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MEET OUR MEMBERS

Arthur & Pamela Aveling



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Designed and Produced by the Florida Commerce Marketing Team



Students: The iBiz Challenge is Here

Florida Commerce is choosing 24 students to participate in a three month business challenge. The purpose of the competition is to educate students about small business and how to handle real life business decisions. The student team completing challenges with the most favorable outcome will win the grand prize of \$10,000! **For eligibility requirements, visit FloridaCommerce.org/iBizChallenge**

Deadline to apply: February 28, 2010

LETTER FROM The Editor



The beginning of a new year brings a fresh start... a clean slate... and the opportunity to learn from the past. A new year brings a sense of purpose and the chance to put in to action what we've learned from the previous year. In 2010,

Florida Commerce is doing just that... taking action and striving to become top dog, if you will, in the commercial service arena.

In this issue of the *C2U Magazine*, we've focused on small business in our community. Each article in this issue is relevant to small business and business owners. Get tips and tricks for success from "entrepreneurial guru," Jerry Osteryoung. Also, Michael Winn with Catalyst Consulting offers the basics on how to use Social Media.

Take a few moments to meet Florida Commerce business members, Arthur and Pamela Aveling of King Arthur Tools. This unique family-owned business is a great example of small business at its best. Also, get to know Darin Saley, Senior Commercial Account Executive. Plus, learn what steps to take, as a small business owner, when the economy begins to improve.

Finally, check out Spend – Save – Splurge and see where you can maximize your bottom line when it comes to advertising on a budget. Get the kids involved in small business with suggestions from the Squirrel's Nest about owning a lemonade stand.

Find your purpose in the new year and take action!

Samantha Strickland

Samantha Strickland
VP of Growth & Brand Management



Meet Florida Commerce Members:
Pamela and Arthur Aveling
of



Once upon a time, there lived a man who had a novel idea upon which to build a new kingdom. His name was Arthur, and he was gifted with a mighty tool and a marvelous idea for making the world a better place. The knights in his service gathered at a round table, where innovations were considered with fairness. Arthur's queen listened to all his ideas, imbuing him with confidence and adding her own touches of beauty, grace, and style.

This is the tale of CEO Arthur Aveling, his lovely wife and Executive V.P. Pamela, and their company, King Arthur's Tools. Young Arthur began life as a tinkerer and business major in Australia, but he left to seek his fortune with machinery giant

Caterpillar in Saudi Arabia. There, he met a future business partner who encouraged him to move to the United States for a two-year stint in 1988. He's been here ever since.

While that first venture failed, Arthur Aveling never lost his entrepreneurial spirit. At precisely, 3:32 a.m. on January 13, 1990, he conceived of Lancelot. This unique invention combines a 4-inch chainsaw blade housed between two steel discs attached to a handheld angle grinder to produce a very precise tool for woodworking, cabinet making, and ice sculpting. He met a Tallahasseean who illuminated the patent process and, through dogged determination and years of waiting, eventually realized his dream.

“Failure led to opportunity,” says Arthur. “I never recognized the words can’t, don’t, or no. Persistence was my watchword, and I just kept on trying. Every step of the way, I had to prove my legitimacy.”

King Arthur’s Tools boasts an extraordinary product line developed by listening and answering to clients. The Galahad sanding disk makes quick work of most wood finishing tasks. The Guinevere inflatable sanding system actually wraps itself around table legs and fine art to replace countless hours of hand polishing. The Merlin consists of a 2-inch chainsaw blade on a tiny grinder, looks like a handheld drink mixer, and holds the Guinness Record as the world’s smallest chainsaw. This “wizard of a tool” has revolutionized pursuits as diverse as taxidermy, bonsai gardening, and animal hoof trimming.

“I wanted to make tools that addressed the practical needs of craftsmen,” says Arthur. In 1991, he took the risk of demonstrating his first product line in front of a huge audience at the National Hardware Show. “We were in the last building, in the very last booth. I made sawdust for four days. In the end, we made friends and won customers who are still with us today.” King Arthur’s Tools now sells its wares across the U.S. and its territories, Canada, and nearly eighty countries around the globe.

The contagious sincerity and loyalty are literally written on the wall of their office in one of many hand-painted artworks. Just as King Arthur of legend codified right and good throughout the land, the Avelings adhere to the tenets of honesty, creativity, flexibility, and friendship in all they do. Their longtime friend Allen DeWolf is National Sales Manager, son Jerry Hammock is V.P. of Sales and Marketing, son Teddy works in the warehouse, son Justin supplies photography from Australia, and Pamela’s father Victor Stimpson maintains the website. Family owned and operated for twenty years doesn’t begin to describe it.

As office manager Tiffanie Hooley guided me through the facility, she remarked, “Arthur is different—there should be a warning label on the front door.” His office sports heraldic pennants and a full-sized Excalibur mounted in a stone. The Avelings share a ribald sense of humor, as evidenced by the hand-painted restroom doors featuring a knight in armor holding his codpiece and a lady wrestling her chastity belt.

Hanging in the hallway are thirty costumes for knights and ladies of the realm. Pamela explains, “In celebration of Arthur’s sixtieth birthday and the company’s expansion, we established the Royal Order of King

Arthur’s Tools and honored eleven local artists with an official fancy dress dubbing ceremony. We repeated this performance with ten more knights on a woodworking cruise through Norway. It’s a wonderful way to recognize our customers and build lifelong relationships.”

As a gift to Arthur, they commissioned an enormous Round Table made from a giant circle of cedar on a pedestal of juniper branches. “The clear glass in the center lets you see that the supports are interwoven, like our family and friends. Arthur has a knack for building strategic alliances,” says Pamela.

The Avelings’ pride and joy is Guinevere’s Gallery, an onsite showroom which displays the work of artisans from Tallahassee and Norway and Japan crafted with their products. King Arthur’s Tools have unleashed the creative powers of these artists, whose works range from decorative bowls to didgeridoos, totem poles to finely turned furniture.

The innovation doesn’t stop at the product line, but finds its way into every practice. “At a time when other businesses were cutting back, 2008 was our best year to date, and 2009 gave us a 15% increase in sales,” says Arthur. “We were up 100% in the last month because we launched our new online store to worldwide market.”

The Avelings decided to grow their business, and they reevaluated everything—mortgages, staff, products, website, and their finances. They interviewed seven financial institutions. Partners all the way, Pamela and Arthur tell this story simultaneously, finishing each other’s sentences. “Only Florida Commerce Credit Union came through with a financial plan that met our needs. We go with our gut, and Florida Commerce proposed the most creative solution. We met Carla DeBaldo on a Friday, and Monday morning she knocked on our door with a complete plan to leverage our existing assets and restructure our business to make King Arthur’s Tools legendary.”

The next phase of expansion will give back to the Aveling’s adopted hometown. “We’re planning on inviting friends to come to Tallahassee to teach woodworking, carving, and turning classes.”



King Arthur’s Tools is truly the stuff of legend—part Camelot, part Sword in the Stone, part Monty Python skit. Arthur says, “We’re a company that works hard and has fun. This ethic runs through all we do.”

As I take my leave, Arthur and his Queen smile and wave from their castle. And they lived happily ever after.