**A brown building with many windows

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**From Corporate Leadership to Entrepreneurship: Kevin Nolan’s Journey with Ecogistics**

Entrepreneurial success is often born from a mix of experience, opportunity, and a willingness to take risks. Kevin Nolan’s journey from corporate supply chain management to founding Ecogistics is a powerful testament to recognizing industry gaps, betting on yourself, and staying committed to long-term growth.

**Finding the Inspiration for Ecogistics**

Kevin’s career began in transportation and supply chain management, working for major companies like Roadway Express, Case IH, Han Industries, and Terex. His work took him across the world, managing logistics for multimillion-dollar operations, but something was missing. He noticed a frustrating trend: many transportation providers lacked a true customer-centric approach. They focused solely on moving freight, with little regard for service, sustainability, or building meaningful relationships.

The turning point came at an industry conference in Seattle in 2008, where Kevin attended a Van Halen concert with a prominent freight executive. During their conversation, it became clear that no major logistics providers were prioritizing environmental sustainability. Recognizing an opportunity, Kevin left the event with a business idea—to create a transportation company that focused not only on efficient logistics but also on eco-conscious practices and top-tier customer service.

**Taking the Leap into Business Ownership**

Starting a business in 2008 was no easy feat. The financial crisis made securing funding nearly impossible, with banks hesitant to lend money. After being turned down by 10 to 15 banks, Kevin finally found a lender—on the condition that he put everything on the line. He had to sign over his 401(k), home equity, cash savings, and life insurance, along with his wife’s assets. It was an all-or-nothing gamble, but Kevin believed in his vision and took the risk.

On January 1, 2009, Ecogistics officially launched in South Haven, Mississippi. The early days were tough, with Kevin operating out of a small rented office and personally handling every aspect of the business. He took a customer-first approach, believing that simply picking up the phone, being responsive, and following through would set his company apart from the competition.

**Overcoming Challenges and Scaling the Business**

The first year was financially difficult—Ecogistics lost $180,000, pushing Kevin to work relentlessly to turn things around. He kept costs lean, paid himself significantly less than his previous corporate salary, and focused on building a strong foundation. By year two, the business became profitable, and from there, it continued to grow steadily.

A key turning point came in 2010, when Kevin recruited Deb Gooch, a former customer who had been a tough but fair critic of his work. Recognizing her deep industry knowledge, he convinced her to leave her stable job and join Ecogistics. Her presence transformed the company, reinforcing the commitment to operational excellence and customer satisfaction.

**Returning to the Quad Cities and Expanding Ecogistics**

With growing business opportunities in Illinois and Iowa, Kevin made the decision to relocate Ecogistics to Rock Island, Illinois. The move was strategic—it put the company closer to key customers and within Kevin’s personal and professional network. However, finances remained tight, and banks limited his ability to invest in housing and expansion. Despite these hurdles, the company steadily grew, focusing on open-deck freight logistics, a niche that allowed it to compete against industry giants like C.H. Robinson.

Over the next decade, Ecogistics became one of the fastest-growing logistics companies, maintaining a steady 25–30% annual growth rate. Kevin credits this success to hiring the right people first before pursuing aggressive sales growth. His belief that well-trained, knowledgeable employees drive customer trust and long-term business success remains a core philosophy.

**Lessons in Entrepreneurship from Kevin Nolan**

Kevin’s journey offers valuable takeaways for aspiring entrepreneurs:

1. **Bet on Yourself** – Success often requires taking big risks. Kevin’s willingness to invest everything he had was the foundation for Ecogistics.
2. **Customer Service is a Competitive Advantage** – Simply being reliable, responsive, and engaged can set a company apart in any industry.
3. **Surround Yourself with the Right People** – Hiring team members who share your values and work ethic can make or break a business.
4. **Growth Should Be Strategic, Not Rushed** – Expanding too quickly can backfire. Kevin prioritized smart, sustainable growth over chasing revenue.
5. **Adaptability is Key** – Economic downturns, industry changes, and hiring challenges are inevitable. Being able to pivot and problem-solve is essential.

**Looking to the Future**

Today, Ecogistics is a thriving company with nearly 50 employees, serving clients across the country. While Kevin remains committed to growth, he is equally focused on maintaining the company’s core values—customer service, employee development, and long-term sustainability.

For Kevin, success isn’t about chasing the highest revenue numbers—it’s about building a business that lasts, provides meaningful service, and creates opportunities for others. His story is an inspiration to any entrepreneur looking to take control of their future and turn a vision into reality.