

Second generation family business going strong

by Heidi Riley

Kwik Kopy Design & Print Centre has been a going concern in Charlottetown since Dale and Marg MacKenzie started the company in 1984. They had been operating a heating oil business, and decided to change gears. They took a two-week course with the franchise and became the proud owners of their own print shop.

Their sons Troy and Shawn MacKenzie first began working at the business with their parents when they were 14 and 11 years old. "It was just a small operation in those days," says Troy. "It was our parents and three other people." Since then, the business has expanded its floor space twice, and then moved to a bigger location at the corner of Euston and Queen Street in 2002.

Brothers get work experience off-Island

Troy completed a Bachelor of Arts at UPEI, and then moved to Ontario for two years. Shawn completed a Business Administration program at Holland College, and then moved to Calgary for four years, where he worked in retail and in two commercial printing plants. "I learned a lot during my time in Calgary, and I was able to bring some of that knowledge back to PEI," says Shawn.

In 2001, Dale and Marg decided that they were getting ready to retire. Troy moved back to PEI to return to work in the business. A year later, Shawn moved home to join him. In 2002, they purchased the company from their parents.

Changes in the industry

"When my parents started this company, the equipment and the products were very different than they are today," says Shawn. "We had no computers, and we had huge typesetting machines. In the last 10 years, there have been many changes in the printing industry. We started to do a lot



Shawn (left) and Troy MacKenzie are the second generation of a family that has been running Kwik Kopy Design & Print Centre in Charlottetown for the past 25 years. The company won the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Business Award for 2008.

more colour printing, and we moved into working with computers, doing much more digital work. Also, there have been a huge number of mergers and acquisitions in this industry, and only about one out of every 10 Canadian printing companies have survived."

"Our parents had a rough start, because they had to learn everything from scratch," says Troy. "We were more fortunate because we were born into this industry, and we learned so much from our parents. Also, we are of a generation that is much more comfortable with digital technology."

"To survive, you need to be able to embrace technology," says Shawn. "You always need to be looking for the right fit, and for better quality, speed, and streamlined efficiencies."

Staff

Over the years, Kwik Kopy's employee numbers have grown to include 27 full-time and six to eight part-time staff. "We've been fortunate to have a very

low turn-over with our employees," says Shawn. "Of our four full-time press operators, two have been with us for over 20 years, and one has worked in the industry for 30 years. It takes years to make a good press operator. It's a trade that you need to learn over time, but it's hard to find training for it."

"We also have staff who work in graphic design, administration, sales, digital production, and wide format production," says Troy. "Presently, we aren't looking for more staff, but we will always accept résumés, and we keep them on file. When we do hire more staff, we usually place an ad in the paper and on the Job Bank."

"Our staff is a big part of our success," says Troy. "We appreciate the fact that they can guide us towards new trends which will improve customer service and the final product. We welcome our staff's input, and we credit them with the willingness to be flexible and try different ways to do what it takes to get the job done."

Brothers work as a team

"My parents both had a very active role in the company, and we realized that we needed two people running the business," says Troy. "We divide our duties, and we bounce ideas off each other."

"When I get an idea, I have to convince Troy first, and he is a much tougher sale," says Shawn.

After years of working 60 to 70 hours a week, the brothers have managed to pare down their work load to an 8 to 5 day, at least most of the time. "We both think it is important to be involved in community volunteer work such as the Rotary Club of Charlottetown and the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce, and we are glad to have the time to do so," says Troy.

For more information, call 368-0156 visit www.charlottetown.kwikkopy.ca

Preparing youth for a life in the business world

by Heidi Riley

YOUTH

Junior Achievement (JA) is an international non-profit organization which teaches young people about the world of business and entrepreneurship.

Programs introduce students to the world of business and economics

Every year, between 3,000 and 4,000 students are involved in JA programs across PEI. JA delivers five programs tailored to students in grades 3, 4, 5, 8, and high school.

The program geared to high school students is called the **Company Program-A Student Venture**. Participants take a business from the idea stage all the way to selling shares to raise capital, marketing and producing a product, and then closing down the business. Students can participate either after school or in the classroom as part of the regular curriculum.

A learning experience

"Participating in the Company Program will help you find out what you need to know if you ever plan to go into the field of business," says Philip Reid, who has been involved in JA as a student and a volunteer, and is now the Company

Program Manager. "It teaches you every aspect of business, including marketing, finance, production, and accounting. Many students who started out in JA have gone on to run their own businesses."

Success stories

Kellie McQuaid and Pam Andrews are two Charlottetown Rural High School students who got to know each other through participating in JA last year and are back again this year. "In my group, I was the company president," says Kellie. "I learned how a company functions and what struggles business people must overcome. It's also a great way to meet business people and other students. I attended an international JA conference in Toronto where I met so many people who share the same interests."

Last year, Pam was the VP of Finance in her group. "I learned so much from that experience," says Pam. "It was great practice for the Accounting course that I was taking in high school. I learned how to balance costs and expenses with revenue, and I was surprised to see how quickly costs add up. It gave me a really good idea of what a career in Accounting would be like. I enjoyed it so much, that I wish I would have started in grade 9."

Students and volunteers needed

"I would like to encourage more high school students to get involved with the Company Program," says



Philip Reid, Company Program Manager (left), with participants Pam Andrews and Kellie McQuaid.

Philip. "Seven company program groups across the Island have signed up so far, and we have room for more students."

About 200 people volunteer with JA every year. "We welcome more people from the business community to help deliver our programs," says Philip. Each Company Program group has at least two advisors. Training and all necessary materials are provided. Meetings are held once a week from November to April, excluding holidays."

For more information, call 892-6066 or visit www.japei.org



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