

CONNECT™

A BUSINESS RESOURCE FROM STERLING NATIONAL BANK // WINTER 2014

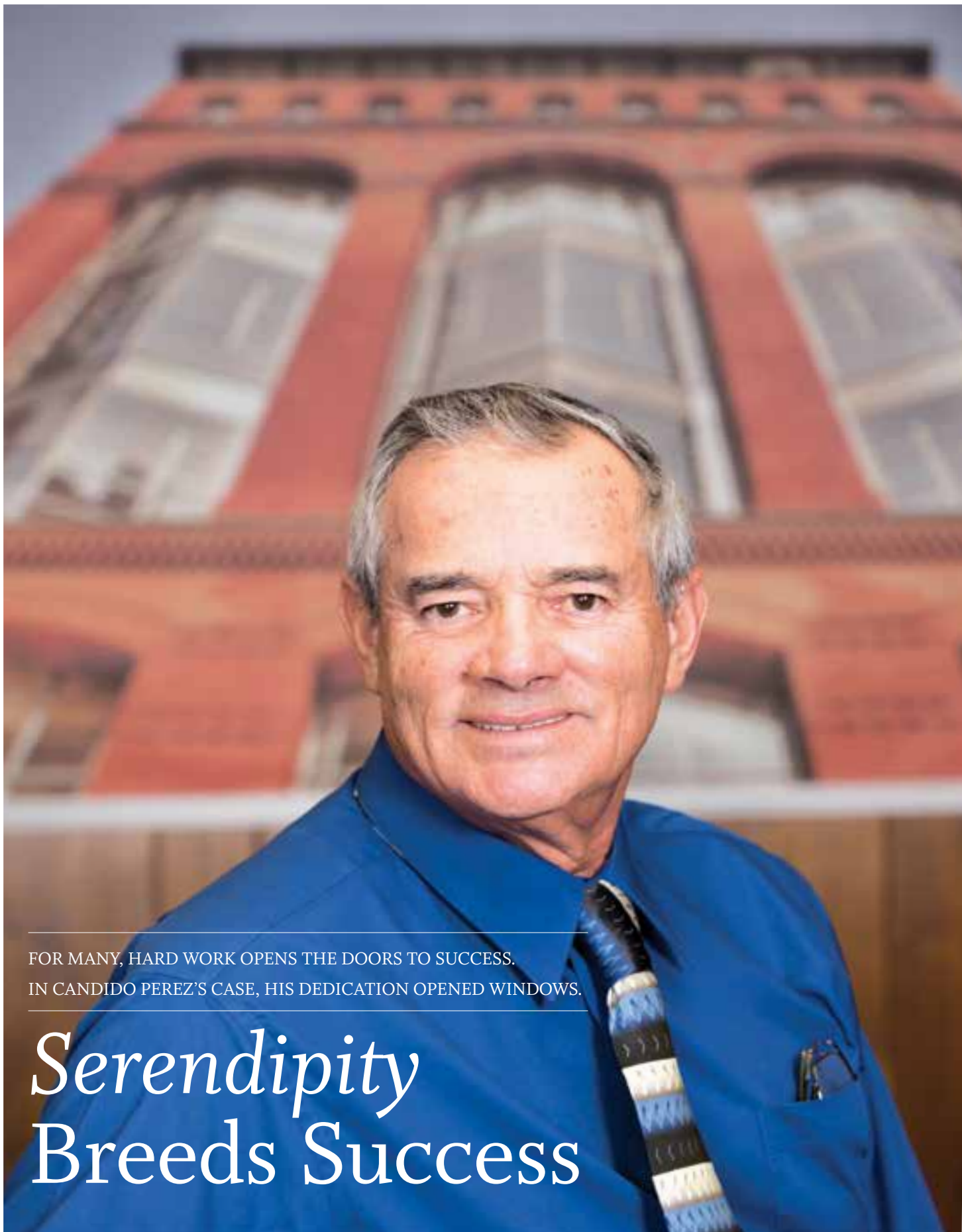
Employer Health
INSURANCE
REQUIREMENTS

ANSWERS *about*
ASSET-BASED
LENDING

Candido Perez
Using Windows to Open Doors



STERLING
NATIONAL BANK



FOR MANY, HARD WORK OPENS THE DOORS TO SUCCESS.
IN CANDIDO PEREZ'S CASE, HIS DEDICATION OPENED WINDOWS.

