Three Key Priorities Unlock this Company’s Success

Ruoff Mortgage’s family-business approach and sophisticated operations and technology create a recipe for fast growth.

Ruoff Mortgage is no stranger to challenging times. President and CEO Mark Music took over the lead role from his father-in-law, David Ruoff, in 2007, right before the Great Recession sent the housing market into turmoil. With just 18 employees, one Fort Wayne, Indiana location, and a leader who had never run a mortgage company before, Ruoff Mortgage had to weather the second worst economic disaster in U.S. history—and emerged poised for growth. Music says his “fresh eyes” made him open to new ideas in an industry ripe for change.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ruoff Mortgage successfully faced down challenging times again. Under Music’s leadership, the company now has 1,050 employees and 75 locations throughout the Midwest and Florida, as well as a national consumer direct division. Loan volume doubled, and the company added 250 new employees, earning Ruoff Mortgage a spot on the Inc. 5000 list of America’s fastest-growing companies for the ninth time. This year also brought an

Mark Music and the Ruoff Mortgage team

ON THE INC. 5000 LIST
Ruoff Mortgage

NO. 3931
2020 Ranking

45
States Licensed

1050
Employees

$5.6
billion
2020 Loan Volume

exciting new partnership with NASCAR—a multi-year agreement making Ruoff Mortgage the Official Mortgage Partner, with branding rights to the most coveted real estate in all of motorsports, Victory Lane.

But such results don’t happen by accident. Music credits three priorities for the company’s sustained growth:

1. ROCK-SOLID RELATIONSHIPS

Ruoff Mortgage team members are trained from their first day on the job to put customers first. That approach has paid off in the company’s stellar 97.8% Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI), measured by third-party surveys. If the team notes a concern on the surveys, they contact the customer within a day to make the situation right.

Music says that one of the keys to building exceptional customer relationships is to be transparent every step of the way and manage the process so there are no surprises. “We set expectations for borrowers and then make sure we live up to them,” Music says. Customers appreciate having the option to work with Ruoff’s direct-to-consumer channel online or in person at one of their branch offices.

2. EMPLOYEE-FOCUSED CULTURE

Despite Ruoff Mortgage’s fast growth, Music is proud to maintain its family business culture. Employees share news, celebrate, and support each other on the company’s Facebook page. Training and mentoring internal talent are priorities, giving both seasoned professionals and people new to the industry rich career opportunities. As a result, even employees hired with little to no experience have been successful here.

Employees take pride in seeing their company’s branding in more than 50 sports and entertainment venues, ranging from national teams like the Indianapolis Colts and Columbus Blue Jackets to local community teams.

3. TOP-NOTCH TECHNOLOGY

Ruoff Mortgage has been at the forefront of technology changes. An in-house team builds proprietary software. Embedded artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled tools deliver the most current information to customers based on their profiles, needs, and interests. Automation of rote tasks makes employees more efficient, accurate, and productive.

Laser-focus on those priorities is spurring more growth. The company hopes to add roughly 700 employees by the end of 2022 to expand its direct-to-consumer division. But keeping its family-oriented approach is still crucial. “We try to do it in ‘stair steps,’” Music says. “We grow, let things ferment a bit, and make sure that we’re keeping what makes our brand special.”

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