

Episode 48 - Jacques Campeau - Jacques' Gems [00:16:33]

Intro: Welcome to Profiles In Prosperity, the leading podcast for residential service contractors, sponsored by Service Roundtable and hosted by David Heimer.

Dave Heimer: Welcome to Profiles In Prosperity, I'm David Heimer. Jacques Campeau, the owner, president and founder of Campo Heating in Sudbury, Ontario. Jacques has successfully grown his business to well over 30 people. And he's been able to do it with a family emphasis. His daughters, Natalie and Dominic are in the business as well as their husbands. Campo Heating is a well-respected business. They won many awards and Jacques is a well-respected businessman. I had the pleasure of interviewing Jacques on stage in Ottawa, before a group of contractors. And it was clear, he's not just well-respected in his city. He has fans all across Canada and the USA. I have a tremendous appreciation for Jack for the solid well-run business he grew. For his compassion for others, for his family values and for his support of our industry. So today I wanted to talk with Jack about his start in the industry. I think it's a really interesting story. And I asked him to give me a list of his rules for life and business. I call them Jacques' Gems. So Jacques Campeau welcome to Profiles In Prosperity.

Jacques Campeau: David, thanks for such a positive introduction. I'm definitely humbled, you have asked me to participate in this podcast.

David Heimer: It's my pleasure. I really do have great respect for you. And I was quite sincere about everything I said. So, start off at the beginning. How did you get into this industry?

Jacques Campeau: David, we all have a story and I believe we do have a destiny. The series of events I encountered in the earlier years of my life helped me on my path to be

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who I am today. My father was in the heating industry prior to me, unfortunately, my father passed at a very young age. He was 48 at the time and I was only 13. And as a young boy, it was very difficult for me to deal with that. And after spending a bit of time reflecting and understanding and seeing my position, I quickly decided that I wanted to follow in my father's or my parents' footsteps and get into the heating industry.

Therefore, by the time I was 16, I was fully licensed in this industry. And I was very fortunate that my father's friends that were in the industry really helped me out and took me under their wings and introduced me and helped me carry my dream and to advance in this industry. By the time I was 21, 22, I had started Campo Heating and was on my way to being who we are now.

David Heimer: Now, at some point, you sold the business, and then you ended up buying it back also.

Jacques Campeau: Through the years, there's always been some challenges, positive negatives. And one of the positive aspects was in 1999, we were purchased by the Service Expert Group. And I stayed on as a manager for five years and they did educate me quite well as being a manager and how to understand my numbers and how to grow the company. And I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to buy the company back in 2004.

David Heimer: That's great. And so you bought it back and it's taken off ever since then, right?

Jacques Campeau: Definitely. Yes. We grew the company, probably - I call it a very secure growth. I try to manage my growth at about not more than 10% per year. I find

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by doing so I can stabilize it and maintain the growth, for cash flow, etc, very easily.

David Heimer: Well, I'm looking forward to this. Can you talk us through Jacques' Gems?

Jacques Campeau: I believe life is a complex game and you need to set your strategic plan early in life in order to succeed. However, it's never too late to start. What you refer to as my Jacques' Gems, were my building blocks to my success. Also an important note, it's an evolution you will constantly add and improve your building blocks. The most important for me is, don't wish your life away. Too many times people say, I can't wait until the next anniversary so on and so forth. And I don't believe in that. I always live and enjoy the moment. When I get up in the morning I thank God for the beautiful day and the opportunity to succeed. Also always make sure you have a balance between family and business. I was very fortunate to have a wife, a partner who supported my decision during all these years. The second item or gem that I always follow, it's, always be positive, appreciate and evaluate every moment. There's no place or value in negativity in life. Surround yourself with positive people. It will definitely make a difference in your life.

David Heimer: Yeah, I couldn't agree more with that. When I've had the opportunity to exit some negative people from my life, you'd be surprised how much happier I became afterward. Time and time again.

