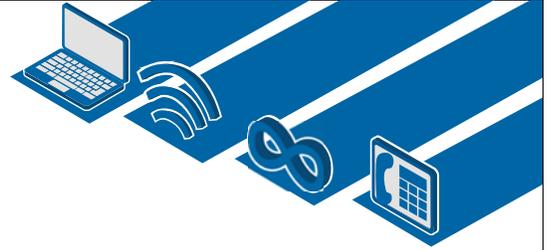


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## Business owner brings innovation to P.E.I. construction industry

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© Submitted photo Steven Jackson knew at a very early age he could always make a good deal — and a good deal for him was when all parties involved left Steven Jackson happier than when they started.

He's been making himself and other people happy ever since.

Now, Jackson heads and owns Sperra Construction Group, a P.E.I.-based company aimed at bringing the principles of innovation to the construction industry.

"I figured out pretty early that I like the art of the deal and I liked negotiating and I wanted to develop that skill set and get more serious about business," laughed Jackson during an interview with The Guardian.

"I became really passionate about becoming an entrepreneur and I really wanted to be a business owner as I came right out of high school. For the last seven years I have worked

on gaining experience, knowledge and connections. This past year, though, is where we have had the opportunity to really branch out.”

The 27-year-old Jackson and his company have tackled several different projects around P.E.I. including the recent replacement of the one-kilometre sidewalk on the Bunbury Road.

“I think I am bringing a fresh outlook to the industry in terms of investing in new technologies, how our company shares information about projects we are working on and adapting and managing in a constantly evolving world,” explained Jackson.

“There have been difficulties for but I have been very fortunate to have had great mentors teaching, supporting and encouraging me the last six years prior to my own successes.”

Jackson invested much of his personal savings into his business and had no formal training after high school.

He gained much of his experience working under different mentors and different companies.

“I didn't come from a wealthy family and it's hard to get loans from banks when you own nothing and end up owing everything but there are grants and opportunities out there for people wanting to start their own business,” said Jackson.

Currently, Jackson is taking part in UNB's Entrepreneurial Leaders Program, which is aimed at helping young business owners grow and network their businesses around the Maritimes.

Out of 400 businesses, only 16 high potential candidates are chosen through a 12-round vetting process.

Jackson has already completed three of the twelve rounds.

“I think ultimately if you live on the Island and you want to start a business here, just chase your dreams and your passions. Don't expect to hear 'no' all the time and even if you do hear it, be persistent. Sometimes 'no' is an opportunity for a better yes.”

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