Serendipity Breeds Success



IN 1957, new high school graduate Perez went to work with his brother at a Queens painting company that shared an office with a window business. Perez ended up on the payroll of the latter organization, and a 57-year-and-counting career in the fenestration (window) industry was born.

Ten years of dues-paying passed, and Perez realized the company's seniority structure blocked the path to increasing his earnings. He struck out on his own with \$300 in capital, \$150 of which he spent on a truck.

"I acquired some tools and tried to get any work I could—glasswork, welding, altering steel windows to make room for air conditioners," says Perez, now Founder and Owner of Optimum Window Manufacturing Corporation in Ellenville, N.Y. "I worked on my own in the summer and took a job with a glass or ironworks company in the winter. Five years passed before I was able to draw a salary from my own business."

Perez owned that business, Alter Steel Window Company, until 1998, when he sold it to focus on running Optimum Window—a company he founded after experiencing a serendipitous moment.

ANSWERING OPPORTUNITY'S KNOCK

In the mid-1980s, a European company contacted Perez to gauge his interest in selling their products. He was interested—if the company agreed to produce a fire-rated window.

"There was a need in the U.S. market for fire-rated windows to comply with fire codes," Perez says. "The companies that used to manufacture the products were going out of business, leaving only one company—a competing distributor—making them. I had to go through that company to buy fire-rated windows, which I used quite a bit."

A fire-rated product was produced for Perez, but he swiftly decided to manufacture the windows himself using the Italian company's raw materials. In 1986, Optimum Window was born.

MOVING AND GROWING

From its first home in the Bronx, Optimum Window moved to Warwick in 1989, and in 1998, to a 110,000-square-foot building in Ellenville. At the time of its final move, the company had a staff of approximately 25 and occupied only 60,000 square feet of its new headquarters as it focused on producing fire-rated windows. It has come a long way in 16 years.

Optimum Window remained true to its bread-and-butter product, but through the years, the business added other items to its manufacturing repertoire, including detention windows for maximum-security prisons, primarily in New York state; aluminum windows and doors; and hot- and cold-rolled steel windows and doors. Today, the company features a workforce of over 50 and has no trouble filling its building—or a 23,000-square-foot neighboring structure Perez added to accommodate a powder coating operation. Perez's products are sold nationally.

Optimum Window's fire-rated windows are in great demand in large, urban markets, such as New York City and Chicago, where the proximity and height of many structures make fire safety critical. The company's hot-rolled steel windows, once a staple of commercial construction, are also in demand for use in historic buildings and homes whose owners like the windows' vintage look.

After so much exciting growth since the move to Ellenville, Perez's vision for the future of Optimum Window is of improving processes rather than adding products.

"The company is pretty busy right now," he says. "We are going to focus on what we do well and add different types of equipment to get better at what we do."

ALONG CAME A PARTNER

When Optimum Window moved to Ellenville, Perez worked with a hometown institution, Ellenville National Bank, for the business' financial needs. Eventually, Provident Bank (now Sterling National Bank) bought Ellenville National Bank. The purchase turned out to be another serendipitous moment for Perez and his business.

"Provident Bank personnel visited me, and I decided to keep my business with them," he says. "Provident Bank has always made me feel welcome and comfortable. My financial requests have been carefully considered with favorable results in the end, whether they be personal or business in nature, such as equipment purchases for Optimum Window. Provident Bank and Optimum have solidified a strong business relationship and will continue to do so in the future."

➔ VISIT WWW.OPTIMUMWINDOW.COM TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OPTIMUM WINDOW'S PRODUCTS AND VIEW ITS PROJECTS PORTFOLIO.



My team at Provident Bank (now Sterling National Bank) once gave me the CEO's direct phone number, in case I ever needed to speak with the Bank's leader about an issue. I never had to use it, though, because the Bank has excellent personnel who understand and communicate my messages to the appropriate individuals and make me feel comfortable working with the institution. Those relationships are important to me.

Candido Perez

FOUNDER AND OWNER OF
OPTIMUM WINDOW
MANUFACTURING CORPORATION
IN ELLENVILLE, NEW YORK



OPTIMUM WINDOW MANUFACTURING CORPORATION PRODUCTS PROVIDE ONE OF AMERICA'S CULTURAL ICONS WITH VIEWS OF THE WORLD: THE COMPANY'S WINDOWS ADORN A CALIFORNIA HOME OWNED BY NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS QUARTERBACK AND THREE-TIME SUPER BOWL CHAMPION TOM BRADY.