Jacques Campeau: It is so important. So true. If I'm in a group and I have people who are negative in that group, I will try my best to see if I can turn them around because maybe they do need a helping hand. But if I see it's consistent and you can't turn them

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around, I'll walk away. It's just not good for my health. The next item is, you need a plan. I strongly believe you need to plan your day, your week, your year, even have a five-year goal. If you don't have a plan, you cannot measure your success. It's very difficult to build a home without a blueprint. Life is the same, especially in business.

David Heimer: How do you record your plans? Do you have a list? You write it down? What's your methodology behind it?

Jacques Campeau: Well, I'm still a bit old-fashioned. I have a notepad and a pen and I can write a lot of things on my day-to-day plan. It is always on a notepad that I keep on my desk and I try to put my 10 most important items I have to accomplish the next day. So typically at the end of the day, before I leave the office, that's the last part of my day. So when I do get into work in the morning, I'm a lot more focused and I know where I'm going. If I don't do that, I find I lose a good part of my day and I'm not as structured. As for the one year and the five year. I would try to put that on the word document that I keep on my desktop. And I review that on a regular basis because it's a changing plan. You'll never get a plan that's going to be consistent. But at least if you have that plan, then you can turn around and make the adjustment required.

David Heimer: I like that idea of creating the plan the night before for the next day. I always do it first thing in the morning. But I'm going to try your way. That sounds like a really good thought.

Jacques Campeau: The reason for it, David, I have about an hour commute in the morning. And I find when I do the plan the night before, when I get in the car and I start driving, my plan is reviewed. And I know, okay, I got to do this and that. And, the minute

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I'm at the office, I'm working, I know what I'm doing.

David Heimer: Right, what's next?

Jacques Campeau: Know your numbers. That's a key one, it's very important. And in the years I've been in this industry for many years, I find that every time I go to a session or meetings or groups, so many people don't understand numbers. They might be great technicians that got into the industry, but they don't understand the KPIs. They don't know their expenses, their operating costs. The difference between markup and margins. I mean, that's definitely one of the first things you need to know.

I know what my operating cost is on a daily basis. I know how much revenue I got to bring in. And I try to review that every day, if not during the week. Because at least if you catch the first week of the month and you haven't met your targets, you have three weeks to catch up. If you don't review those numbers and you get at the end of the month and you didn't meet your target, it's too late. You can't do it. A month is not bad. But if you wait until the end of the year to review your numbers, you wasted a year and you can't catch up. So knowing your numbers and your KPIs, I mean, if you want to be a manager, you need to do that. That has to be part of your daily activity or weekly activity.

The next item on my gems would be to educate your team, always look to improve by educating yourself or your team. The more you invest, the more you will achieve greatness. And I got to say, this is probably where the Service Nation Alliance has so much resources and has offered so much to us, with my team and Campo Heating, especially with the AB group. I'm very fortunate, I was part of a previous group that was

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really great, some great people, I learnt a lot. The group that I'm with now, we have a great time. I'm always looking forward to the one-hour conversation and discussion. And during that one hour, there's so much that we discuss and it really enhances the operations. So, training is definitely a big part. We're always looking at programs that we can fit into our budget because there's always a cost to doing training. But we're always trying to see if we can improve and bring us to the next level.

David Heimer: Yeah, you can never stop pushing yourself and learning more. And what you said about learning from other people. It's funny, when I look back over time in my life, the things that ended up being the most valuable were often just something that somebody told me. And I think to myself, what if that person hadn't given me that key piece of information at that point in time, what would have happened? It's funny how often that works that way.

Jacques Campeau: I agree. It's very important that instead of speaking a lot, you listen. Because when you're part of a group, there's always someone that has something important that you can learn from. And it's valuable information, especially when you're in business and you're new at it and you're just starting. There's a lot of people that have acquired a lot of knowledge during the years and they can help you out and it's great. The next item and I strongly believe that you need growth and a strong profit margin being profitable is not a dirty word. You cannot be in business without making great margins. It's definitely important, however, that you don't forget to have positive ethics. You have to have a balance in that too. So you need to treat the customers and employees the right way with respect being courteous, making them an important part of your life. By doing so you will achieve growth and greatness automatically. Dishonesty doesn't exist in my vocabulary and you cannot achieve satisfaction with that.

