

ENTREPRENEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE CAMERON HEROLD:

The Harder You Work, The Luckier You Get!

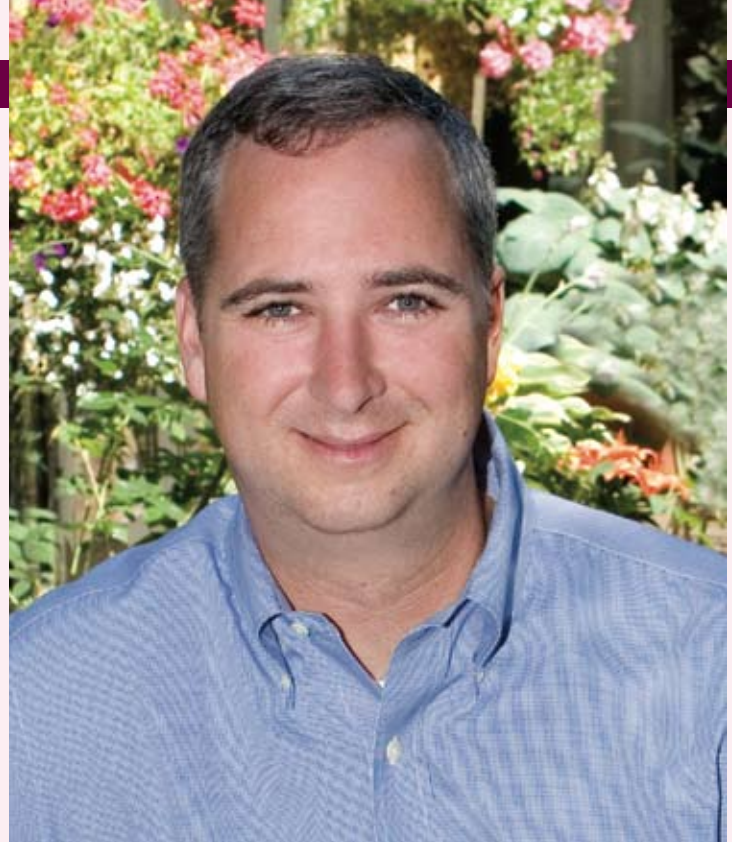


Photo Credit: www.wildmanphotography.com

In Conversation with Val Wilson

The word *help* comes up often during this conversation.

Cameron Herold cares.

Thoroughly likeable, down-to-earth, and good-natured, he has the pleasure of earning his living by assisting others to make their business dreams come true.

He knows how.

Cameron applies the family inclination to lead with enthusiasm.

And he enjoys his work immensely!

THE SCRIVENER: Please tell us about your childhood and your early life in the East.

CAMERON: I was born in Toronto, grew up in Sudbury, and attended Carleton University in Ottawa. I have a brother and a sister—both are entrepreneurs. My father is also an entrepreneur.

THE SCRIVENER: And his father?

CAMERON: My grandfather developed a major pharmaceutical company. And my mom's father was an entrepreneur. I grew up in a family of entrepreneurs!

THE SCRIVENER: What qualities do they have in common?

CAMERON: That's funny. My wife and I were talking about that last night. They are very much a family of leaders. Very tenacious—and they have a lot of passion.

In Grade 3, I started selling licence plate protectors door-to-door.

THE SCRIVENER: What did you want to be in life?

CAMERON: I don't think I ever knew what I wanted to be, but I knew it would be about deal-making and making money.

I remember when I was 7, my mom came into the family room and asked me what I was doing. I had out the phone book and was writing down the names and phone numbers of all of the dry cleaning stores and I was calling them. She

asked me why. I said, "Well, they buy coat hangers and I'm going to go around the neighbourhood and ask for coat hangers. I can sell them to dry cleaning stores for money." I remember her just looking at me. I was in Grade 2.

LAUGHTER

THE SCRIVENER: You were motivated at an early age.

CAMERON: Yes. In Grade 3, I started selling licence plate protectors door-to-door. Sold hundreds of them and made a few hundred dollars.

LAUGHTER

I had a paper route. My dad wanted me to learn how to manage someone else so I took a route that was a lot bigger than one person could handle, then hired people to help me. One kid didn't work out. The other was my brother. He did half the route and I made money from his work. Then I started selling pin cushions door-to-door. I made them the shape of rocking chairs—brown ones and clear ones.

