

Who's working lots, and green on top?

Going 'green' has helped company expand from home business to handling projects around globe

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In everything he builds, Kevin Simoes thinks green. "Our clients come to us with a green mindset and that's how we started," the 29-year-old founder and owner of Streamline Design Ltd. and Streamline Enterprises Ltd. said in an interview. "We do our best to build green."

Simoes, who custom designs eco-friendly log and timber-frame homes and promotes green building techniques, started Streamline Design in 2004 out of a home-based office and grossed \$80,000 the first year.

Today, his two Abbotsford-based sister companies do projects across Canada, the U.S., Europe, Russia and New Zealand with combined gross sales of about \$1.4 million annually.

Streamline Design (which designs about 65 homes annually) is his home-design company, while Streamline Enterprises -- the Canadian distributors for Green Living Technologies and its Living Wall (a vertical garden with plants grown on walls) and Green Roof systems -- is a newer company started in 2007 focused on green-building needs and sustainable architecture and construction.

Products include natural cotton-fibre insulation, recycled glass and porcelain tiles, wool carpet and FSC-certified hardwood, cork and bamboo.

Simoes sees Streamline Enterprises as his biggest growth company, noting that it has seen sales rise to \$950,000 this year, with anticipated sales of \$1.6 million next year. By comparison, Streamline Design recorded \$450,000 in sales this year.

"There's a bigger market share [with Streamline Enterprises]," he said. "That's where we're taking our focus."

Most recently, Streamline Enterprises designed and installed a project utilizing both a green roof and living wall for Gossamer Threads at 455 Granville St. to be used as a lush retreat for employees for lunches, barbecues and social gatherings.

TBWA\|Vancouver and Deecorp Properties were also involved in the project.

"They wanted to create an amenity space for the staff," said Simoes, who has been named Abbotsford's young entrepreneur of the year.

"And we couldn't be happier. It was a fantastic little project. It took 12 months to do it, from start to finish."

Other projects include a 68,000-square-foot green roof for Sysco Foods and a 200-square-foot living wall in a private residence in Vancouver.

Simoes sees his business expanding more across Canada and internationally, noting that he has upcoming projects in Mexico and Iran.

The company recently set up its own manufacturing facilities in Port Coquitlam.

His advice for other aspiring entrepreneurs? Keep your overhead low, retain a good bookkeeper and accountant, and ensure you provide the best service possible.

"Word of mouth is the best advertising."

Other suggestions from Simoes include treating your employees and suppliers fairly and with respect; paying your bills in full and on time; keeping close tabs on the amount of money owing the government; using marketing dollars wisely and making sure you're reaching your target audience; surrounding yourself with a good network of individuals and companies and becoming an active member of your local business association and community.

"This may not bring you immediate business dollars, but solid business relationships with others can be a good source of information, advice and a shoulder to lean on.

"Not to mention, what goes around comes around."

STREAMLINE DESIGN AND STREAMLINE ENTERPRISES

Websites: www.streamlinedesign.ca www.streamlineenterprises.ca

Date formed: 2004 (Streamline

Design); 2007 (Streamline Enterprises).

Total gross sales in 2004: \$80,000

Total gross sales of both companies today: \$1.4 million

Total number of employees: Seven, including two part-time

Number of custom homes now designed annually: 65

SMALL BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21 | 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

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BY BRIAN MORTON
VANCOUVER SUN

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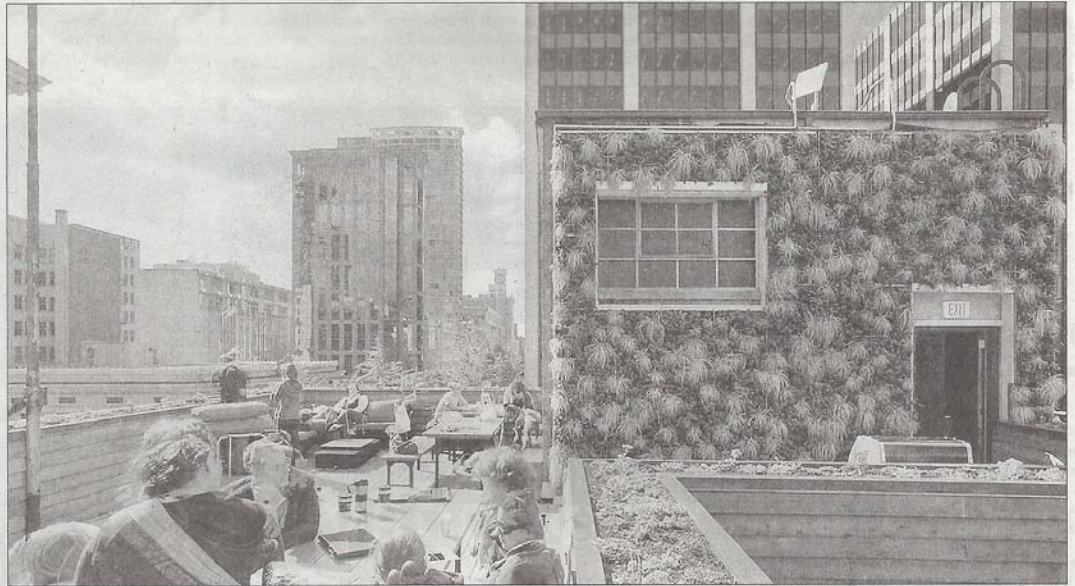
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Abbotsford-based Streamline Enterprises recently installed a rooftop patio for workers — including a green wall and roof — at 455 Granville St. in Vancouver. The project is a joint venture between Gossamer Threads, TBWA\|Vancouver and Deecorp Properties.

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