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AMERICA'S LEADING KARTING MAGAZINE SINCE 1986

**IF YOUR
TRANSPONDER
COULD SPEAK**

PERSONAL PROFILE:

RJ VALENTINE

F1 Boston

**Ocala
GRAN PRIX****THE OFFICIAL ROTAXIAN NEWSLETTER INSIDE!**

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From the Board Room to the Track. A Road Less Taken

Story & Photos By Jeff Louk

What does the automotive aftermarket, insurance, high technology, real estate, financial services, corporate investigative services, auto racing and high performance karts have in common? They're all businesses Richard J. Valentine has excelled in prior to launching SSC East.

SSC East is the exclusive distributor of Rotax, CRG, Mogo, and GearBox product lines to the eastern United States. With over 50 dealers, partnerships with Champ Car and a handful of new tracks in development – SSC East is on the fast track.

At the core of this success is SSC East president Richard "RJ" Valentine. His keen ability to apply the experience and knowledge he's gained from an array of different industries is breathing new life into the kart racing business. RJ's mission is to bring a professional business approach to karting – it's an approach that has helped him achieve tremendous success in a wide array of businesses.

During his remarkable business career, he has done everything from nurturing start-ups to overseeing multi-million dollar enterprises by providing strategic vision, marketing innovation, operational expertise and financial acumen that have enabled these businesses to thrive and grow.

As a race car driver, he has been a major player on the competitive racing scene for over thirty years, racing everything from Porsche 911 GT3Rs, to the



current Pontiac GTO.R, and still continues to be a force on the track. This year, he drove in his 20th consecutive Rolex 24 at Daytona, placing 2nd in class.

"I believe there are remarkable parallels for success in both the racing and the corporate world," Valentine states. "To achieve something special in both areas you need the support of a great team, the drive and desire to make the most out of every opportunity and the vision, passion and drive to see it through to the finish."

The Business Beginnings: Entrepreneurial Engine

Fresh out of Suffolk University, RJ founded the Massachusetts Business Association (MBA) in 1970 with the mission to serve the needs of small to medium sized businesses – from group health insurance, real estate to auto aftermarket

The Stars Come out to Shine at F1 Boston Indoor Racing Facility

Right, Top to bottom:
RJ on the podium with Dale Earnhardt Jr. and F1 Boston General Manager Karen Quast.
Talking strategy and track design with Jeff Gordon.
RJ 'hanging-out' with Rolling Stones Guitarist and Rock Legend Ron Wood.



R. J. has a love for all things racing.



Far Left: Mixing business and pleasure – RJ with the F1 Dodge Viper and Rotax RM1 at F1 Outdoors (2002).

Above: RJ with the Team PTG F1 Air BMW M3 and F1 Air's Lear60 Jet (2005).

services -- he saw the potential of this underserved market niche. In the 1970's, MBA began providing cost-effective health insurance to businesses. The business has thrived – today the MBA Group is the state's leading provider of employee benefits, serving more than 50,000 companies and 240,000 subscribers – and providing broker services based on proprietary technology that streamline administration and customer services.

He credits The MBA Group's success to taking innovative approaches to reach potential customers. "We used a number of marketing techniques that insurance providers just weren't doing," states Valentine. "From direct mail and database CRM techniques to building alliances with affinity groups, such as chambers of commerce, small business associations and industry-specific organizations. It gave us a strong advantage."

**Automotive Aftermarket:
Customer Service is King**

During the 1980's RJ identified another underserved market niche that had tremendous potential – the quick lube oil change business. Under the banner Lube 495, The MBA Group opened its first Jiffy Lube service center in 1984. At the time, quick-lube was an entirely new concept in New England.

The formula for success included tireless customer service, an emphasis on team work, and, of course, innovative marketing. Lube 495 developed an aggressive program of mystery shoppers, customer surveys and other performance evaluators to help keep the Jiffy Lube teams sharp. The results were outstanding. For example in 1991, one of Lube 495's stores went the entire year without a single customer complaint. That same year, the entire chain – 20 locations at the time—posted an impressive stat: only .004% of customers lodged a complaint, one of the lowest claim figures in the nation.

