



The Rundown

August 5, 2015

“Risk Management in Business”

Presented by Damon Callis, Owner, The Urban Winery

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A networking event took place on July 29, 2015 at [The Urban Winery](#), a ground breaking winery located in downtown Silver Spring. This was a seminar focusing on the [best ways to manage risk](#) and was sponsored by the [Young Professional’s Network \(YPN\)](#) of the [Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce](#). This event consisted of another healthy mix of experienced and newer professionals from in and around the Silver Spring area.

Immediately upon entering The Urban Winery, I was [confronted with the charm and class](#) of an actual winery, except it was located right in downtown Silver Spring. Sections of [aged wine barrels](#) hung from the ceiling and a large portion of the main back wall consisted of only glass, allowing patrons a peek at the [actual wine making process](#) occurring on site. It was immediately obvious that The Urban Winery offered something I’d never seen before.

After the attendees trickled in and got to know each other, or re-connect, over the complementary wine provided, the seminar portion of the event began. [Damon Callis, the owner and vintner at The Urban Winery](#) addressed the group and offered his insight into [business risk management](#).

After hearing Damon talk for five minutes, it was he clear he knew a lot of about risk. [As a Marine and later, financial planner](#), Damon knew of which he spoke. His [passion, drive](#) and [intensity](#) were inspiring and mirrored many of the same traits that I notice in other YPN members.

Regarding his specific business, Damon advised that there really was no such thing as an urban winery in the region prior to his setting up shop. It was evident that he actually took [steps to begin the construction and pre-opening tasks necessary to start a business](#), even before certain obstacles were removed from his path. Licensing, permits

and taxation issues stood in his way, as the State and County allowed local brew-houses to engage in the [type of business that Damon envisioned](#), but they didn't allow it for wineries.

Impressively, Damon set to work lobbying local legislators and industry leaders to [help change the current economic and legal landscape](#) so that he could [realize his dream](#). Many of us I'm sure took away from Damon's speech that all along our path there will be obstacles, some seemingly insurmountable. With [passion](#), [belief](#) and the [courage](#) to take calculated risks, Damon advised that these [obstacles could be overcome](#). The Urban Winery was proof!

Next, Damon discussed some of the risks associated with [developing a completely fresh business model](#): another theme that hit home for many of us. Risk was inherent for Damon because he had no other businesses to use as a model. [Inventory](#), [investment costs](#) and [agricultural considerations](#) were confronted conservatively, giving The Urban Winery room to grow, adjust and profit.

[The Urban Winery's motto is Taste. Learn. Create.](#) I cannot think of a more appropriate motto for such an interesting business. It was a delight to hear a fellow chamber member discuss his thoughts on [acceptable risk management](#) and the joy in developing a [thriving business](#).

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