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Are you the author of memorable and meaningful moments? Are you strategically shaping the events in your life to positively impact those around you? Are you personalizing your service and paying attention to the small details in your business? All of these questions are woven throughout this month's articles, which may help you be more intentional in each step you take and in each moment ahead of you.

Kristin

IN THIS MONTH'S **ISSUE**

- ◆ [Entrepreneur Feature Story: Personalized Service – Joseph Sherren](#)
- ◆ [Strategic Thinking Tip: Examine Events and Trends](#)
- ◆ [12 Tips to Moderate a Panel Discussion That Flows Naturally](#)
- ◆ [From the Bookshelf: The Power of Moments: Why Certain Experiences Have Extraordinary Impact](#)
- ◆ [Contact](#) Kristin

ENTREPRENEUR FEATURE STORY: PERSONALIZED SERVICE by Joseph Sherren

A government bureaucrat becoming an entrepreneur (although not unheard of) is not a common occurrence. But that is just what happened with Kim Green, the proprietor of Kays Wholesale.

Kim worked for the Capital Commission and Tourism Charlottetown in her early career. While there, she was always thinking, "How can we be bigger, better, or more effective?" She was never satisfied with the status quo.

During this period, she always held a dream to operate her own business. It started with taking over Island Chemicals with her husband, Roddy Willis. Then she started Kays Wholesale. Having two businesses gives them the ability to share resources and expertise.

She believes her strong work ethic came from losing her father while young and learning that if you want something, you have to work for it. As a child, she excelled at selling Girl Guide cookies and was even chosen class Valedictorian in high school.

Some people mistake her name for Kay, it's not. The name comes from a successful confectionary wholesaler from years ago. In fact, Kays Brothers were one of the suppliers I patronized when operating my father's store at the corner of Kirkwood Drive and Queen Street.

She favored the name because it came with some of the cache required to be successful in the wholesale business. Kays Brothers ran a successful business for over 60 years, garnering a reputation for personal service and supporting small businesses around P.E.I. Kim's business is built on those same fundamentals. She says, "The more successful

my customers are, the more successful I can be.”

But, success comes with cost. Although she never had a “9 to 5” mentality, she did not fully realize that being a business owner is a 24/7 responsibility. But this self-admitted workaholic was up for the challenge.

She can often be found on the job seven days a week if that is what her customers require. She is hands on and expects a lot from her staff, but nothing she wouldn't do herself.

Since it is a low margin industry, they do not embrace credit cards. Transactions are either cash or customers can open an account. Her focus is to be continually building the business, streamlining processes, and improving service. They currently have a 13,000 sq.ft. warehouse and plan to substantially increase that soon.

By representing over 7,000 small firms, they can offer buying power for small Island businesses. Kim does acknowledge there are competitors, but none offer her level of personalized service and flexibility. She wants the best staff, but discovered that the best is not always the most educated, or the most experienced. Her employee philosophy is posted on her wall. It lists these things that require zero talent:

- Being on time
- Maintaining high energy through the day
- Being open to coaching
- A consistent work ethic
- Using positive body language
- Showing customers a positive attitude
- Doing more than expected
- Putting in honest effort each day
- Being prepared for the unexpected

Kim's advice for anyone wanting to become an entrepreneur, stop thinking about it, just jump in and do it and continue to invest in your own personal development along the way.

My question for business owners: How have you structured your business to bring maximum value to your Island customer?

STRATEGIC THINKING TIP: EXAMINE EVENTS AND TRENDS

This past week, Joe and I were doing some strategic thinking with our dear friends, Brian and Barbara Tracy. One of our discussion items was around "trends." I have always differentiated between an event (one isolated incident otherwise known as a "data point") and a trend (three or more data points that confirm a direction).

Brian made an interesting observation: A successful business sweeps the business landscapes for "events" but examines them as a trend. "What if this takes off?" "What if this becomes the new normal?" In this way, businesses are pulling a "Wayne Gretzky moment" - going where the hockey puck is going (rather than chasing the puck where it has been). Waiting until a single event becomes a trend might be too late in this crazy, busy world!

