

Terry became a UTA member more than 17 years ago, the earliest days of the UTA. Many UTA members may already know him. What you might not know is that Terry comes from a family with quite an extensive pedigree in trucking.

“My whole family was in the trucking industry,” Terry says. “My father drove a truck for Strickland Trans, and my grandfather drove for Gordon’s Transport. My uncle drove for Yellow Freight, and my brother drove for Red Ball Motor Freight.” You might be wondering about Terry himself. His father started teaching him to drive a truck at about the age of 14. By 17, he’d gotten his chauffeur’s license, which was at the time, the commercial license he needed drive trucks.

“I started my driving career hauling chemicals for Matlack Tank Lines. I ended up as a line-driver for C.F. or Corn Flakes as they were called,” he said. Reminiscing about his first truck experience, Terry said he drove a needle-nose 1963 White with a 220 Cummins and a 10-speed. “I was hooked on shifting gears, and I drove until 1980 when I decided to go into the truck tire business.”

That is how Terry’s career began, but since that beginning, he’s gone on to create three different businesses throughout his career; selling the first two, before he settled on the online business he operates today, Heavy Truck and Equipment Wholesalers or HTAEW.com. Let’s go back to the beginning of Terry’s life as an entrepreneur and work our way through the fascinating ideas and determination he has brought to his extraordinary career.

“It’s a long story how I came to get into the tire business,” he warned. “I ended up building a large cold cap truck tire retreading plant. I was the largest independent cold cap retreader in Houston, TX.” Terry operated that business until he sold it in 1985, signing a non-compete clause that kept him from going any further in the tire business. “That’s how I ended up in truck sales,” he explained. All of the companies Terry had been capping tires for were trucking companies. He started trying to help them sell their equipment. With the passage of just a couple of years, Terry had quite a following of truck companies and dealers who were depending on him. “Then in 1990 I had an idea to build a network for trucking companies and anyone who serviced that industry to be able to communicate with each other through computers,” Terry told us.

Terry created his computer network before the Internet took over and made such a thing so much easier and *faster*. “We used 2400-bps phone modems to hook up with each other,” he remembered. Once again, another company came along and bought that business from Terry too! “I was back to helping

dealers buy and sell from each other,” Terry said. “I have never worked a day in my life for any dealership.” Ten years after he first created his rudimentary network, technology had caught up with our resourceful friend, and he was ready to launch HTAEW.com. He joined with an old friend, Dan Boone of Universal Trucks, and the two men decided to give it a try. As the website was coming together, Terry decided to buy out Dan’s share. “Once I finished putting the website together, I started signing up dealers who I had done business with for many years,” Terry said.

At first, Terry was willing to give the membership to his site away for a free trial period of several months. He wanted his long-time trusted contacts to see for themselves the value and potential the site offered. “Then I was able to hire the absolute best and most knowledgeable salesperson in the world, Penny Armstrong, and the rest is history,” he said. Today HTAEW.com has more than 2,500 members and, the day the site has facilitated more than \$171 million in equipment sales. Nearly 1,000 trucks and trailers were listed for sale as of September 2017.

When we asked Terry how he can explain such a successful career, he turned to his wife Teresa. “My wife Teresa, and perseverance,” he said, “not giving up when they said ‘no.’ Teresa wouldn’t let me give up.” In asking Terry to recount some of his proudest moments throughout his long career, he went right back to the early days. “I have had many proud moments,” he replied. “One is the first trip I took as a line driver for C.F.” He also recounted his success in the truck tire business. “Creating something of value from just an idea,” he told us was an amazing feeling, and the proudest moment of all was “getting my first check in the mail from a paying member of HTAEW.com.”

Today Terry can speak from his vast experiences and offer advice to others still building their careers. “If you have an idea, and you really believe it can make a difference,” he advises, “never get discouraged by what others might say. Stay true to yourself, and believe in yourself. Work hard and give back.” For Terry, he’s happy with what he’s already achieved. He’s satisfied with the website he’s created and the network it supports. He knows that his members are secure and successful in using the site to buy and sell equipment. “I’m just going to let it run the way it is,” he said. “It’s really self-generating, just like a big snowball.”

When Terry hits the road today, it’s in a Prevost bus. He has it all arranged for comfort, and he can load in the whole family. “We use our bus, and people are just amazed how I can drive that bus,” he mused. “It weighs 55,000 pounds and

the trucks weighed 80,000!” Once a truck lover, always a truck lover, with a lifetime of achievement in between.