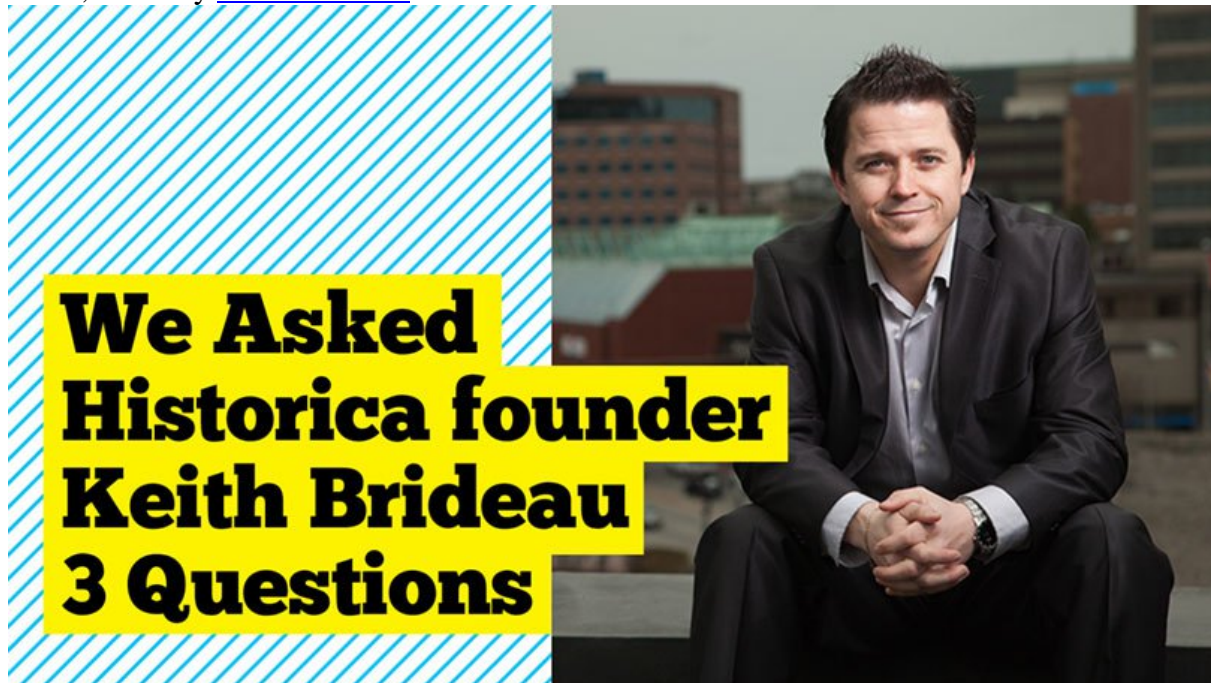


[Making SJ the “Place to Be”: 3 Questions for Keith Brideau](#)

Mar 1, 2016 by [Cherise Letson](#)



Saint John’s Keith Brideau has made a name for himself by tackling projects nobody else would. His company [Historica](#) has transformed the city’s uptown landscape, taking vacant or rundown urban properties and turning them into vibrant apartments, retail and office spaces.

We asked Keith three questions:

1) [Why did you see an opportunity in redeveloping uptown Saint John when many others didn’t?](#)

Simply put, the stars had to align. There were many others who saw the opportunity. Chances are they just didn’t have all the right ingredients and/or the desire to make it happen.

Not only did it require someone with vision and a tremendous amount of work ethic, it required the passion and courage to be brave enough to try. To be frank, rebuilding a city isn’t for everyone.

It also took some good sales skills to raise the capital necessary to turn the vision into a reality. My guess is not everyone who saw the opportunity had the ability to articulate the vision and sell it to others.

Stamina and persistence have also been critical to our success. There are all kinds of obstacles that challenge and threaten our ability to move forward, and it was through sheer determination and will power that we were able to do what we have.

The timing also had to be right from a market perspective. More specifically, it’s easier to sell the uptown when the momentum’s on your side and there’s more to see and do in the area than ever before. Twenty years ago, people were looking to move away. But now that we have all these great people, entrepreneurs, businesses, and a lifestyle that’s second to none in New Brunswick, everybody wants to be here. Without a doubt, the dream is becoming more and more real every day.

2) What is it about uptown Saint John that inspires you?

There are two main things that inspire me when it comes to the uptown. The first is the people, and the second is the character. At first, it was all about the money and real estate. But now it's about the challenge. It's about creating a legacy for future generations. I want to be remembered as the guy who helped make Saint John great again.

The amount of support I have received over the years has been incredibly encouraging. Literally, I've received thousands of messages from people telling me how great it is that we've chosen to rebuild the city. When times get tough and I feel like giving up, all I do is think about all the words of encouragement I've received over the years. I think about how much I want my children to want to stay here, and how much everyone wants Saint John to prosper.

From a character perspective, we have really cool architecture and it just so happens to be on the waterfront. The uptown is also incredibly walkable. You can pretty much do anything you want within a matter of minutes. Believe it or not, uptown Saint John probably offers a better quality of life than anywhere in Atlantic Canada. Everything you would ever need is here and everything is within walking distance. Now how cool is that?

3) What's next for you and Historica Developments?

Our current projects include turning around a 15 unit residential building, an eight unit residential building, transforming the former Bustin's building on Germain Street into eight high quality loft apartments, a couple high quality office spaces, an Italian restaurant, a pub, and a comedy club.

In addition to that, we're also in the process of looking for more investors. We're looking for people who want to partner with us so we can continue building on the momentum we have and make Saint John great again.

Simply put, there are all kinds of opportunities, so many great things to look forward to, and so much more we can do to make sure Saint John becomes the place to be for the foreseeable future.