

## At Home in the Business of Caring

By Kiana Riego

*If there's one thing you need to know about Georgia Lloyd, it is that she loves working with people. "I love when I know I have taken care of someone...it just makes me feel golden."*

It makes sense, then, that Georgia Lloyd is the proud founder and president of one of the largest independent, non-franchise owned home care companies in metro: Always Home Homecare. It is a company that provides non-medical home care services to clients in their homes. "I have to say I am proud of the fact that I started a company from nothing, and I didn't even know the homecare industry," she says. Always Home Homecare is now a multi-million dollar company.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Public Relations from Mount Saint Vincent University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Dalhousie, Georgia ended up in the world of sales. She was in outbound sales for about 20 years, and trained reps around the province, winning awards for top sales every year. Her success in the sales world is accredited to her passion and commitment to working with people. With both of her parents owning businesses for most of her life, Georgia's dad always encouraged her to start her own business, because he knew she could be successful selling for herself. She began to explore the idea, and researched the top 10 selling franchises in the world, finding that homecare was always on the list.

So, in May 2004, she jumped on a plane to Philadelphia to buy a franchise called Senior Health Care by Angels, and flew back to Halifax to meet with a lawyer so she could get started. When meeting with the lawyer, he asked Georgia what she was getting for \$27,000, and Georgia replied with, "a week training, and a manual."



"The lawyer says, 'Listen, you can get a lot of consultant work done here for \$27,000 - it's not like you're buying a Tim Horton's or a McDonalds, you can start your own.'"

And so began Georgia's journey into entrepreneurship.

"I decided to take the summer to develop a name for my company, while continuing to work at my job - because I have three kids and I had a big job, a big salary, and you can't really replace a big salary."

September rolled around, and Georgia won Presidents club at this company, which recognizes the top 10 per cent of the employees, and they are invited to attend a prestigious event to receive an award.

Georgia remembers so clearly the day everything fell into place. "I was called into the office, and I was told that my job was no longer in Atlantic Canada, one week before I was going to President's Club," she says. "My boss looked like the colour of that paper, white, but inside I was doing a major happy dance because I knew I was already starting a company, and this meant I was going to get a full package, and get paid for a long time."

It is important to remember that if you put the hard work in, in the end it will pay off and the kinks will work themselves out. "It was like a horseshoe turned up the right way. It worked out perfectly - God was on my side," Georgia says.

This was just the beginning, but with her parents support, and her dad's encouragement to, "just do it", Georgia jumped over all the hurdles that were thrown at her, with hard work and determination.

"Persistence is key. I really believe in hiring the strengths you don't have, and never, never, never, never, give up; if it's something that you want to do, you will always find a way to do it if you just continue to work at it" she says.

There will always be challenges along the way, but it is how you handle them that makes the difference, she adds.

"I don't think inside the box - I think about ways to get around problems. I come up with solutions that nobody else has really thought about, because I think about a way to go around it at a different angle. There is never just one path to a problem, and that creates opportunity," says Georgia.

While trying to discover what holes were in the marketplace, she found that a lot of people in the industry talked about transportation being an issue, so she responded by purchasing a van and hiring two drivers.

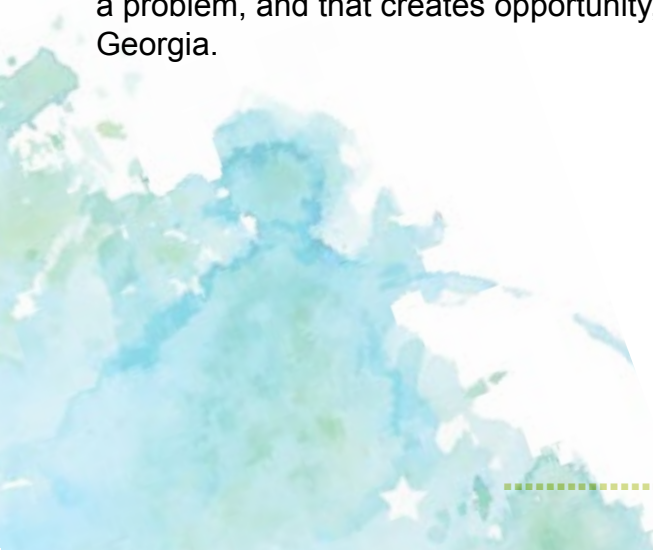
"It became very apparent that although it was a need in the marketplace, there wasn't really anybody that wanted to pay for those services. Was it a failure? No, I wouldn't say it was a failure, but it certainly wasn't a success either. I think that everything has been guiding us to where we are now, and I know now that you just have to focus and do what you're good at, and that's what we've learned."

