



Tony Ciepiel Named CEO Step2 Discovery Beginning April 2nd

Tony Ciepiel, CEO The Step2 Company, LLC and Backyard Discovery



STREETSBORO, Ohio – April 2, 2018 – Aterian Investment Partners (“Aterian”) today announced that Anthony (“Tony”) Ciepiel has been named Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Step2 Discovery. In this position, Tony will lead the combined businesses of The Step2 Company, LLC and Backyard Discovery, effective April 2, 2018. Mr. Ciepiel was most recently Chief Operating Officer of Vitamix Corporation (“Vitamix”), a privately held, family owned and operated manufacturer of high-performance blending equipment for home and commercial use.

Tony will succeed Tom Doherty, Interim CEO, who was appointed in July of 2017.

“We are thrilled to have Tony join the team and lead the organization to accelerate growth in existing and developing markets,” said Michael Fieldstone, Principal at

Aterian Investment Partners. “We also want to thank Tom Doherty and Lawton Bloom for their leadership during this transition.”

Said Mr. Ciepiel, “I am very excited to join the Step2 and Backyard Discovery companies – two great brands with some of the most innovative products *for home, play and leisure*. Both companies have talented management teams and are positioned well for growth. The combination of rotomolded products, wood and other substrates provides for endless possibilities for new innovation.”

Tony Ciepiel

As Chief Operating Officer from 2011 to 2018, Mr. Ciepiel was responsible for establishing and realizing Vitamix’s strategic direction and ensuring alignment of all domestic and international operations. During his tenure, Mr. Ciepiel led the teams that developed new products and expanded distribution resulting in over 400% growth in 5 years. His prior roles at Vitamix included Vice President Sales & Marketing and Vice President of Commercial Division. Mr. Ciepiel’s past leadership positions include: President & Chief Operating Officer at The Flood Company and President, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer at Realty One Inc., as well as Executive Vice President, Treasurer, and Chief Financial Officer at Griswold Inc.

Mr. Ciepiel currently serves on the Board of Directors and is an active committee member of IDEAL Industries, Beckett Air, and The Christian Business Men’s Connection of Northeast Ohio. Prior board positions include: Westfield Bank, Southern Title Company, The National Association of Realtors, In His Steps Foundation, Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy, and United Cerebral Palsy.

Mr. Ciepiel has a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Finance from Baldwin Wallace College. Additionally, Mr. Ciepiel is a Certified Public Accountant (C.P.A), earned in 1984, and has been a Licensed Realtor, State of Ohio, since 1999.

About Step2 Discovery

Step2 Discovery, headquartered in Streetsboro, Ohio, is one of the largest outdoor home, play and leisure companies in North America, with aspirational brands including Step2 and Backyard Discovery. Step2 Discovery, which holds lead positions in mailboxes, swing sets, playhouses, activity tables, play kitchens and ride-ons, as well as other outdoor home and garden products, is privately held by Aterian Investment Partners, based in New York, NY.

About The Step2 Company, LLC

The Step2 Company, LLC, headquartered in Streetsboro, Ohio, is one of the largest manufacturers of rotationally molded products. Since 1991, Step2 has been producing the highest quality and most aspirational play, leisure and home products, growing from five employees to its present 800+full time employees. Step2 products are distributed to a wide range of retailers and distributors throughout the U.S., Canada and over 70 other countries.

To learn more about Step2 and its products, visit <https://www.step2.com/>

Follow Step2 on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Pinterest](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

About Backyard Discovery

For over 30 years, Backyard Discovery, headquartered in Pittsburg, Kansas, has been producing the highest quality wooden swing sets, playhouses and backyard leisure products for the home. Backyard Discovery has a team of innovators and specialists who are passionate about bringing a love of quality family moments to the backyard.

To learn more about Backyard Discovery and its products, visit <https://www.backyarddiscovery.com/>

Follow Backyard Discovery on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Pinterest](#), and [LinkedIn](#)

About Aterian Investment Partners

Aterian Investment Partners is an operationally-focused middle market private equity firm, providing resources to further enhance operations, growth and investment initiatives. The firm invests in businesses generating \$25 million to \$500 million of annual revenue with strong, proven franchises. After making an investment, Aterian, in partnership with management, seeks to focus on the critical growth, operational and liquidity initiatives of a business in an effort to drive value creation for all stakeholders.

To learn more about Aterian visit <http://aterianpartners.com/>

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