Teamwork was another hallmark. "The entire management team was involved in marketing program – working closely with our in-house advertising agency to develop a synergy that led to marketing innovations in the auto aftermarket industry," he stated. RJ also leveraged his



Richard Valentine at the helm of The MBA Group. His mission: to recognize innovative ideas with huge market potential, employ breakthrough marketing techniques and outwork the competition.

professional racing career as a powerful marketing and promotional tool for Jiffy Lube. He personally tested the products under racing conditions, entertained fleet customers, sponsors and employees at races and crafted a dual racing sponsorship/supplier relationship with Pennzoil.

Successful? The numbers don't lie. Within 5 years of inception, Lube 495 was the largest and fastest growing Jiffy Lube developer in the country. When he sold the operation to Pennzoil in 1993, it had grown to a \$35 million chain of 30 stores, including the #1 grossing Jiffy Lube in the world and six of the top 10 grossing Jiffy Lube service centers in America.

**Health Insurance Administration:
The Power of Senior Management**

In 1984, RJ built upon The MBA Group's success in healthcare insurance by starting United Plans, a third-party administrator of health insurance plans. At the time there was a tremendous need for a solution to an industry-wide problem of ineffective management and procedures that depressed growth and slowed profit potential. Tapping its seasoned team of senior management, United Plans implemented proprietary technologies and aggressive marketing programs that allowed the company to realize growth that had never been achieved in the industry.

Another success: When United Plans was sold in 1991 to Plan Services, Inc., a subsidiary of Dunn

& Bradstreet, it was a leader in the field, serving 17,000 companies in nine states.

**Investigative Services:
Tapping Technology**

Born out of The MBA Group's own need to fill a critical information gap, in 1987 RJ's team formed LCF, a professional investigations firm specializing in finding the facts that are essential to successful legal, corporate and financial decisions.

In an era that preceded wide use of the Internet, LCF utilized leading-edge computer research tools, complimented by traditional investigative techniques. The company grew to serve Fortune 100 companies and also provided services to an array of international clients. When LCF was sold in 2001 to a multinational security firm, it had evolved into one of the market leaders in an industry it had helped create.

**Software Solutions to Optimize Bottom
Line Success**

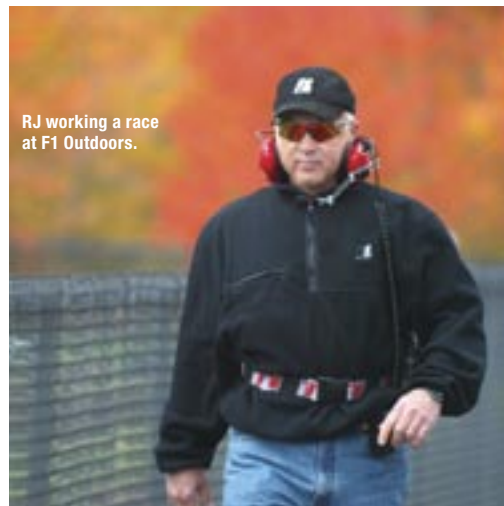
When RJ was looking for a software tool that would help better manage its' portfolio of businesses, it found a company with a unique approach to software. Arrayworks was developing powerful new business-management software –impressed with this innovation in software process, The MBA Group partnered in the development effort.

ArrayWorks' client list includes Insurance and Financial Service leaders Savings Bank Life Insurance Company (SBLI) and Lenox Advisers, not to mention The MBA Group and many of its affiliated companies.

Shifting Gears Into Kart Racing

In 2000, RJ most closely aligned his instinct and racing experience with the opening of F1 Boston, a 106,000 square foot conference and entertainment facility build around two European-style indoor kart racetracks.

F1 Boston provides a wide array of race-themed programming for events including off-site meetings, dinners, sales/staff meetings, tradeshow, incentive events, social events, rewards programs, summer outings, team building, recruiting, and holiday events. It employs a total participatory approach utilizes the parallel tenets of both racing and business – leadership, teamwork, attention to detail, competition, and focus.



RJ working a race at F1 Outdoors.

2003 started an impressive string on success for RJ on the track, he finished on the podium in 4 of 6 races in Grand-Am. At the "Sahlen's Six Hours of the Glen," at Watkins Glen, NY he took 3rd in the DP class.

Right: RJ celebrating another podium finish with teammates Dariusz Grala, Ferrari Challenge Champion (left) and Formula Mazda Champion, Guy Cosmo (right).

