

Focus on Leadership

A SPECIAL SERIES ON CALGARY'S BUSINESS VISIONARIES

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Estelle Besserer photos

Dan Evans is managing partner of the digital management firm Evans Hunt Group.

Digital world opens doors

One of the things that distinguishes the Evans Hunt Group from the rest of the pack in the digital strategic consulting field is its expertise, says the company's managing partner Dan Evans.

The Calgary-based company, which serves clients across North America, focuses on helping companies determine "how to take advantage of the huge shift to all things digital," says Evans. "We have been working in this field for 15 years.

"What we bring to the table, is a pretty broad-based view of how technology has been impacting business and communications in ways that are very difficult to keep up with, given the rapid rate of change."

While other digital agencies are typically focused on marketing communications, Evans Hunt is more focused on business value.

"We look at how to make sure that any technology implementation is really about driving business goals and objectives, so that everything starts from that strategic base," says Evans.

"What's most innovative about our approach is that we truly believe in a networked world."

One of the huge advantages of a digital world is that great

work is happening everywhere, he says.

"And we can tap into that base of talent and experience that goes far beyond the borders of our company or the city," says Evans.

"What that really means is that we're not just trying to deliver the skill set that is inherent in our own little company, but we're also using the broader network we have, to bring what we would consider true global best-practice solutions to our Calgary clients."

As just one example, Evans Hunt built an e-commerce platform for a client using software developed by a Vancouver company, which was then implemented by an Ohio development shop that had already done the same thing many times before.

"These are companies we bring to the table in order to provide a broader set of solutions to our customers," Evans says.

Evans Hunt handles digital strategy, website development, social media, applications development, mobile marketing, online marketing and advertising — "anything in the digital space."

The company, which celebrated its second year in business this past November, now has

more than 30 employees.

The fact that the company started just after the global economy began to collapse speaks volumes on how important its services are to the economic growth, says Evans.

"Regardless of how many challenges they are facing, businesses recognize that in order to retool for the future they've got to be putting a lot more emphasis on the digital side," he says.

In the future, "you're going to see us working a lot more in the mobile computing space, especially as tablets like the iPad start to play a bigger role, not just in personal, but also in business computing."

Action Calgary has helped Evans Hunt realize its goals by connecting it to many of the larger initiatives that are happening city-wide.

"So we start to understand concepts like how Calgary's workforce needs are going to evolve over time, or what is happening in terms of the growth of the business community," Evans says. "It helps us understand how we can build plans into our solutions for our clients that respond to those kinds of things. It keeps us connected to those people in the industry who are shaping the future of Calgary."

Not your average Joe

Joe Media Group is "a group of hardworking, approachable, reliable Joes who specialize in development, production and post-production of screen-based entertainment and marketing," says company president and CEO Matt Gillespie.

"We're not your average Joe — we strive to surpass expectations in everything we do, but we don't take ourselves too seriously either."

Gillespie founded Joe Media Group in 2003, and says it is the company's attitude and approach that makes it stand out.

"I always like to try and start any kind of relationship with a sit down and a good cup of coffee, and talk about what their challenges are. Our strength is in our ability to zero in and help our clients identify their goals this way. Just by having that cuppa joe and giving the client a chance to be heard, and by getting to know their business we have been successful at providing some excellent, impactful and affordable content strategies."

Gillespie is proud of Joe Media Group's ability to open doors for clients, by helping them focus and deliver their messages to their target audience.

"When you say 'corporate videos' people roll their eyes and think it's another boring video," he says. "Our group of creative people is fun and on top of the latest trends, and our team is great at finding inventive, original ways to entertain

people, engage them and keep them returning for more information, whether it's internal communications or external PR."

In addition to doing corporate communications, the company develops and produces television series, including lifestyle programs, performance pieces, sports events and documentaries.

Joe Media Group also produces television commercials for various organizations, usually in concert with advertising agencies, and develops web strategies for clients.

"It's about strategizing — how video can help you achieve your goals with your web messaging," Gillespie says.

"We are continually challenged now to try to keep up with the way technology is changing," he says. "The one thing we can say is constant, is that companies and people are always looking for creative, engaging, informative content that is driven by great storytelling — and I think that's what our organization has to offer."

"As an Action Calgary partner I am very impressed with the way Calgary Economic Development focuses on industry sectors.

"Initiatives such as Behind the Scenes and the Creative Hub are indications that they understand the challenges of the film, television and creative industries. With partnerships like Action Calgary, CED is making a difference in the way our industry is evolving," Gillespie says.

Building innovation

As one of the world's top engineering, procurement and construction companies, SNC-Lavalin has a long and proud history of delivering services in Alberta, in a wide range of industries, including oil and gas, power, environment and infrastructure.

Headquartered in Montreal, SNC-Lavalin has 22,000 employees worldwide and projects in more than 100 countries. Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, the company operates four divisions in Alberta: chemicals and petroleum, power, environment and operations and maintenance.

With approximately 2,000 employees in Alberta, it is one of a handful of engineering procurement construction firms capable of taking a project from concept through to delivery by managing and operating assets for the life of a project.

"Most engineering companies only do service work," says senior vice-president Don Chynoweth. "We take financial positions in specific projects and put our capital at risk with the jobs we do. We do that from an investment perspective — to be part-owners in projects that we are designing and building — in order to bring

continuity to the client."

This innovative approach places the company in the unique position of being not only accountable, but stakeholders, as well, in the projects it manages.

But thinking outside of the engineering box isn't new to SNC-Lavalin. Besides making inroads on a project-management level, the company has also made it a priority to be involved in the cities in which it operates.

In Calgary, SNC-Lavalin is participating in the Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council's (CRIEC) Mentoring Collaborative, which brings together skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships. Mentors support their mentees in developing their networks and job search strategies, with the goal of helping highly qualified immigrants join the Canadian workforce.

"Being a global company, we can really assist in that — helping recent immigrants become more knowledgeable and helping them develop their networks and skills to match the community's needs," says Chynoweth.



Don Chynoweth is senior vice-president of SNC-Lavalin.

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