Through her journey she may have taken some rough paths, but it is what's led her on the straight road she is on today, where she goes into work with a smile on her face every day, grateful to be a part of such a giving industry.

She's created countless unforgettable memories at Always Home Homecare. "The work I do revolves around giving and I love knowing that I am putting back into the community with the work that I do every day."

"One time we had this woman that lived alone and didn't have any family, and we became her family. We would throw birthday parties for her; we are really invested in each and individual client. We bought her gifts, and brought her cake, and it was just really fun," she says.

Always Home Homecare used to have a day centre, where seniors could come for the day. There was a chef on staff, a recreational therapist and activities for the seniors to participate in.



“We had a Nintendo Wii and there were two veterans of the Second World War playing a boxing game - it was so fun and so precious to see them enjoying themselves so much.”

Clients are the focus at Always Home Homecare, but Georgia also invests a lot in her employees, and it shows. “Just recently I had a couple of staff leave after being with me for a number of years, and they came back and said they missed us so bad that they never want to leave again. So that’s wonderful, and that’s very rewarding.”

Being an entrepreneur also gives Georgia the opportunity to connect and network with women entrepreneurs and professionals.

“I love the Women’s President Organizations because it allows me to have those deep discussions with other like-minded women, and they have shared experiences that can definitely help.”

Through the Women’s President Organization, Georgia met Laurie Sinclair, a Business Development Officer at the Centre. “Laurie Sinclair is one reason I joined the Centre, because I think she is amazing. She’s very, very knowledgeable and that gave me the confidence to join, because I thought that if this demonstrates the kind of skill set the Centre for Women in Business offers, it’s awesome.”

Georgia joined the Centre last year and attended Professional Development Day in November. “I liked when the women all sat up on stage, and each person said a few words about they learned through their business. I wrote everything down, because I could relate to all of it.

“Sometimes you get so caught up in your own world that it’s nice to take the time to sit down with all types of business owners and hear about their world for a change.”

**Centre for Women in Business**

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# Are Leaders Born or Made?

By Kiana Riego

*Are leaders born or made? Some people believe that leadership is a quality that we are either born with, or aren't. But with hard work and determination anything is possible, and Suzanne Bachur is the perfect example of this.*

McDonald's, age 15, Hull, Quebec: that's where it all started for Suzanne, who is now the President of Premiere Executive Suites/Atlantic Limited, a provider of long and short-term fully furnished accommodations with franchises across Canada.

Everyone has to start somewhere, and while working at McDonald's, Suzanne developed skills she never knew she had, and it gave her the opportunity to learn about herself.

"McDonald's culture was one that I very much respected and attributed to helping develop my confidence, as prior to joining them, I had been a rather quiet and reserved teen," says Suzanne.

While Suzanne was enrolled in a computer programming course at Cegep de l'Outaouais, a college in Gatineau, Quebec, she began to reconsider her future when she was offered a management position within McDonald's. "By this point it was very clear to me that hospitality was my passion," says Suzanne.

When her future husband, Ron, who also worked for McDonalds, was transferred to Toronto, Suzanne moved with him and found herself working at AMJ Campbell Van Lines. "I was immediately enthralled by the energy and passion of entrepreneur Tim Moore, President of AMJ Campbell," says Suzanne.