I was doing comic book sales and barter in Grades 3 and 4. Kids at one

end of the beach would sell me their comic books for cheap, then I'd bike down to the other end of the beach where all the rich kids lived and sell them for a profit. They all started putting the pieces together about what I was doing so I had one of my cousins buy the comics. He'd give them to me and I would sell them. That way the kids wouldn't know I was working both ends of the deal. So very early on, I was definitely entrepreneurial, focused, and dealing with people.

THE SCRIVENER: What came next?

CAMERON: I got a stock broker when I was 13—Jim Wilkinson. My dad made me go down and spend a full day with Jim at his office to learn how the stock market worked. I watched the ticker and the LED reader boards with the stocks.

Jim showed me how his computer terminal worked, how he could understand what stocks were trading at, and how people bought and sold. He explained the whole market. I started doing my first trades and buying stocks at 13. My dad would cosign because I was too young to buy shares legally. My dad would split the up-side with me and he guaranteed my risk if I lost money. It wasn't gambling as much as it was education.

THE SCRIVENER: How did you do in the stock market?

CAMERON: I didn't do well in the early days. I made money and lost money. I wish now, looking back, that I'd bought Apple and Microsoft, but I didn't have enough foresight to understand the trends, but I understood how to invest, how to save money. All through high school, I was working and saving my money and investing.

In my first year of university, I got involved with a company called College Pro Painters. I hired 10 employees and got a lot of business training around hiring and firing, coaching employees, and building corporate cultures.

THE SCRIVENER: How did you learn about that?

CAMERON: College Pro ran training programs. That was my first exposure

to running a very professional business. We were trained in all aspects of running a company—big business, multi-unit locations, franchising, and professional sales techniques. I was 20 years old and had a payroll to cover. During the last 4 months of the school year, I was out doing marketing and hiring students and trying to line up jobs and working with customers. I did that for 3 years at university.

When most students were graduating with debts to pay, I bought a house in Sudbury and rented it out right away.

At the same time, I was running a business selling wine skins door-to-door. That was just another way to make a lot of money without having to work hard while I was in school.

THE SCRIVENER: How was school going?

CAMERON: When one of my professors talked about how to hire and train employees, I remember putting my hand up and saying, "Have you actually hired anyone?" He said, "No. Why?" Then sarcastically he said, "Have you?" I told him that I had 10 employees on my payroll right now. He asked if I would mind talking to the class about what it was like to hire people, so I did!

THE SCRIVENER: How did you like doing that?

CAMERON: I loved it. I had come second in a city-wide speaking contest in Grade 2 and was comfortable standing in front of a group. Right then, I realized that I, too, had the knack for leading and teaching from experience. I'm not a theoretical learner, I wasn't the best in class, but I could teach from experience.

I made a lot of money in university. Was able to take the girls out to all the good restaurants and I was driving a nice car. I paid for every penny of my university on my own.

THE SCRIVENER: Who were your mentors along the way?

CAMERON: Early mentors were Greg Clark, founder of College Pro, and Steve Rogers, CEO of First Service, which owns California Closets, Colliers International, and College Pro Painters.

THE SCRIVENER: What did you do after you graduated university?

CAMERON: When most students were graduating with debts to pay, I bought a house in Sudbury and rented it out right away. I moved from Ottawa to Toronto. At that point I was working full time for College Pro Painters and helping open up areas in Toronto.

Again, the company provided me with more business training. I was gaining experience around opening up territories and had about 30 franchises supporting me. I was learning how to run 400 people—doing revenues of \$1.5 million in 4 months a year with my group. I was running a big business at 23.

THE SCRIVENER: And loving it.

CAMERON: Loving every minute of it.

THE SCRIVENER: How many days a week were you working—and how many hours?

CAMERON: It was a bit of a curse—I was working 6 days a week, 10 hours a day. Even a little bit more sometimes. As a student, when I was doing College Pro Painters, I was working 70 to 75 hours per week, but realized that's what it takes to start a business.

Then I moved with College Pro to Seattle to open up Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

THE SCRIVENER: How long did you stay in Washington?

CAMERON: I stayed for a year. I started with 220 painters and 25 franchises.

THE SCRIVENER: Why only a year?

CAMERON: I just got tired of living in the United States. I wanted to come back and be Canadian again.

THE SCRIVENER: What is the difference?

