

**Greetings, Toronto alums!**

### **Entrepreneur spotlight**



**Diana Goodwin, Founder & President,  
AquaMobile Swim School**

Bain office: **Toronto**

Bain tenure: **2006-2010**

#### **How would you describe your business?**

AquaMobile Swim School is a private swim school that offers high quality swim instruction at our clients' home and condo pools. Having lessons taught in a comfortable environment facilitates the learning process, and by having an instructor travel to our clients, we aim to save our clients time and minimize stress.

AquaMobile utilizes a rigorous process to hire the best instructors and then provide them with clients and take care of the business side of things so that they can focus on doing what they love: teaching swimming. The vast majority of instructors don't want to do the advertising to find clients or deal with bookkeeping or other hassles of running a business.

#### **What is your geographic focus?**

AquaMobile currently operates in 35 cities across Ontario, Canada and 25 cities across Florida with more locations across Canada and the United States on the way.

#### **Describe your journey in founding your own company.**

I've always been entrepreneurial—I was that kid on the street corner with a lemonade stand. I even tried to start my own school newspaper when I was seven-years-old. I had a company similar to AquaMobile that I started when I was in university, where I would teach swim lessons at clients' home pools. But I never thought this idea would end up being my full time job or the entrepreneurial idea that I would pursue with such passion. It took years for the proverbial lightbulb to click on and for me to realize that this idea had great potential to become much bigger than I had once imagined. I used my time at Kellogg (where I completed my MBA) to refine the business concept and relaunch under the current brand, AquaMobile.

#### **What are the two biggest challenges you face right now?**

The biggest challenge for me is that I have to time my expansion around the seasonality of the business. I've got a unique growth model up my sleeve that I'm dying to test out, but it makes the most sense to wait until Spring 2013 as busy season ramps up, so I have to wait a few months. In an ideal world, I'd be able to test the model across Florida over the winter, and then roll out to a few new territories in the spring.

The second challenge is that I started this business as the sole employee doing many different tasks across many different functions. Because of this, I have to be very

disciplined not to jump into the nitty gritty of the business. Now that the business is bigger I've had to learn to let other people deal with that stuff so that I can focus on the bigger vision of the company. It's very tempting, especially when I get excited about something and want to jump in and help, but I've got a great set of interns and admin staff that I'm getting better at utilizing to their full potential.

### **What did you learn at Bain that helps you now?**

While at Bain, I honed a number of skills that I use all the time including robust analysis, presentation skills and effectively managing others. The Bain network has been very supportive and when I need to bounce ideas off of brilliant minds, there are a number of Bainies I call up.

### **What is the next big thing for your business?**

Testing out my new growth model in Florida and perfecting it before expanding to multiple areas across the United States and Canada. I'm hoping things go smoothly during the test phase so that I can expand to other areas soon after. I'm eager to become the market leader in more cities!

### **What is the funniest anecdote you have experienced to date?**

I can't think of a funny anecdote, but one of the most powerful experiences I've had was an email I received from a client whose husband was out on a boat with their two boys. The husband drowned in front of the two boys. Hours later the boys were found floating in the lake—they had survived. They had been taking swim lessons with us and the mother credited our lessons with saving her sons' lives. Hearing stories like this makes it all worthwhile at the end of a challenging day. Realizing that not only am I doing something I'm passionate about, but I'm making a real difference in people's lives, that makes me happy.

### **What advice would you give to current and former Bainies who want to start a business?**

If you aren't ready to take the full leap and leave your well paying job for the land of start-up uncertainty, it's very critical to block out chunks of time in your schedule where you can 100 percent focus on nurturing your idea or start-up. And you need to be diligent about this: it's really the only way to get things going and avoid continually pushing it off, or waiting for your current project to end. You really need to be able to block out all other distractions—phone, email, family and friends—to get your creative juices flowing and get your idea off the ground.

Also, look to your network of current and former Bainies to help you through the process. They've been a great source of help for me along the way.

### **2012 Bain World Cup**

The Toronto office made a concerted effort to bring a complete, Canada-only squad of serious soccer players to compete against our former teammates and gracious hosts from Chicago. Despite missing the playoffs in a showdown of skill and will against our Chicago rivals, the Toronto team left the pitch like true champions after winning our final match against our Australian colleagues. The Toronto team also showed our True North spirit at the House of Blues and Navy Pier during the evening events. The entire Toronto team would like to thank our friends in Chicago for their warm hospitality. We will surely be back on the pitch next spring in preparation for what will surely be an epic bout in Amsterdam next year.

## **Alumni events**

The summer alumni cocktail party was a big success! It took place on June 21 at AMBER in Toronto and about 30 alums attended.



On September 10, the *Repeatability* road tour came through Toronto, featuring Chris Zook, himself. Around 20 alums attended the event, held at the Hazelton Hotel.

The alumni holiday cocktail party was held on December 6th at Crème Brasserie in Yorkville. A great time was had by all. Please join us for future alumni events.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the above events, please contact [AJ Trotter](#) of Bain Toronto alumni relations.