

Mrs. Dunsters leading the charge on baked goods

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Rosalyn and Blair Hyslop, co-owners of Mrs. Dunsters, celebrating being named New Brunswick's top exporter for sales under \$5 million on Friday afternoon.

Photo: Lyndsay Armstrong/Kings-County Record

SAINT JOHN • Talk to any New Brunswicker and mention the name "Mrs. Dunsters" and their face will light up, says owner Blair Hyslop.

"When you tell people where you work, they get a big smile on their face and they tell you a story," Hyslop said. "The people that come into our store take pride in what we're doing, not just employees but the customers. It's a pretty awesome experience, it's hard to put a price on that."

For Blair and his wife Rosalyn who co-own both Mrs. Dunsters in Sussex and Snair's Golden Grain Bakery in Borden-Carleton, P.E.I., it's been a long time in the making before being named New

Brunswick's top exporter for sales under \$5 million with Blair also being selected to join the Wallace McCain Institute's Entrepreneurial Leaders Program at the University of New Brunswick. But the awards and distinctions aren't why they work to make some of the most delicious baked goods in Atlantic Canada.

"That's not something that we strive to be," Blair said. "Our motto in our business is to be a little bit better everyday than the day before, that's where we set the bar. We don't go out and try to win awards and get these kinds of things but lately that's been a consequence of the things we do."

Blair himself has been working in the food industry for over 25 years, starting his career in Saint John with Eastern Bakeries, managing brands like Butternut, Karnes and Fun Buns before moving into the alcohol industry, working for Alpine and Moosehead. He spent the majority of his career working for McCain International Inc., where as a vice-president of marketing, he helped build the brand in more than 100 emerging markets around the globe.

Working internationally though, he said it was always he and Rosalyn's dream to open a business of their own and they were presented with the perfect opportunity in 2014 when Mrs. Dunsters became available.

"I went home that night and told Rosalyn I think I found the business that we've always wanted to have," Blair said, noting the strong business brand that was already established for Mrs. Dunsters. "People really wanted this business to succeed, we still to this day, three years later, have people who thank us for buying the business."

Helping him succeed so quickly was the fact that Blair had spent the start of his career working for a bakery, allowing him to better understand the difficulties of producing product on a daily basis and shipping to stores throughout the Maritimes.

"If a machine goes down, you have to fix it, if a truck breaks down, you have to get back on the road," he said. "You have to get the product out to market, everyday to 600 stores, and it's all fresh so the clock is ticking as soon as it's baked."

But it's this steady business that has made Mrs. Dunsters a staple in the New Brunswick economy and diet today, allowing him more time to get more involved in the community as a volunteer for initiatives such as helping children read through the Good Fit Book program and the Fog Lit Festival, which Rosalyn helps organize each year.

"We try to tackle that as a family and do what we can to really create the place we want to work in and the community we want to live in," Blair said, relating it to their business for the future.

"For us, we're just trying to create the company that Rosalyn and I, that we ourselves, would want to work for."

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