12 TIPS TO MODERATE A PANEL DISCUSSION THAT FLOWS NATURALLY

One of the panel moderator's most important responsibilities is to keep the conversation flowing naturally. Like a good talk show host, here are 12 tips to keep the conversation lively and informative:

1. **Get the Conversation Started.** Once the introductions to the topic and the panelists are done, the actual discussion starts. This is the toughest part of the moderator's job, and this is where the moderator can make the greatest difference.
2. **Ground Rules.** Remind the panelists and inform the audience of the ground rules for this portion of the program.
3. **Hot Potato or Ping Pong.** The first question usually takes the form of a "hot potato" question (where the moderator asks the same question to each panelist - ough, so boring!) or conversational ping-pong (where the moderator asks a different question to each panelist, preferably ones that build on each other). Typically, the conversation then will evolve into more of a discussion.
4. **Use Your Questions.** Get the panelists to talk by using your well-prepared conversation starter questions. Make it sound like you just thought of them and make sure each question is directed to a specific panelist.
5. **Break Eye Contact.** Look at the panelist when asking a question, then turn to the audience to gauge their reaction and interest. If you look at the panelists after you've asked a question, the panelist will instinctively look back at you when responding. You really want the panelists to talk among themselves and with the audience!
6. **Watch for Cues.** In your pre-meeting, you set up a way for panelists to catch your eye to let you and the other panelists know that they would like to respond. Your speakers should be able to tell you and each other with a glance that they want to address a question or follow up on someone else's comments.
7. **Two is Enough.** Don't go down the hot potato line for every question. By the time the fifth panelist is answering the same question four other panelists have answered, the contribution is probably pretty thin. When you ask a question, two answers are plenty, unless a third person is dying to jump in.
8. **Be Flexible.** Be open and flexible about following the natural conversation path as long as it is interesting and the audience is engaged. Be willing to let go of your planned questions should a particularly interesting line of discussion emerge.
9. **Take Notes.** Especially when the panelists deliver prepared remarks, listen very carefully and take notes. Wherever possible, capture important statements verbatim so you can refer to them during the discussion.
10. **Invite Comments.** Encourage other panelists to comment on particular parts of other panelists' statements. Stay away from a general, "What do you think about that?" It opens the door to off-topic answers.
11. **Use Humor.** Use humor gently and appropriately in service of the discussion. Use your natural wit to lighten the moment. Beware of going too far with canned jokes, gimmicks, and sarcasm. It's a panel, not a game show.
12. **Banter.** Encourage the panelists to have fun, chatter, and joke among themselves.

Follow these 12 tips and you'll have a great conversation during your panel discussion!

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: THE POWER OF MOMENTS: WHY CERTAIN EXPERIENCES HAVE EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT

I'm a big fan of Chip and Dan Heath, bestselling authors of Made to Stick (which explained why certain ideas catch on while others die), Switch (Which showed us how to make changes at work and in life), and Decisive (which explained how to make better choices). As of today, they just launched their newest book, [The Power of Moments: Why Certain Moments Have Extraordinary Impact](#).

In this book, The Heath Brothers dissect what, specifically, makes a particular experience memorable and meaningful. Then, based on these attributes, they challenge us to "be the author of them." So why should you care?

In business, the whole notion of creating an exceptional customer experience (CX) is at the top of everyone's minds. And some have done a great job at defining some basic attributes. (For example, see Lior Arussy's book, [Exceptionalize It](#)). The Heath Brothers take it one step further to provide further ideas to springboard and implement CX thinking. It certainly has got my brain thinking!

In my life, I can also see how these principles apply. Many years ago, after my second child was born, a dear friend shared her secret to raising great kids. She said, "Your job is to make positive memories. As they get older, that's what they remember." And now that my kids are grown and flown the nest, when I asked them, "What do you remember about your childhood?" they replied some simple things - like making sure I made a favorite chicken buffalo sandwich for school. I never understood how that was important, but now I do. (hint: it relates to a transition and connection).

So if you want to be more intentional about making magical moments at work and in your life, I highly recommend this book.

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