With Tim Moore's full support and encouragement, Suzanne and Ron made the decision to accept a franchise opportunity with Swiss Chalet, and left Toronto to begin their life as entrepreneurs in Nova Scotia. Suzanne took a very hands-on approach with the franchises-from management to financials.



But when Tim Moore, presented her with an opportunity to partner in a new venture, Premiere Executive Suites, she agreed without hesitation.

"And so began a labour of love and adventure in learning that has in 15 years grown from a handful of

fully furnished condos in Halifax, to what is now a Canada wide franchise with over 1450 fully furnished, extended stay properties," said Suzanne.

Fast forward to 2014. Premiere Executive Suites has been recognized as one of the 10 Best Places to Work in Atlantic Canada for six consecutive years. In 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 Suzanne was named one of the Top 50 CEO's in Atlantic Canada by Atlantic Business Magazine and also made the Top 50 Fastest Growing Women Lead Companies in North America during the Women Presidents Organization Conference in Dallas in 2013.

She calls her leadership style “energetic and very open.”

“I share our quarterly financials with the entire team so that they are aware of the company’s position. I believe that nothing should come as a surprise.”

Through the trials and tribulations, and between moving provinces, Suzanne’s had her fair share of challenges, but whatever is thrown at her, she focuses on the positive. You have to treat every situation as a learning opportunity and make the most of what is in front of you, she said.

“The path to success is not reached without challenges and valuable lessons learned by way of errors in judgment or decision making. I prefer not to use the term “failure” as to me it doesn’t sound positive. Making mistakes is inevitable, but it is what you walk away with that builds strength and confidence,” said Suzanne.

As we all know, there will always be ups and downs along the way, and barriers that have to be broken down. Five hundred of the country’s largest companies by Women’s Advocacy group Catalyst found that 17.7 per cent of senior officer positions were held by women in 2010. The majority of the top leadership positions are still filled by men, but this does not phase Suzanne. Many people are always looking at the disadvantages women have when in leadership positions, she said, but she isn’t scared to admit these challenges and utilizes them to the best of her ability.

“I find that the most difficult challenge for me, being a woman in a leadership role would have to be trying to control emotions,” said Suzanne. “I am not afraid to acknowledge or suggest that most men tend to like excitement, change, challenge, uncertainty, and the potential for huge returns on a risky investment, whereas women tend to prefer predictability, continuity, safety, roots, relationships, and a smaller return on a more secure investment, and that is a maternal instinct that can be difficult to diffuse at times.

Relationship building is very important to Suzanne, and she believes that the foundation of the company was built around creating open and honest relationships. “Making sure that you have

happy, talented staff representing your service is as imperative to success as is the promotion. I believe that it is the ability to earn trust that determines the quality of the relationship,” said Suzanne.

“I truly believe that it had been my experience with McDonald’s that has been most influential in molding my management style. McDonald’s training programs and culture instilled my enthusiasm for creating and providing excellent customer service and employee retention,” said Suzanne.

Suzanne also learned a lot from Jackie Stewart, Corporate Sales Manager for AMJ Campbell Van Lines, and Tim Moore, founder of AMJ Campbell Van Lines.

“I learned important lessons during my time with AMJ Campbell Van Lines. Namely Jackie Stewart’s dedication to nurturing relationship with corporate accounts; networks; and fostering friendships and Tim Moore’s philanthropic spirit and the importance of giving back to the community,” said Suzanne.

In addition to having open and honest relationships important with employees and co-workers, she considers it “vital” to build relationships with other entrepreneurs and a-like business women, and the Centre for Women in Business offers just that. Suzanne has attended a number of the Centre workshops and events. “I always walk away reenergized and motivated to put my new lessons into action.”

Leaders come in all different shapes and sizes, so take a risk and step up to the challenge. You might find out that you are a great leader, but you may find out it’s not for you.

“Do not be intimidated by people who they perceive to have more knowledge or experience. Always remember – we all get out of bed and pull on our pants the same way every day and there are no doubt many more similarities,” she says  
“There are no mistakes; it is what you walk away with that builds strength and confidence.”

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