

Blue Mountain Quarter Horses' Blueprint for Winning

October 25, 2022

As the Director of a world-class banking division that's passionately focused on the equestrian community—and as someone who lives in that same community—I recently got to do one of the things we horse people love to do most: I got to celebrate a colleague. In this case, that colleague happened to be our Malvern Bank CEO, Tony Weagley.

Tony owns Blue Mountain Quarter Horses with Delbert Hostetler. Two months ago, their homebred filly Simply Statutory won the coveted 2022 NSBA [National Snaffle Bit Association] World Championship title in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It's a big deal. And even though our Malvern Bank Equestrian team consists of people who have some considerable accolades and hardware to their name (from Tony at the top, all the way down), this Tulsa belt buckle trophy had something special to it.

I've been reflecting on what that something is, and recently, it hit me. The NSBA win serves as more than just a high-water mark in our personal histories. It's not just a joyful episode in the career of our bank's CEO. It's a powerful analogy for the bank itself. The work that went into Tony and Delbert's win, and the way they approach the sport, is replete with surprisingly powerful parallels to what our bank is all about. And I thought I'd share some of the most compelling ones.

Parallel 1. Boldness and flexibility

Champions often take surprising paths. It's true in this case. Delbert showed Simply Statutory as a baby with significant success. She was in the Top 5 as both a weanling and a yearling—



Hillary Dobbs, Former Professional Show Jumper and Vice President/
Director of Equestrian at Malvern Bank

but when she hit her two-year-old year, she looked like she just wouldn't be tall enough to make a top Halter Horse for the future. Delbert and Tony's celebrated trainer, Kristy Smith, recounts the insight that Delbert had at the inflection point: "He said to me, 'Why don't you break her to ride? Let's see if you think she can do something under saddle.' So I broke her to ride in the winter of her two-year-old year, and she was really trainable." Although Kristy remembers Simply Statutory being "kind of irritable" as a baby and yearling, "once we broke her to ride, she became very sweet. She had a job and truly enjoyed being ridden." Simply Statutory had found her calling. At the recent NSBA World Show, she showed in Performance Halter, Ranch Riding, and Ranch Trail. And she won.



Simply Statutory and her trainer, Kristy Lee Smith

Simply Statutory's height had seemed to be a limitation. But Tony, Delbert, and Kristy were flexible. They were bold enough to make a change and shift, which opened up a tremendous opportunity and allowed their horse to capitalize on strengths that might otherwise have lied fallow. I can't help but notice that this is directly analogous to the Malvern Equestrian Division's origins, and its current strategy. The Equestrian Division was Tony's brainchild nearly 6 years ago, when he saw a need (and an opportunity) in our sport for a boutique commercial bank—one with a lending capacity of a big bank, but with the high-touch personal service those banks can't (or won't) provide.

Since then, the Equestrian Division has embraced that philosophy and stayed nimble, always seeking opportunities for our customers. Recognizing that equestrians need flexibility, too, Tony and our division recently introduced one of the most flexible tools in our repertoire: the new unsecured line of credit. It allows businesses and individuals to free up funds to do what's necessary in the equestrian world: flex, adjust, be nimble, and capitalize on strengths. Just as Delbert, Kristy, and Tony did with Simply Statutory.

Parallel 2. Long-term relationships and loyalty

I was lucky enough to have a pleasant chat with Delbert after his team's big win, and I naturally inquired about the secrets to his lasting success in the show pen. One of the many interesting things he mentioned was that he never sells his horses. "That's my claim to fame, I guess. I haven't sold a horse in probably 30 years," he proudly remarked. "I breed them to show—I don't sell. They get raised here, and they retire here." Blue Mountain Quarter Horses is all about long-standing relationships with its beloved animal-athletes. Tony and Delbert stay faithful to their horses. And as I thought about it, this made perfect sense. The bank that Tony runs is built on loyalty and long-term relationships, too. I've known some of my clients for 15 years—well before my career even began at Malvern Bank. At Malvern, we don't just work a transaction or hip-pocket a customer for short-term gain. We build trust and friendships. And that's the difference.



Trainer Kristy Lee Smith, right, and her husband, Kevin with Simply Statutory who won the 2022 NSBA World Championship.



This notion of loyalty even extends to how Tony and Delbert handle bloodlines. “There’s always the flavor of the year, when it comes to studs,” says Delbert. “It’s whoever wins World Champion that year. Everyone goes to breed to that stud. But I’ve always just stuck to my own program. At one time, I had five generations on the mare-side, from the very first Quarter Horse I bought as a yearling. For one particular horse, if I took his pedigree, I could go back five generations back on the mares, and two different studs that I owned,” recalled Delbert. My proudest part, is that I only show what I raise.”

You might think it’s a stretch, but I truly see a parallel here, too. At Malvern, we don’t go for the “flavor of the month” when it comes to strategic direction and core principles. We’ve established our core principle—customer service—and we relentlessly stick to it. Customer service is engraved, as it were, in the marble of Malvern’s brand identity (we even have it trademarked).

Parallel 3. Results

Because of the strategic principles we just explored, Tony, Delbert, and Kristy can compete against the biggest AQHA breeders and farms in the world. Blue Mountain Quarter Horses is a boutique breeding program in Slatington, PA, that goes up against operations that can see up to 50 foals on the ground each year. And Blue Mountain can still win. Just like Malvern. We compete with big banks, but when it comes to all things equestrian, we don’t just compete. We outperform.

As with any analysis of parallels, it’s one thing to establish that they exist. Then one must ask why. Why are there parallels? In this case, much of the answer has to do with that thing that both Malvern and Blue Mountain share: Tony. Their leader. The fact that Malvern and Blue Mountain are both thriving businesses is no accident. It dawned on me that these aren’t just parallels I discovered—they are components of a blueprint. A proven process for success. When Tony is not at the bank, he is in the barn. You can bet he’s there making sure the same core principles from the bank are at work in his stable. After all, that’s the heart of Malvern Equestrian—we don’t just know the horse business. We’re in it, and it’s our passion.



Simply Statutory, Owned by Tony Weagley and Delbert Hostetler

Learn more about [Malvern Bank](#).

Hillary Dobbs
Vice President / Director of Equestrian
Malvern Bank, National Association
Beyond Your Expectations™
Office : 610-695-3685
Cell : 561-657-0969
HDobbs@MyMalvernBank.com
www.mymalvernbank.com