

## Some thoughts from Dave ...

As Dave plans for his retirement, we asked him to think back and share some of his thoughts about NorLand and his time as President and CEO.

*What have you enjoyed the most about your time as President and CEO?*

I'm curious by nature and I like to figure out what the basic principles are behind how things work. I look at the business almost like I would a machine. It's a bunch of parts that make up components and the components work together to make something happen. I always enjoyed being a mechanic and that same curiosity to figure out how things work and how to get them to work better has been a key part of how I've approached my role as CEO. That and working with people – coaching them and helping them grow and develop.

*How have you approached your role as CEO?*

I believe in the fundamental principle that nobody cares how much the boss knows until they know how much the boss cares. I've always taken that to heart and done my best to try and create an environment where people feel comfortable.

I've learned a lot about running a business and basic business acumen. But it's the soft skills that are most important. It's about being a coach. You're surrounded by people with technical acumen. You're there to support them, encourage them, answer questions, and make them feel good about themselves. Bring out the best in people.

I'm also a life long learner. I've learned a lot from coaching kids' sports and learned how important it is to do the technical training. I don't like to be caught without really knowing things. That's where I count on the team around me. I'm a firm believer in hiring people who are smarter than I am. And I often joke that, in my case, it's been easy!

*Looking back, what are you most proud of?*

I'm proud of the team – proud of the ideas they have come up with and how those things have been put to work. I'm proud of the way NorLand is now truly recognized and is a highly respected brand in our industry. I'm proud of the awards we've received, whether it's project based or for our safety culture or innovation in technology. I'm always so happy when people are recognized as individuals because of what they've been able to achieve at NorLand.

I'm proud of the branding work we've done because it gives our company a North star for what we're trying to achieve together. Even though we created this brand to try and bring everyone together, we still think of ourselves as fiercely independent tribes. But actually we are quite tightly integrated and that works well even with a decentralized leadership model.

I'm also proud of our culture ... the fact that we have great people in the company and much more diversity than we had in the past. More women working in different roles across the company – heavy equipment operators and mechanics, women doing all kinds of work at the coalface. I'm really happy when you walk the halls of our new building and we look like the United Nations – people from different cultures and backgrounds. That did not exist six or seven years ago. And that didn't

happen by accident. I have to give our whole team an incredible amount of credit for being welcoming and supportive and making people feel comfortable. That's been really cool.

It's the same with our commitment to impact and sustainability. We've always been cognizant of the fact that we're a construction company and we do work that, from a visual impact, maybe doesn't look kind and gentle. But we've tried to do it in the most responsible way we could. Now we're applying resources to learn how to go even deeper than that, and these things are going to pay off in the long run.

And then there are so many specific initiatives and successes I'm so proud of. The green document and all the work that went into that. Traxxon Rock Drills – a company we bought out of receivership and now they're setting the standard with pipeline activity in BC, a standard that will never be surpassed by another dealership in the world. I think of a little Canadian company like ours going down to Seattle and doing the implosion on the Kingdome. We did this incredible project down in the Golden Sunlight Mine. With the recent 91/17 overpass project we got to the equivalent of the Stanley Cup final and we actually won. That project will be a real linchpin in how we pivot and where that part of the company goes.

I'll stop now but the list of things I'm proud of could go on and on.

*What about disappointments?*

It's natural that things don't always work out the way you hoped. We've had a crack at some startups that didn't work. The most important lesson is to know when it's time to cut bait and close it down. Sometimes those are the hardest decisions. It takes a lot of wondering, research and consternation to start something new, but it really takes courage to know when to shut it down, and we've had to do that a few times.

Failures and mistakes are just part of the business – something you need to learn from. When we screw something up, we have to add it to the database of experience, and not let that stop us from trying again. What did Thomas Edison say? He figured out 10,000 ways that you couldn't make a light bulb before he actually learned how you could. Our objective is to continue to try new things but not take 10,000 tries before we figure things out.

*Any last thoughts about where NorLand should be headed from here and your plans for retirement?*

I think there's nothing but opportunity ahead for NorLand. We've actually tripled the size of the business and I think the goal should be to double the business again. That's an ambitious goal and it will be much more difficult to achieve. But we have learned some valuable lessons from what we've done so far. We've put a solid foundation in place. Higher, bigger, faster, stronger, together. That's what we should aspire to.

For me personally, I'll be working with my successor to ensure a smooth transition and continuing as CEO until the summer. After that, I'm looking forward to more time with my family and more time to play golf – get that handicap back down to a respectable level.