



NOVA SCOTIA

INSTALL-A-FLOR LTD.

PATRICIA and **LARRY GIBSON** realize their good fortune. They ventured into the business world in 1988 with the opening of Install-a-Flor Ltd. In so doing, the Gibsons laid a solid foundation for a business that continues to flourish.

“You could say we were kind of forced into starting our business,” explains Larry. “I was working for Eaton’s Contract Interiors Division and learned that the company had plans to close that division. This left me with two options – start over with another company, or do something on my own. We talked about it and decided to open our own business.”

After finding an affordable location, they invested most of their personal savings in renovations so they could minimize their bank loan. They established Install-A-Flor which provides flooring supplies and custom installations for both retail and commercial consumers. Things went so well the Gibsons had to renovate again within the first year of business. They added an entire floor, but soon outgrew that space as well. After finding a suitable new location, they moved the business and added a warehouse in which to store inventory and then a retail store.

“When we first started, it was difficult to convince suppliers to sell us their products,” recalls Patricia, “because selling to a newcomer is sometimes a bit of risk. But Larry and I have a policy of ‘Never take no for an answer. There’s always another way’. We stuck with it and gained peoples’ confidence.”

Now, Patricia and Larry are able to enjoy more of the benefits of business ownership. “Once you’ve established good, sound business practices and have committed employees on the



Barrett and MacKay

team, things do get easier,” she continues. “Although one thing we’d probably both agree on is that it’s really hard to get your mind off business. Especially when you’re married, because you’re always tempted to talk about business after you get home. But when you draw support from each

They are considering even further expansion in the future, perhaps involving entirely new markets. Such a move will involve their trademark commitment to hard work, providing the best possible service and delivering a quality product at a competitive price.

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other all day, it’s important to put the business aside and relax for a while.”

Patricia and Larry now employ 25 full-time sales and administration staff and employ a minimum of 40 sub-contracting installers. Install-a-Flor was named the 49th fastest growing company in Canada in 1993 by Profit Magazine and was one of the 101 top businesses in Atlantic Canada cited by Atlantic Progress.

“There are certainly lots of potential rewards in owning a business,” admits Larry. “If we could offer one piece of advice it would be to realize that you have to put in more than an average work day - owning a business is not a 9-5 job. There is a tremendous amount of satisfaction, but it only comes after a lot of hard work.”

WHERE TO REACH PATRICIA AND LARRY GIBSON

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