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David Heimer: You have a stellar reputation, you and your company. And you've worked really hard at that, haven't you? I mean, it's just obvious to me when I talked to you and I talked to the people in your company, that that's a huge part of it. You guys do the right thing all the time.

Jacques Campeau: It's always been a strong point for me. I mean, going back in the early nineties, we were one of the first companies to establish a two-year unconditional guarantee. If we installed a piece of equipment and you weren't satisfied within the first two years, if there's too many breakdowns and we couldn't satisfy you, we'd automatically pull the equipment out and put a new piece of equipment in. And at the end of the day, it happens once in a while, but very seldom. But just to reassure customers that, you're there, you're backing them up. That's a very strong asset. The other thing we did, and it's very different from most stores that I've been to. When you walk into the office at Campo Heating, I'm the first person you'll see. My office is right beside the entrance door. And whether it's good or bad, if you want to come in and sit and chit chat and have a coffee, I'd be pleased to. If you have concerns or issues you want to review with me, I'll review them with you. And again, it's an open-door policy and that's with my employees or my customers. And I think that's what kind of helps to establish who we are and why we're so strong in the economy.

David Heimer: That sits very well for you.

Jacques Campeau: We're getting close to the end of some of my gems. But one that I had seen, and I kind of keep posted because it's important, winners look forward. You can reflect on the past. However, people who look forward are planning the future, and

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it's all part of making your game plan and always looking ahead. You can review what you've done as a mistake in the past or the positive. But you can't change that. But you can change your future. So make sure you look forward to it.

David Heimer: That's great advice.

Jacques Campeau: So, the last one I have here, and it's a little bit of a joke and my wife doesn't like it when I - I still think we have to have fun in life a bit. But I find life is like a roll of toilet paper. In the beginning, it's so slow to unwind and you're trying to pull the paper out and it doesn't work. But as you progress and you get closer to the end, it spins a lot quicker. So my mythology with this is don't waste time, do it now, life is short. So it's something to really reflect on because if you want to do something you want to make changes to your company, don't do it in a year. Don't do it in two years from now, start implementing it tomorrow.

David Heimer: That's great advice. I love the analogy. Life is like a roll of toilet paper.

Jacques Campeau: Basically, one of our Service Nation members is here with us, Chris Hunter, and I got to say this gentleman to me as a mentor. I wish I would have met him 20 years ago. But his saying is, it's go time and let's go get it done. And I say that now on a regular basis.

David Heimer: He is great and I love that phrase as well. Well, Jacques, thank you so much for spending this time with me and agreeing to do it. Your advice is great and I know a lot of people are going to listen to this and learn from it. I appreciate you doing it. Thanks again I'm hoping I'll get to see you at the Service World Expo.

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Jacques Campeau: I'm planning on going, if everything turns out properly for me, I should be there. And I would like to thank you for this session. And also would like to thank the Service Nation Alliance. It's an amazing group and there's so much information being shared and so many great people from all the members involved. But it's almost impossible not to grow and improve yourself or your company. And I'd like to thank everyone that's involved for the opportunity.

David Heimer: Thank you for saying that. You're too kind. I will see you in the future. Thanks again.

Jaques Campeau: Okay. Have a great day, David.

Outro: We're always looking for good ideas and interviews for our podcasts. If you have an idea or maybe you think you should be interviewed, just shoot an email to profiles Prosperity@serviceroundtable.com. That's profiles Prosperity@serviceroundtable.com. If you think what we're doing has any value, it would be very helpful if you would give us a great rating on iTunes. Thanks for your support. Hope to see you again soon. Bye.