CAMERON: The people were different. And I had met a girl here in Vancouver, who eventually became my wife. I had a lot of friends up in Vancouver. I just felt more like a Canadian than I did an American. Felt more comfortable. I love British Columbia. I love the mountains.

In the Fall of '94, I left College Pro Painters and moved from Seattle to Vancouver. A friend of my dad's called to say he was starting a chain of autobody shops and asked if I would help grow it. I said No—unless I had an equity position in the company.

THE SCRIVENER: Good for you!

CAMERON: He agreed to give me an equity position. The company was called Boyd Autobody. I came on as a partner in the franchise organization. We built that up to about 35 franchises in British Columbia and Ontario and had corporate locations in British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba. I left after a little over 4 years, when they were getting ready to take the company public. I wanted to do something new.

THE SCRIVENER: Was that a good time to leave?

CAMERON: It was, actually. I had built something using the systems I'd learned, but really wanted to have more fun. Boyd Autobody was never going to be a young, entrepreneurial culture. My partners were all based in Winnipeg and I was based in Vancouver, so I wasn't able to do the day-to-day running of the business.

THE SCRIVENER: Obviously, that's important to you.

CAMERON: Yes. That's been my family background, as well. My dad, my grandparents, sister, and brother all own companies. You know, we just didn't want to run a boring business. We wanted to be running an entrepreneurial company that was fun. We also like fun in our day-to-day lives.

I was hired to be president of a company that was involved in the barter business area. Eventually, it would be called Ubarter.com. The dealings were all taxable and above-board. That became a fun

industry and I had a great time growing it into the United States. We dealt with entrepreneurs and exciting ways to bring new revenue to an industry that hadn't emerged yet. I moved down to Seattle again.

THE SCRIVENER: For how long that time?

CAMERON: Fourteen months. I married while living and working in Seattle and my wife was here in Vancouver. We were getting ready for her to move down when I realized I didn't want to live in the United States. I wanted to come home to Canada. My wife didn't want to move to the US either.

We wanted to be running an entrepreneurial company that was fun. We also like fun in our day-to-day lives.

I quit my job there and moved back to Canada in October of 2000. We ended up selling the company to a US public company also in the barter industry.

I started to coach entrepreneurs on how to grow fast-paced companies—how to get going and where they should focus. One of them gave me my first 3-month contract—Brian Scudamore, the founder of 1-800-GOT-JUNK? whom I had helped a bit when we were in the forum for the Young Entrepreneurs Organization for 5 years. Brian built the initial stages of the 1-800-GOT-JUNK? brand. His first full-time employee was a former College Pro Painters person who was critical in helping Brian get the company going.

Brian had 14 really good franchisees when I came on board. At that point, he said, "I understand entrepreneurial training but I'm really not sure how to grow the company." I came in to help him. We built it.

THE SCRIVENER: Was it fun?

CAMERON: It was awesome. I got to interact with amazing people—it was an incredible franchise and we hired fantastic employees. We were able to build a brand. I was running

everything from operations to call centres, advertising, marketing, the PR for all our franchises—all our corporate operations. All sorts of fun stuff. It was a ton of work. We really worked hard to build it—60 or 70 hours a week.

The harder you work, the luckier you get. After over 6 years, I took it from a few million to \$126 million in the year I left. They've now recruited the former president of Starbucks. They went to the next level. She'll come in and look at what I did and say, "What a cute little company." I would look at what she's doing and think *What an awful job she has . . .* because it's not entrepreneurial now.

THE SCRIVENER: Exciting.

CAMERON: Fantastic. Fantastic.

THE SCRIVENER: I have used the services of 1-800-GOT-JUNK? The people who came to do the work were enthusiastic and highly competent. Very impressive. Outstanding customer service.

CAMERON: Thank you. That's not an unusual response from customers of 1-800-GOT-JUNK? The firm focuses on hiring people who have strong energy, tenacity, and great sales skills. We looked for those qualities in our franchisees, as well. The company understands who they need to be hiring and why.

THE SCRIVENER: So there you were in May of 2007, at age 41, back in Vancouver. Were you retired?

CAMERON: I call it semiretired. I love helping entrepreneurs make their dreams happen. If I can continue to do that while enjoying a *life*, that's what I want to keep doing.

I've looked for a number of different ways I can help entrepreneurs grow their businesses without my having to work a 60-hour week and give up my lifestyle. I'm doing a lot of keynote speaking around the world and have created a series of DVDs that I sell in various countries.