Below: RJ and the team with the Team Cegwa Sport's 4.35-liter Toyota V8 engine-powered silver and blue FABCAR sponsored by OzEXE, F1 Boston and Goodyear.Cegwa



straight-aways that permit racers to reach maximum performance - all in a beautifully landscaped setting.

"F1 Outdoors provides an ideal venue for business executives seeking a recreational activity for networking and entertaining business associates and clients. It offers guests the opportunity to drive and race, enabling them to enjoy a truly memorable experience," states Valentine. "Kart racing at F1 Outdoors is exciting - it promotes team building and provides a competitive atmosphere and a sense of achievement, and only takes a few hours - start to finish."

F1 Outdoors is hosting three Champ Car Rotax Kart Challenge races in 2006. F1 is also developing a track on Long Island, New York and another in Charlotte, North Carolina is in the planning stage.

From Wheels to Wings

In 2004, Valentine created F1 Air, a private aircraft charter firm with offices in Braintree and New Jersey, in conjunction with Jet Aviation and New World Jet. F1 Air, with a senior management team that has a combined total of more than 100 years experience, is committed to raising the bar in private jet aircraft travel.

Always on the look out for innovative products or services to align with, RJ has been involved as an investor and board member in a wide array of highly successful companies, including LoJack Stolen Vehicle Recovery Systems and Mosquito Magnet Biting Insect Traps.

SSC East

RJ's latest venture in the world of kart racing is the formation of SSC East, the importer and distributor of karts, engines, kart racing supplies and race organization for the Eastern United States. SSC East is exclusively focused on kart racing, dedicated to importing, selling, servicing and supporting the world's leading manufacturers, including Rotax, CRG, Zanardi, MoGo and GearBox product lines, to both kart dealers and racers. SSC East is affiliated with Palm Springs, California-based SSC Racing the country's premier kart distributor and dealership network.

RJ with wife, Penny, at Sears Point, California in 1993.



RJ with fellow teammates and Grand Am competitors, Jan Magnussen and Kelly Collins at the Rolex 24 Hours at Daytona, 2005.



F1 Boston offers a variety of meeting amenities, including eight separate meeting rooms, exhibition/banquet room, state-of-the-art AV communications systems, event planning assistance, motivation and sales training programs. Full catering and menu planning services are available, with service capabilities for parties from 10 to 1,200, offering a selection of casual to gourmet fare.

F1 Boston was followed by the construction of F1 Outdoors in East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, which offers competitive kart racing on a 1.5-mile track. F1 Outdoors is the model for kart facilities of the future: Planned luxury clubhouse, high-end amenities, as well as the full-service kart racing facility featuring a Grand Prix style race track with 7 configurations, kart storage and maintenance for owners. The track features hairpin turns, banked turns and

RJ believes the key to explosive growth in karting is attracting a whole new audience to kart racing - speed junkies who buy sports cars, snow mobiles, jet skis, speed boats. With Rotax and CRG products, racers don't have to be mechanics constantly working and making adjustments to their karts. This helps open karting up to a whole new base of people - 30 and 40 something's who have time and money and are looking for excitement.

"Customer service is going to be critical to expanding the kart racing business. Until now, many in the kart business thought our customers want to go racing, and many do. However, many just want to have fun," he states. "They don't fit the traditional karter profile. We need to recognize the market for people who're looking for fun and make sure that kart racing gives them what they need - top notch service, amenities and above all, professionalism."

SSC East's mission is to support and grow the region's kart dealer network, providing the finest lines of karts, chassis, engines, equipment and apparel. SSC

The shop is dedicated to supporting the dealer and kart driver.

Right: SSC East's fully equipped, 10,000 square foot Race & Pro Shop, located at F1 Boston in Braintree, Massachusetts, provides kart racers with a complete line of the highest quality equipment and products, including karts, parts, equipment, accessories and apparel.

SSC East is exclusively focused on kart racing, dedicated to importing, selling, servicing and supporting the world's leading manufacturers.

Below: SSC East Director of Sales & Marketing Mark Ouimet provides an overview of a CRG kart to a potential customer.



East also offers dealerships marketing support with customized programs that capitalize and leverage the organization's experience and expertise.

SSC East is also dedicated to supporting the kart driver. SSC East's fully equipped, 10,000 square foot Race & Pro Shop, located at F1 Boston, provides kart racers with a complete line of the highest quality equipment and products, including karts, parts, equipment, accessories and apparel.

