

Lisa Renshaw

PRESIDENT

PENN PARKING



Founded in 1983, Penn Parking, Inc. is a nationally recognized, regionally focused, women-owned and founded parking management company.

In 2018, annual collections exceeded \$40 million and the company has more than 200 employees.

Penn Parking manages more than 50 parking locations throughout Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

An Entrepreneurial Mindset Drives Customer Satisfaction and Success

“Look out for the best interests of the client, and when appropriate, navigate them to automation, even if it replaces services you provide. This builds trust.”

My early 20s were spent living in a bankrupt parking garage, sleeping on a rolled-up piece of carpet and using a kerosene heater for warmth.

For three-and-a-half years I worked 19-hour days washing, waxing and parking cars until I bid on and won a second location and moved out.

With only a high school education and no handbook on “How to run a parking business,” I was continually looking to the next day, week, or year trying to predict what would be needed to make my first garage a success.

That entrepreneurial mindset helps to see what’s possible and anticipate a client’s “want” before they even know that they want it.

Anticipating a client’s needs and having a solution prior to the ask entrenches value into the client/operator relationship.

Evolve with the Times

As technology dramatically changes the industry and garages become more automated, the need for labor has diminished

Penn saw the need to provide greater value to clients beyond staffing the garage.

So we began by drilling down to identify what we do best – managing people.

Find the Need and Fill It

A CEO should always look out for the best interests of the client, and when appropriate, navigate them to automation, even if it replaces services you provide.

This builds trust.

We may recommend an app that eliminates a cashier position thus helping the client, but I still care about the cashier, so we offer our clients additional ways to use our services.

We point out how Penn can fill patrol positions, door, escort, concierge and



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help desk positions. We can do it more economically because we are already managing the garage.

Bundling these services in one contract saves the client money. It also keeps our employees working.

Be Local and Vocal

Over the years Penn has managed varied parking venues at apartments, offices, airports, events, hospitals, and universities, and all of them have two common denominators.

First, we are local – our company has turned down opportunities outside the region because we are committed to remaining focused on the Virginia/Maryland/Washington, DC area.

This allows us to tailor operations and solutions specific to that facility. I abhor any cookie-cutter approach to facility management.

Second, communication with our client is everything – every parking company says they provide great communication, but the client often tells another story.

Respond as quickly as possible and, more importantly, take action.

Due Diligence for Technology

As a regional company, we know which app is good for which garage and they're not always the same.

Generally, technology and app choices can be tailored specific to garages, neighborhoods or events.

Penn always has a face-to-face interview with the technology vendor rep. We want to feel confident that they know the area as well as we do.

Build in Relationships & Accountability

Penn's two vice presidents have been with me since 1994 and some area managers have been with the company for over 15 years.

We cultivate a work environment with flexibility with an emphasis on camaraderie.

Our managers start their first year with three weeks of vacation.

They earn a fourth if the first three weeks run smoothly during their absence.

Cross-coverage is always top notch because all the managers depend on each other for earning that fourth vacation week.

Lead By Example

During the riots in Baltimore in 2015, we closed all the garages and let staff go home except for two garages supporting hospitals.

Even though a curfew was imposed, I drove downtown to stay the night with the cashiers.

I wanted them to know how important they were and that management cared.

I've grown up alongside Penn Parking, and over the years my leadership role has changed.

What has stayed the same, however, is the desire to create an environment where people want to come to work and are dedicated to the same mission. ■