

# From Army Life to Franchising

This couple is making beautiful music together, in many ways.

By Jill Abrahamsen

Steve and Renae Adrian never aspired to own a signage business. The couple spent most of their careers making a living through the arts. Steve was a trumpet player for the U.S. Army Band, and Renae was a trombone player, music teacher, and an administrator for music and arts companies.

They enjoyed their careers, but when Steve was coming up to his 20-year mark in the military and looking towards retirement, he started exploring other options. “I came across an ad in a magazine that was showcasing the top veteran-friendly businesses, and FASTSIGNS® was on the list,” Steve says. “Initially, I dismissed it. I knew nothing about the signage business.” But as they investigated franchise opportunities, they kept coming back to FASTSIGNS®. “The 50-percent discount on the franchise fee was a huge incentive and a difference maker for us,” he adds. The couple opened their location in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 2015.

The discovery process was thorough. “They vetted us more than we vetted them,” Steve says. “We liked the business model, and while we don’t mind working

hard, when Friday afternoon rolls around, that’s our time,” Renae adds. “Having the weekends off was a must for us.”

The Adrians have been impressed with FASTSIGNS® every step of the way. “We can’t say enough good things about it,” Steve says. “As soon as we signed the franchise agreement, the corporate machine went into action, guiding us along. The leadership is stellar and the support is tremendous.”

Being in the military gave Steve the



discipline and focus to run a business, and Renae’s diverse background was the perfect complement. “We are a great team and we each have our strengths when it comes to running this business. We couldn’t have done it without each other,” he adds. “Renae’s broad skill set was perfect for managing daily operations and customer service. She is the maker-surer of our team. I am the wrangler. I am mission-focused. I run the installation crew and deal with supplies and billing.”

This is a pretty specialized business. We’re

not just making bunt cakes here,” Steve says. Some of the jobs are pretty complex. “We learn something new every day. It’s really exciting. If we don’t know how to do a particular job, there is always someone to help us from the corporate office or the network of franchisees.”

Much like in the military, franchisees need to follow a system, which was one of the many pluses going in for the Adrians. As Steve says, “We follow the recipe, because the recipe works. It has already been tested.”

For more information, visit [www.fastsigns.com](http://www.fastsigns.com).