

Community Matters—On and Off the Court

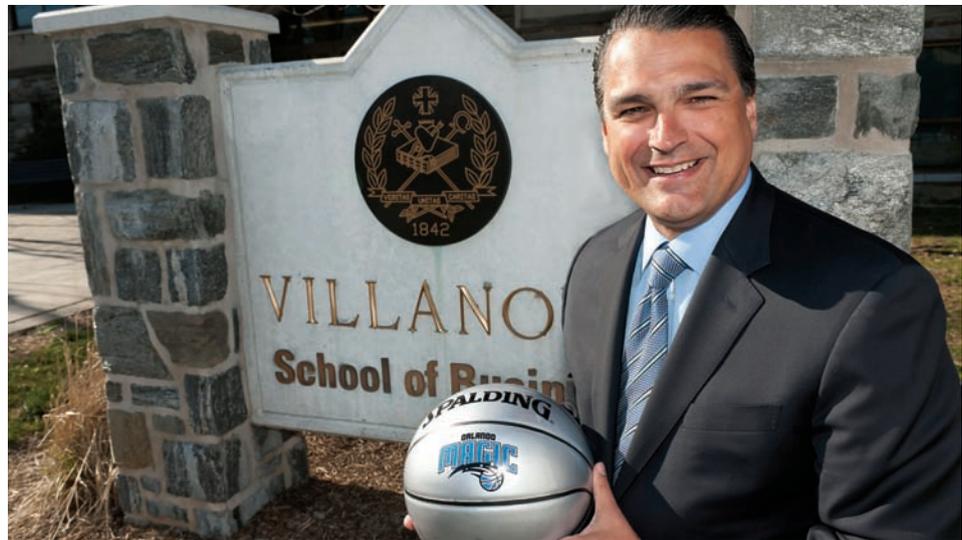
IN THE WORLD OF PROFESSIONAL sports, expansion teams are the equivalent of start-up ventures in the world of business. Alex Martins VSB '86 has guided four of these athletic start-ups through their birth and growth. His entrepreneurial spirit, first developed as a student at the Villanova School of Business, has flourished during his career and has helped his teams succeed on and off the court.

In 1989, Martins started as director of publicity/media relations with the newly formed Orlando Magic. While working with the Magic, he was integral in the launch of a new minor league hockey team and a new WNBA team. He left the Magic in 1998, to help launch the reborn Cleveland Browns of the NFL. "For a while I thought I wasn't going to get off of the expansion-team carousel," he jokes.

More than a decade and a half after his first foray into the business of professional athletics, however, he did. In 2005, Martins returned to the Magic to serve as executive vice president of marketing and franchise relations. A year later, he was named chief operating officer, and in 2010 he became the franchise's new president. Martins also now serves on the NBA Team Presidents Advisory Council.

As do so many success stories, Martins' started at the Villanova School of Business. "I got into this sports business without the intent of getting into this business," Martins says. As a freshman from Kearny, NJ, he noticed that the Wildcats' Sports Information office had an open work-study job. "I ended up working there for all four years I was at Villanova, and even got to work at the National Championship basketball game when we won in 1985."

After graduation, Martins was hired by a former assistant sports information director for Villanova who had moved on to the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers. That same mentor later recommended Martins for his first job in Orlando. "I underestimated how strong the 'Nova network could be and realized that people I interacted with in college could help me in the



Alex Martins VSB '86 is the president of the Orlando Magic.

future," he says. "The work ethic that you show in any relationship is very important. I wouldn't be sitting in the role I am today if I didn't work hard in the Villanova office for someone who opened the door for me to go work for the Magic."

Now Martins oversees the Magic's day-to-day business operations, including corporate marketing, ticket sales, season-ticket services and operations, community relations, broadcasting, corporate partnerships, communications, government relations, arena development, and business strategy.

While the business skills he honed at VSB are the foundation of his job with the Magic, the core values instilled in him while on campus have brought Martins—and his team—success beyond the bottom line. He is dedicated to the soul of the organization, through everything from ensuring employee satisfaction to leading the franchise in giving back to the community. These values, cultivated during his time at VSB, were further reinforced through working with Magic owner Richard DeVos.

When Martins returned to the Magic in 2005, the season-ticket base was the lowest in the team's history. "It was a major rebuilding project," he says. "We really had to re-engage the community."

Accomplishing that goal meant more than tickets and dollars. It even meant more than winning games on the court. It meant re-igniting DeVos' commitment to community throughout all levels of the organization. "We've been getting back to being an important part of our community and giving back in significant ways. We've also been bringing in players of the right character who are committed not only to winning, but to teamwork and the community," Martins says.

The hard work and investment have paid off. Since Martins' return to the team, the Magic have increased the number of season-ticket holders while making the playoffs for five straight years, advancing to the NBA Finals in 2009. The players and the organization are respected in the community and seen as leaders. Martins recently served as the chairman of the board for the team's Orlando Magic Youth Foundation, which has distributed nearly \$17 million to local non-profit organizations.

"I think we're doing some things right, but it takes a lot of hard work," Martins says. "You have to have strong values wherever you are, whether it's at a university, in a business, or in a professional sports franchise, and stick to them and live them every day." **1**