I'm helping a couple of clients grow their new franchise organizations.

One is Nurse-Next-Door; another is Fairway Divorce. I really get involved.

THE SCRIVENER: Nurse-Next-Door must be for seniors.

CAMERON: We're helping seniors stay in their homes instead of moving to a seniors' home.

THE SCRIVENER: Fairway Divorce is self-explanatory.

CAMERON: Divorce doesn't have to be a bitter frustration that destroys the family and the kids in the process. After my client Karen Stewart went through a nasty divorce, she found a better way to approach it. She had done a lot of work in mentoring and created a process in Canada to help people go through a divorce in a much easier fashion. And they know up front exactly how much it's going to cost.

THE SCRIVENER: Does the situation have to be quite straightforward for Karen's method to work?

CAMERON: We tend to get into the process early enough so the couple is still willing to talk. In the legal world of divorce, the problem is the breakdown that happens after the couple has decided to divorce. If you can reach the couple before the recriminations set in, you can walk them through the entire procedure without getting *the hating thing* going on.

THE SCRIVENER: It's a marketing challenge to reach people who are about to separate.

CAMERON: Yes. They'll turn to their friends in the early stages. We have a very viral marketing approach so people know who we are. I also help a company in Toronto called "I Love Rewards."

THE SCRIVENER: Does that company market products to give to employees who have done good work?

CAMERON: Exactly. It's private-label points program. Sort of a company bonus program to help motivate and reward employees. We are assisting businessowners to get their heads around helping make their employees' personal dreams happen.

THE SCRIVENER: Sounds very worthwhile. Do you see yourself as a mentor in your work with your company, BackPocket COO?

CAMERON: Yes. BackPocket COO is set to mentor entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, at this stage I'm charging a fee because that's how I make money.

I have created several DVDs on Leadership [www.BackPocketCOO.com]. Recently, I coached two groups of entrepreneurs from all over the world who were taking the Entrepreneurial Masters Program Asset program at MIT. I coached them for a 3-hour period and stayed on through the entire 4½ days of their program, to provide added value.

Some of my work is studied at Harvard and I've taught entrepreneurs at MIT.

I had a 62 percent average in high school and about a 63 percent average in university. I attended about 60 percent of my classes. My theme was "5-0 and Go"—50 percent average and get me out of here!

Universities seem to have taken notice of my career capabilities. Some of my work is studied at Harvard and I've taught entrepreneurs at MIT. I wouldn't qualify to attend any of those schools.

Education is just part of the puzzle. It's also about working smart. The educators have to help explain why we're learning this stuff—how it's going to help us—and they have to realize they must provide a balance of theory and experience. It's discouraging how many entrepreneurs have never finished university or college.

THE SCRIVENER: Because they want to get out and start making it happen?

CAMERON: Yes, get out and accept the responsibility and start learning the stuff that's relevant to them.

THE SCRIVENER: Have you had time for community service?

CAMERON: I've done some in the past and am currently working on a nonprofit model where I'll be helping entrepreneurs from low income families and single moms and disabled people who have an entrepreneurial idea. I'll be spending time with them and helping them grow their companies. I'll be doing that without charge.

THE SCRIVENER: What are your special interests, now that you have more time?

CAMERON: I love cooking. Love spending time with friends and family. I work 4 days a week. I don't work Fridays anymore. I'm getting back into golf in a big way.

When I'm helping an entrepreneur with his or her business, that's exciting. If someone asks what I'm doing and what I do day-to-day, I say *I'm enjoying life!*

THE SCRIVENER: What are the most important aspects of your life?

CAMERON: Absolutely friends and family. I love being a mentor. I still live with dreams. I still live with goals. I want to encourage people to learn. I have a list of about 100 goals.

THE SCRIVENER: Share your top 3?

CAMERON: I don't rank them. I want to drive a Ferrari. I don't want to own a Ferrari—I'd like to drive one down the coast of Italy. I'd like to have an antique globe. I want to travel the world with my kids.

THE SCRIVENER: You will always have a young attitude. You're so buoyant and enthusiastic—and you're making a big contribution in so many ways.

CAMERON: And having fun!

THE SCRIVENER: What advice would you give to businessowners and entrepreneurs?

CAMERON: If you focus on your employees as important individuals, they'll help you grow your company. ▲

Voice: 604 736-2876

Cell: 604 351-9665

Cameron@BackPocketCOO.com
www.BackPocketCOO.com