In the Driver's Seat

RJ's passion as a corporate "deal maker" is equaled only by his love of cars and racing. While many racers get into racing and focus on it exclusively, RJ married his success in business to foster a racing career. He has more than 340 professional road racing starts, and is one of only seven people to eclipse 120 starts in the Trans-Am Series. His career Trans-Am record includes a 62% incidence of top ten finishes and in excess of 20 top-fives.

In 1975, RJ got his start in recreational sports car racing through the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA). Competing – and winning three SCCA National Production races in Corvettes – he quickly moved up the ranks, turning pro in 1976. His professional debut on the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) GTO circuit was a success, with a 5th place finish.

From 1981 to 1997, RJ competed in the famous SCCA's Trans-Am Series, going toe-to-toe with racing stars including Scott Pruett, Boris Said and Paul Gentilozzi, driving 750-horsepower beasts like tube frame Chevy Camaros. Other highlights from this era include:

1978 – 79: Campaign GTO Corvette

1980 – 81: Developed/Designed/Drove 850 hp Tubular Chassis CAM AM Corvette

1983-84: Drove March 83/84 G-Series, Chevy Power

1990-92: Mobil Trans-Am Camaro

1993-97: Pickett/Pennzoil/Puralator/Venture Tape /Pharmasol Chevy Camaro

Building upon their successes, RJ shifted his racing focus to the Grand American Road Racing Association (Grand-Am). Grand-Am is widely regarded as the fastest growing and most successful motorsports association. In 2002, he made three starts in the Rolex GT Series – and four starts in Daytona Prototype Class – earning a best result of sixth in the GT class.

In 2003, he finished on the podium in 4 of 6 races in Grand-Am, including

a 2nd place finish at the Grand Prix of Homestead in a Porsche 911 GT3 RS. RJ moved up in classes for the remainder of the year, and helped develop the Cegwa Sport Toyota Daytona Prototype. Driving for The Racer's Group in a Porsche 911 GT3 RS in 2004 on the Grand-Am Series, RJ earned 4 podium finishes, and a 4th place finish in the Rolex Series GT Driver's Championship.

RJ competed in all 11 Grand Am Series races in 2005 for Team PTG, driving a BMW M3. His successes include a podium finish at Laguna Seca and top ten finishes at Daytona, Barber, Watkins Glen, and Phoenix. This year's highlight to date is a career-best 2nd in the GT Class at the Rolex 24 Hours at Daytona in Team TRG's Pontiac GTO.R. All told, he's achieved 13 podium finishes over the past 18 months.

Mentoring the Next Generation

RJ's passion for the sport doesn't end on the track. His dedication to motorsports is exemplified by his commitment to helping introduce the thrill and excitement of racing to the next generation of drivers. Valentine has established a Junior kart racing program – the F1 Junior Racing Academy – offering kids ages 7 to 17 the opportunity to learn how drive and compete. "Over 2,200 boys and girls have enrolled in the program. From a racing school, to leagues to summer camps, we're not only educating kids on how to drive and race, but also helping to instill confidence and sportsmanship, build coordination and discipline and teach driver safety and control," he states.

Taking it to the next level, RJ has hosted the East Coast Run Off competition for the Red Bull's Driver Search program at F1 Outdoors. The program is designed to find, test, and support budding young American racing talent (ages 13 - 17) and build the American presence at the pinnacle of motor racing; the Formula 1 World Championship. The Red Bull Driver Search mission is to discover and support promising young racers, the real "diamonds in the rough," helping them embark on a career in racing. Each year since 2002, this grassroots program has provided thousands of young kart racers with the opportunity to take racing to the next level and beyond – with the winners landing scholarships to race in Europe; groomed to break into Formula 1 and compete for the World Championship.

"Last July, 100 young drivers tested their mettle at F1 Outdoors, competing to reach their dreams of becoming a Formula 1 race car driver," Valentine stated. "The goal of this program is to find and cultivate American drivers, field the first ever All American Formula 1 team – and ultimately help crown an American F1 Champion. We're proud that Red Bull recognizes the quality of our facilities and has selected F1 Outdoors as the ideal venue for its annual East Coast Run Off."

"Racing has been an indelible part of my life, both personally and professionally. To me, it's both a responsibility and a pleasure to help share the experience with as many kids as possible." ♦♦



RJ accepting an award from Captain Steve Turley, Director of Boston Firefighters Burn Foundation, at a 2005 fundraiser.