

Mike Desjardins

Driver, **Virtus Inc.**

Age: 34

Mike Desjardins, the owner of Virtus Inc., a Vancouver-based consulting firm that helps companies retain and develop talent and build leaders and teams, has "driver" as his job title.

"I don't use words like "CEO" or "president"; I don't like it. I would rather call myself a "driver" because I am driving the business," he said.

Virtus currently has 21 employees and annual revenues of \$1.3 million, and it is growing, according to Desjardins. "My business grows because I have a solid, committed team who are bought into the culture of our business and are interested in personally growing and improving," he said.

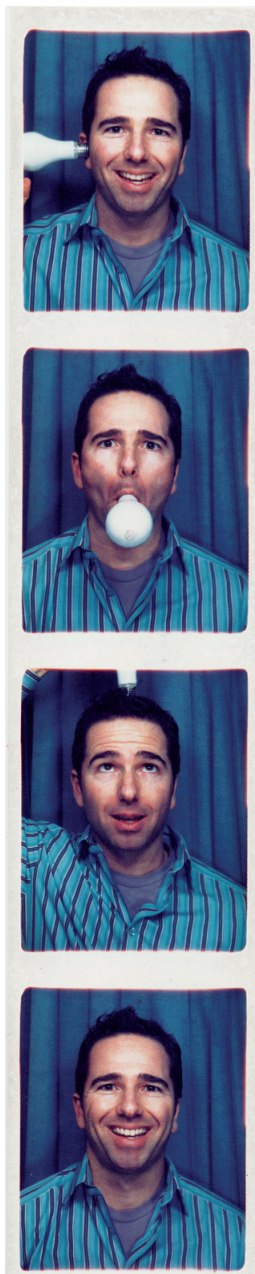
A commerce graduate from the University of British Columbia, Desjardins became the youngest president in the pool and spa industry in North America at the age of 25, when he took over control of Purity Water Treatment Products Inc. He took a \$750,000 company and built it into a \$4 million business, in so doing making it the largest

supplier of hot tub and pool chemicals in Canada.

Desjardins claims that he is the kind of man who never says "if," but rather always says "when."

"Cash flow is the most critical thing to watch in a growing entrepreneurial business," he said. "Passion is contagious. Team members, suppliers and customers, love to get excited and be involved with a business full of passionate, driven people."

Desjardins never misses an opportunity to connect people together where there is potential for them to create a mutually beneficial relationship. "The way for me to truly reach the success I'm looking for in life is based on me helping others to achieve their dreams and aspirations. I do this daily by first focusing on how I can help my team, my clients and my friends, before I think about how they can help me." ■



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*Profession you would most like to try: Jet fighter pilot
Favourite movie: **Monty Python & the Holy Grail**
Favourite local restaurant: **Quattro (at Whistler)**
Mentor: **My Dad, Guff Muench, and Walt Sutton**
Currently reading: **Blue Ocean Strategy** by W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne*

*Toughest business or professional decision: **Buying out two of my business partners in April 2003***

*Car or chosen mode of transport: **Audi TT and Yamaha R6***

*Person you would most like to meet: **Richard Branson (I know, join the line...)***

*Birthplace: **Kitchener, Ont.***

*Last CD bought or music downloaded: **Let it Die** by Feist*

*Highest level of education: **B.Comm., UBC***

*What's left to do: **My wildly courageous decision is to turn Virtus into the Apple of the consulting world***

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