando's oldest office furniture company in January, founded by his Uncle, Larry Weed, in 1983. By April, Weed had already hired new sales reps, doubled his design department, and tripled down on what has truly made ICS ultimately successful. Its relationship with its customers.

"Customers come to us, and 99% of the time, bring us reoccurring business because of our ability to listen to what they truly want, stay within their budget, and get furniture to them in a timely manner."

Weed credits having one of the only in-house installation teams in Florida for what makes his company different. Although he can't tell us who they are, many of the local Orlando furniture dealers rely on Weed's team of installers to get the work done, even for projects ICS didn't initially sell.

"There are larger government and state clients we do business with, layered with many private corporations who engage us for design, furniture and space planning needs."

A quick search yielded further insights into just who Weed's doing business with including UCF, Advent Health, United States Central Command, Orlando Police and Orange County Sheriff Office to name a few. Weed confirmed he is working with companies who haven't even disclosed their pending move to Orlando.

"We serve several Fortune 500 companies throughout Florida, the US and internationally. They trust us to accomplish the work and deliver an amazing quality experience along the way"

The furniture industry is a new one for Weed, who has grown up around it but never in it. Weed's former professional life involved a diverse background in local, state and federal Government and Finance.

"Honestly, I was shocked at how expensive office furniture is, coming from a business and government background, I immediately recognized

we needed lines of furniture at all price points to meet our customer's budgetary needs."

He further added, "In the age of Ikea and Staples it's hard for small businesses and growing ones to justify spending such a large amount on office furniture."

When asked about what he dislikes about the furniture business thus far, Weed was quick to call out the fakes or "Corporate Goliaths" in the industry.

"You have so many shops, especially here in Orlando, who really have no true presence, but are just hunting Orlando businesses requiring furniture and want to stick them with a large invoice. They don't have installers. They don't have trucks. They don't have dedicated project managers and licensed designers. They're calling me ultimately to come and install or fix their stuff."

Weed finds it somewhat comical how office furniture businesses go to such great lengths to make furniture not boring, sexy, and ergonomically friendly.

"People buy dog and cat food every week. They buy office furniture every 10 years. It's not some spiritual journey or life changing experience. It's furniture. It comes down to what the specific company truly needs, price, and your ability to deliver. It's pretty straightforward."

As far as mentors he would like to follow in the industry, John Bassett of Bassett Furniture immediately comes to mind, the principal character in the National Bestselling book *Factory Man*.

"John is a guy who grew his family's furniture company-one of the last true American businesses, saving it from big, corporate takeovers and looming threats of outsourcing. He focused on what his business does best and never compromised his integrity along the way."

"I feel we are similar in some way," Weed said. "We have had several companies try to buy us over the years, and have been approached to buy poor quality stuff from China and what not, but we won't do it. It doesn't live up to the expectations our clients have for our products."

Weed is a self-confessed Dunkin' Donuts coffee junkie and wine lover. He also currently finds himself as office furniture's latest breath of fresh air.