



Trent Dyrsmid Through the eyes of an entrepreneur

Trent Dyrsmid is the CEO and founder of Dyrand Systems, a Vancouver-based provider of Managed IT Services to small and medium sized businesses.

Trent's entrepreneurial spirit was awakened early in his career when he discovered as a photocopier sales representative that success is not something that comes with seniority but that it can be achieved at a young age through focus, determination, and hard work.

In 1992, 21 year old Trent was recruited by Scotia McLeod as a rookie stockbroker - the youngest the firm had ever hired - based on his outstanding track record as a photocopier sales rep. Within 18 months, he was at the top of his class earning a six-figure income. Six years later, Trent found himself no longer satisfied, so he set out to find a more rewarding challenge. The first step of this journey saw him return to school for a diploma in Applied Information Technology.

It was during his time at school that Trent founded his first startup, Global Motorsports Interactive. As an avid racecar driver Trent decided to create an eCommerce service provider business for the manufacturers in the automotive aftermarket. With the business plan written and an angel investor supporting his idea, Trent started his very own dot com only to find that he couldn't raise the additional funds required due to a lack of experience, management skills and very bad timing. "I knew it was time to call it a day", Trent recalls, "so I decided to return the remaining 50% of the angel money and look for a new business idea." About a month later, in July 2001, Dyrand Systems Inc. was born.

To create Dyrand, Trent decided to combine talents with a former colleague, Edward Anderson, who was working as a network engineer in Calgary at the time. As co-founders of Dyrand, Trent and Ed turned out to be ideal partners; Trent's organization and sales skills in combination with Ed's technical know-how and operations management experience proved to be the critical ingredients to create a successful IT services company.

The two young entrepreneurs started out in a Yaletown apartment as a break-and-fix IT shop with no customers whatsoever but very ambitious plans and two phones to make cold calls. One day the newly formed company was invited to submit a proposal for an IT maintenance competition. Their proposal was initially rejected because their services did not meet the requirements of the large customer. This rejection proved to be a key moment in the young company's development. In the face of running out of funds, Trent and Ed recognized the shortcomings of their business model and decided to become the ultimate customer-focused organization. They took the time to understand exactly what

their ideal customers would need and created a service with the strongest value proposition possible: “Get all the benefits of an enterprise-level IT department for the cost of less than a full-time employee”. Dyrand became an MSP and won their first large client as a result.

Even though this client’s needs proved to be representative for the needs of many other companies and things began looking better for Dyrand, the young company started losing money faster than ever and soon they couldn’t make payroll. “There were days where I wondered if I had just blown 10 years worth of savings” he says. “When I first chose to go down this path, I sold my house, my ski-boat, my racecar, my camper, and my stock portfolio, all to fund the business. The thought of losing it all scared me to death.” Out of options and deeply in debt, Trent went back to his original angel investor. Impressed by Trent’s persistence and the fact that he got the remaining funds back the first time he invested with Trent, the angel agreed to support him once again.

With the company refinanced, break-even was reached within a short period of time. The fiscal discipline the company had to adopt as a result of being founded during a high-tech downturn enabled the company to stay around for long enough to gain the momentum necessary to attract such high-profile customers as HY Louie, Cryopak Industries, and Quantum Environmental. Today, Dyrand Systems provides Managed IT Services to approximately 40 customers around North America.

After five years in business Trent says the most important lessons he has learned from all the ups and downs of being an entrepreneur are to know what you want, don’t be afraid to go after it, and no matter how tough things might look, never give up.

Having enjoyed the benefits of mentoring relationships himself, Trent participates in the “Leaders of Tomorrow” mentorship program of the Vancouver Board of Trade where he has been mentoring a UBC commerce student for the past term. Trent is a sponsor of several foster children through World Vision. He used to participate in the “Junior Achievement” program and he also contributed his time to build houses for low-income families through “Habitat for Humanity”.

Trent Dyrsmid
CEO & Founder
Dyrand Systems Inc.

tdyrsmid@dyrandsystems.com
www.dyrandsystems.com
Phone 604.408.4415
Fax 604.484.2043