

Inc. Founder Friendly Investors	Founded in 1999	AUM \$1.4 billion	Portfolio Companies: 17	Location Stamford, CT	
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A Private Equity Firm That Takes An Individual Approach

There’s no correct playbook because founders and their businesses are each unique

James Andersen, managing partner and co-founder of Clearview Capital, knows what it’s like to start a business in a garage. Or more precisely, directly above a garage with a \$29 speakerphone and a card table serving as a conference table.

“Most of the people that we invest in started in that place. We understand what it means to start a business on a shoestring and build it to be something truly great,” says Andersen.

That empathy helps guide Clearview when it comes to working with founders. Decision-making is “collaborative,” and because founders and their companies are each unique, requires a customized approach.

“There are lots of horror stories about private equity firms coming in and doing all the wrong things, firing a lot of people. That’s never been our approach. There’s a lot of pride of ownership, and that’s why we don’t dictate to our management partners. We earn trust and build a relationship over time,” he says.

FOSTERING GROWTH

Clearview focuses on the lower-middle market or companies with \$100 million in revenue or less. The businesses are typically still run by their founders or the family. Regardless of industry, most founders eventually reach a point where they need help getting to the next level. That’s where Clearview comes in.

“Our area of focus is helping these really

Managing Partners and Founders:
Cal Neider and Jim Andersen



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—James Andersen, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Clearview Capital



Left to right, back row (all partners): Tony Veith, Paul Caliento, Matt Rumilly, Matt Blevins, Bill Case, Jr. Left to right, front row (managing partners and founders): Cal Neider and Jim Andersen. Not pictured: Partner Larry Simon.

dynamic growth businesses professionalize themselves in a way that they can continue to grow and often accelerate their growth rates,” he says.

Founders typically need help in one of three areas: hiring key individuals to augment the management team, establishing professional systems to manage the business as it grows, and then ramping up growth either organically or through mergers and acquisitions (M&A). Between Andersen’s background in operations, co-founder Calvin Neider’s experience in lending, and the rest of the teams’ experience building successful growth businesses, Clearview has seen a lot of what works and doesn’t work.

“We’ve seen so many different businesses; we can take something we learned at a manufacturing business and apply it to a health care service business,” he says. Over the last 22 years, the Clearview team, whose partners have worked together for an average of 18 years, has overseen more than a hundred acquisitions and helped integrate the companies. Similarly, the team has over-

seen the installation of countless systems and helped make key hires.

NO PLAYBOOK

While some firms take a certain approach time and again, that’s not Clearview’s style. Because every company is a little different, “we don’t come in with our perfect playbook,” Andersen says. Every situation requires a slightly different approach or attention in a different area. Some founders want more help with growth, others with key hires or systems.

Ultimately, it comes down to trust and transparency. For instance, Clearview is up front when conducting due diligence and encourages founders to do due diligence on Clearview. “We’ll set up whatever references they want, because we want them to understand us too,” he says. Having a good relationship is key.

“You want to choose the partner who’s going to be easy to work with when you have a problem. Every business has unexpected challenges; that’s when a private equity partner really proves itself,” he says.