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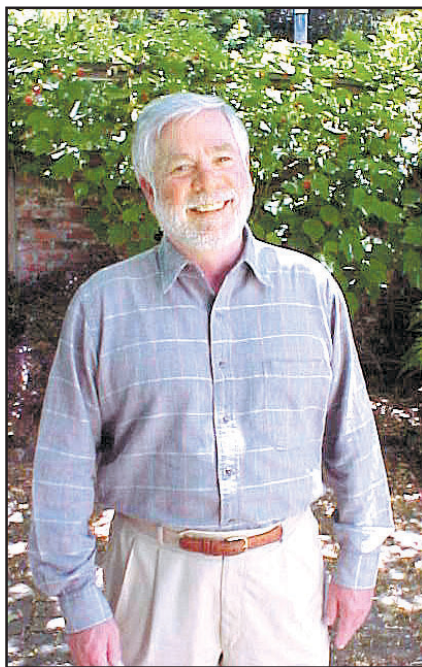
SAN FRANCISCO • OAKLAND • EAST BAY • PENINSULA • NORTH BAY

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EntrepreneurProfile:

KEITH ALWARD



RÉSUMÉ

Name: Keith Alward.

Title: President and founder.

Company: Alward Construction Co. Inc. in Berkeley.

2002 revenue: \$3.4 million.

Employees: 25.

Year founded: 1989.

Source of startup capital: I didn't even understand the concept.

Background: I grew up in a rural environment where people were expected to fix things with their hands. I remodeled my first house in 1959, got a Ph.D. at UC-Berkeley in developmental psychology, applied for jobs, and started building to make money.

Age: 62.

Residence: Berkeley.

Web site:

www.alwardconstruction.com

BIG PICTURE

Reason for starting business: At first, it was just pragmatic. I needed to support my family. I was very disappointed not to be in the mainstream of the academic craft, and at first, this (construction) was just considered just a way to make a living.

Biggest plus of ownership: You're in control of your life. You're also very responsible for a lot, and that adds a different kind of meaning to your life.

Biggest drawback: You're never away from work totally, and there's a lot of risk involved.

Biggest misconception: I don't think I anticipated my business growing as it has. I just started off with the idea it would be only for a few years.

Biggest business strength: I listen, and I know how to treat people with respect.

Biggest business weakness: Believing that you can always make that relationship work can place you at a disadvantage.

Biggest risk: As a contractor, it is taking on jobs that were outside our field of expertise, which is

residential remodeling. We once took on a historic restructuring project, and it was a huge risk.

Smartest move: Hiring good people and entrusting them to grow the business.

Biggest mistake: This job I referred to was a pretty big mistake. It stems from the idea that you are capable of taking on anything, and that's not always the case.

Biggest worry: The nitty-gritty flow of work day by day is on my mind a lot. I don't lose sleep over anything, but I'm always thinking that I just want to make sure we're not dropping the ball anywhere.

Top source of inspiration: The feedback I get regularly about the people in my company and the projects is rewarding. I'm very keen on my employees feeling good about their work, because work isn't easy, but it has to feel good.

DAILY ROUTINE

Most challenging task: Resolving difficult conflicts, like when you have to hold the line with a contractor or a client or an employee and you have to make it clear to people you will not

accommodate their wishes or that you want some compromise.

Favorite task: Being responsible for talking to prospective clients.

Least favorite task: The minutiae of managing information takes an enormous amount of time. I don't like to develop budgets.

Biggest frustration: If I had one, there'd be something wrong. If I did, I'd go to a doctor to see what could be done or what was at the heart of the matter.

Source of support in a business crisis: First and foremost, my life partner.

DREAMS

Goal yet to be achieved: I had some very intense interest in developing a theoretic model that replicated biological experiences in culture. I'd love to continue thinking about it.

First move with a capital windfall: I'd want this company to be able to provide a haven for my employees for the rest of their lives.

Five-year plan: I'd like to increase the solidity of the company, in terms of operations, and increase its volume and develop an exit strategy that incorporates the well-being of my employees.

Inducement to sell: I get a great psychological boost from work. If my good employees left or if it didn't have meaning to me anymore, I'd try to jettison it.

First choice for new career: If I had a perfect situation, it would be for someone to pay me enough to write and think.

PERSONALS

Most-admired entrepreneur: Frank Lloyd Wright.

Most interested in meeting: Jean Piaget. He was a genetic epistemologist. He's a profound thinker.

Stress reducer: I write non-fiction, and I also do reading, go out with friends, travel and I enjoy music and drawing.

Favorite pastime: Traveling.

Favorite book: My first one was "Earl the Leaky Whale," but I guess in my adult life, it was "The Odyssey."

Favorite film: "The Horse's Mouth" or "My Uncle," both by Jaques Tati.

Favorite restaurant: Chez Panisse in Berkeley and Hayes Bar and Grill in San Francisco.

Favorite destination: Italy.

Automobile: Toyota 4Runner.

— Jessica Materna ■