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Leaders of Tomorrow

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Leaders of Tomorrow

Inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs

BY DEREK SANKEY

We've all heard stories that inspire. Sometimes they lead to success and fortune; sometimes they get chalked up as learning experiences. Either way, this year's Leaders of Tomorrow are living their dreams as entrepreneurs and enjoying the ride along the way, even when the going gets tough.

Corey Marshall remembers getting a call from the bank one day a few years ago asking to set up a meeting. It's not very often your bank requests a meeting with you, so he was suspicious and a little tense. Suddenly, even after a 10-year glowing history with the lender, they deemed the business high risk and wanted a \$1 million bond to secure the company's merchant services.

So, he changed banking and merchant services providers and shifted his business to an entire new level. "As businesses grow, more of the day-to-day time of the CEO becomes involved in situations such as the above, which limits the time on growth and development," says Marshall, owner of Anderson Vacations and one of the 2010 Leaders of Tomorrow. "Success lies in ensuring as time gets eaten away, that employment of people in these areas will ensure your growth continues," he says.

There are many lessons to learn from the stories of this group of entrepreneurs and business leaders.

From the Calgary high school student who launched a business in the basement that grew into a highly successful, national graphics design firm to the top-quality meat market that's been an iconic business for more than 85 years, good leaders inspire.

"I'd like to think that leadership styles have transformed from autocratic orders from on high, to empowering teams to make good decisions on their own," says David Farran, who single-handedly took a small group of local veterinary clinics and built them into a national chain with 35 locations and 800 employees – Associate Veterinary Clinics Ltd.

"Many a business has failed because someone's self-importance overrode common sense and solid values," he says. Fear of failure can sometimes achieve great things.

"Some call it ambition; others call it fear of failure. Regardless, it's a hidden drive which makes you always strive for the best," says Farran.

The 2010 Leaders of Tomorrow are selected and recognized not only for their outstanding business success, but also for their ongoing contribution to building Calgary's communities through active volunteering and participation. After the judges determined that their business model is successful, their involvement in the community was the primary criteria that separated them from the crowd.

This year's judges are: Dan Doherty of D3 Strategies Inc. and Macleod Bros.; David Woodman, managing partner at Meyers Norris Penny; and Mike Carlin from BMO Financial Group. Sifting through all the nominees wasn't easy.

What often separates truly successful leaders is the drive and passion to follow their vision, willing to tackle all the challenges along the way. "Pursue your dream and go for it," says Farran. **BIC**

The Judges



Mike Carlin



Dan Doherty



David Woodman

Platinum
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Leader of Tomorrow: Greg Keller

Company: Bon Ton Meat Market
Incorporated: 1921



As an enduring Calgary institution, Bon Ton Meat Market has proven that some things never go out of style. Since opening its doors in Calgary in 1921, it has always been a business based on honesty, integrity, quality and service. It moved to its current location in the Stadium Shopping Centre in 1994.

A year later, Fred and Ruby Keller acquired half ownership of the bustling shop. In 1997, the Kellers became sole owners and made it a true family affair when their son Greg joined the business as manager in 2002.

He followed in his father's footsteps and became a butcher, but the family dream was always to own a truly unique meat market that only stocks top-quality meats, including AAA Alberta beef, fresh free-range poultry, Alberta pork, lamb and milk-fed veal, as well as gluten-free sausage, exotic meat and fresh game.

Combined with the Kellers, the team has 270 years of combined meat-cutting experience. Greg chalks it up to his focus on the simple things, like providing quality products with excellent service. The passion is a natural part of what he does, just like his involvement in numerous charities and community events through Calgary. He seems to have found the recipe for success.

"Passionate people are happier in their professions, which generally leads to them being successful," says Greg. "Hopefully, young budding business students and entrepreneurs will learn from the latest economic crisis and realize that doing business with honesty and integrity, coupled with hard work, knowledge and passion, is the best path to follow."

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