



Meet Paul & Connie Polce, owner of Ponzi's Antiques...

1. Describe Your Business:

Ponzi's Antiques buys and sells antiques. They also do repairs and refinishing for individuals, dealers, and museums. The antiques they sell are primarily 18th and 19th centuries, including artwork, clocks, and furniture. "We're pretty fussy about what we're going after," Paul said. "I'm not going after \$150 stands. No one wants that, so I try to stay away from that stuff. We're looking for better things."

2. Tell us your story:

"I've lived here all my life," Paul said. He met his wife, Connie, through one of his best friends in high school, and they have been married for forty-four years. "The first house we had we filled up the dining room with a picnic table and lawn chairs. Then we met a lady who had been in the antiques business for about fifty-five years. We went

to an auction and were bidding on the same things she did. She ended up getting it, but someone told us she would sell it to us because she was a dealer. So she did." Paul said they started out buying three wooden planes to hang on the wall because Paul was a carpenter. Next, they bought a banjo clock for their first anniversary for \$350. "I thought at the time, 'Gosh, it will take me a week to make that money.'" Then three months later the guy we bought it from offered us twice as much for it. Then another guy offered us \$1200 for it. We still have the clock, and that was forty-four years ago."

3. What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

"Working with people that I trust," Paul said. He added that being honest about what he is selling has also helped him succeed. "Especially because we do a lot of repair work, and we let people know. A lot of our customers like it because I'm pretty point-blank. I don't beat around the bush, and most people appreciate that. We don't try to treat anybody any differently than we want to be treated."

4. What inspires you?

"Trying to find something I haven't had," Paul said. "I'm always looking for better things. But you also have to keep things that anyone who walks in your store can find something. We're in the middle of the road, more or less. Some things we sell are really high end, but some aren't. We try to have something for everyone."

5. What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

"I think anybody that owns a business is trying to think ahead and make things better," Paul said. "You think about what the next move is. We do a lot of shows, which is nice. That's probably the one thing that keeps you up at night. Everybody thinks because you own your own business you make a lot of money, but that's just not true. It can be feast or famine. That's always the way it is."

6. What is your favorite local activity?

Paul and Connie enjoy the lakes and the beauty of the area. They go camping with their family a lot, as well as going to watch their grandkids play sports. "The Finger Lakes have enough going on that you'll never get it all done," Paul said. "We send out customers all over the Finger Lakes when they ask us where to go." Paul added that they also enjoy meeting new people.

7. Is there anything else we should know about you?

"You can ask me just about anything you want and you'll get a straight answer," Paul said. "Connie is the same way, although she can be a little more diplomatic about it than I am." Paul added that their door is always open. They enjoy helping people, opening up their house to people in the community.

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