

## [A lesson for entrepreneurs: Do you want to be liked or respected?](#)

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by DAVID VEALE



Terri-Ann Cormier, part owner of PropertyGuys.com Saint John franchise. Photo: Kâté Braydon/Telegraph-Journal

Wallace McCain Institute's entrepreneurial leadership program has been life changing for many entrepreneurs in Atlantic Canada. Every one of the program's alumni has a story – an incredible story in some cases. Terri-Ann Cormier is no exception.

Cormier has come a long way from her first entrepreneurial ventures – Valley Words of Wisdom and Naturally for Life (businesses in Rothesay). Since then she has published a magazine, founded a women's group and become an author, blogger and radio personality. Cormier's present company, Executed Solutions, providing online marketing and brand management was a natural extension of the skills she mastered in her early business ventures combined with her unbridled passion for helping other businesses succeed. Last September, Cormier became part owner of the Saint John PropertyGuys.com franchise, a private sale real estate marketing company.

**Q: What is your biggest lesson learned when it comes to being an entrepreneur?**

**A:** I think my absolute biggest lesson learned – and it didn't come easy – was understanding that you have two options typically while growing as an entrepreneur. Deciding whether you want to be liked or respected. When I first went into business I was 19 years old and tried to be all things to all people. I learned later in business (now at 30) that there are tough decisions to be made. You need to say 'no' to some people, there are boards you need to resign from and sometimes you need to fire a customer – all in the spirit of good business. Ultimately, that is how you become successful, by focusing on what really matters to you and your businesses growth.

[Focus on what really matters to you and your businesses growth. -Terri-Ann Cormier](#)  
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**Q: What attracted you to being an entrepreneur versus finding a career and profession?**

**A:** I think I just was born to be an entrepreneur. I've been finding ways to sell things, invent things and create new ideas for as long as I can remember. When I did have a regular J.O.B. I always wanted to

improve things, change the way things were done, increase sales/revenues or move through the ranks. These were not my decisions to make and out of my control and – well – I didn't like that very much. Entrepreneurship is in me, it's not a career path I chose, it's a passion, something that boils deep within. I can't really explain it – it's just something I'll never quit.

**Q: What advice would you give to someone who is considering entrepreneurship?**

**A:** Seek out mentors. My entire life I have been blessed with amazing mentors who have walked onto my path at the right moments. These entrepreneurs and community leaders have taught and mentored me as I grew. Why reinvent the wheel when you can potentially learn from someone who has already 'been there and done that'?

**Q: How did the PropertyGuys.com opportunity come to you?**

**A:** Well I could give you a real elaborate reason but, if I summed it up in three words, it would be "Wallace McCain Institute." Maybe I would add two more words – "Nancy Mathis" (the executive director). Being a part of the institute's entrepreneurial leadership program has quite literally changed my world upside down and inside out as an entrepreneur and connected me with other thought-provoking, like-minded, high-growth entrepreneurs. Nancy has a way of knowing exactly who to connect you with. She tried really hard to connect me with my present business partner, Sarah Albert (Moncton PropertyGuys.com franchisee), for quite a long time. When we finally did meet, we chatted, talked about business and PropertyGuys.com, the topic of the Saint John franchise being available, came up. Within a few months we made a deal and we bought the franchise.

[Seek out mentors. -Terri-Ann Cormier](#)

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**Q: What has been the most challenging part of getting this business going?**

**A:** I think with any business that has this potential, the biggest hurdle is the growth curve and increasing brand awareness. Our goal right now is to grow the brand's presence here in Saint John. When someone says real estate, I want people to think PropertyGuys.com. That takes work, dedication, long hours, less sleep and, unfortunately, less time with friends and family.

**Q: Being an entrepreneur can be a lonely endeavour – how do you overcome this?**

**A:** I find other lonely entrepreneurs. No seriously, it's about surrounding yourself with positive individuals from both the business world and the 'normal world.' You need people that can tell you it's all going to work out and others to tell you to get back on the horse and not give up until you win. It's balance.

**Q: How would you finish the following sentence? 'A leader's job is to...'**

**A:** A leader's job is to empower, motivate and create a momentum for newborn leaders! I had someone tell me once that you have two goals in life: find your purpose and spend the remainder of your life fulfilling your life's purpose. I found my purpose in entrepreneurship and the impact I am able to leave on others through this responsibility is rewarding in, and of, itself. My purpose being fulfilled will be shown in the legacy I leave behind to other young entrepreneurs from similar backgrounds. The legacy that clearly states – you can be, you will be, if you choose to be.

[Find other lonely entrepreneurs. -Terri-Ann Cormier](#)  
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**Q: I know you are passionate about giving back to the community. How is that playing out right now?**

**A:** I am a huge advocate of being a business with a social conscience. As an entrepreneur and a business owner, I believe you have a responsibility to give back. Currently, 13 PropertyGuys.com franchises Canada-wide have partnered with Habitat for Humanity to assist homeowners in donating their 'gently' used goods. From May 19 to June 1 we will be going out into the community and picking up those items from homeowners and delivering it back to Habitat for Humanity. They have built 17 homes since 1998 for citizens in our communities and the stats are staggering of how those families' lives have been touched by the opportunity to have a safe roof over their heads.

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