

Tammara Kennelly

PRESIDENT, FRIESENPRESS



<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/tammara-kennelly-mba-acuic/1/b10/66a>

SYNOPSIS

“If you’re lucky enough to do well, it’s your responsibility to send the elevator back down.”

~ Kevin Spacey

This sentiment is at the very core of Tammara’s leadership philosophy. Inspiring others to dream more, learn more and do more, she is best described as an authentic and focused visionary, having shaped her style around the Servant leadership philosophy of Robert Greenleaf. Leaning in and thinking big are natural reflexes for her and are what drive her current mission: to further establish FriesenPress as the highest-quality publishing services provider in the world.

Her 20 years in key leadership positions have seen her drive growth, build amazing work cultures, give back to her local community and play a pivotal role in developing the next generation of talent.

EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER

Tammara was born in Surrey, BC. With a keen interest in crime, law and the psychology of humanity, Tammara completed her Criminology degree at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. During her university years, she volunteered at several correctional centers, facilitating groups that dealt with topics including life skills, Pre-Release Readiness and anger management. This experience was the birth of Tammara’s passions for volunteerism and giving back to her community, and they inspired in her a driving desire to leave the world a better place than she found it.

Following this, Tammara grew inspired by the member ownership and community involvement values of credit unions while working in the banking industry in the 90’s. She decided to develop her industry knowledge by pursuing her Associate of the Credit Union Institute of Canada designation with Dalhousie University, graduating from the program with honors in 2009. At the age of 27, she was Coastal Community Credit Union’s youngest Branch Manager ever, leading 3 smaller branches along with her flagship branch. It wasn’t easy; weathering charter changes that allowed credit unions from other geographic territories to directly compete in her cities; acting as a key member of the management team at the union bargaining table; successfully navigating the renewal of three contracts and leading the team through one strike and one lockout; and in her final years, becoming deeply involved in several significant mergers as the industry looked to consolidate and compete with banks.



While leading her credit union branches through periods of incredible growth, Tammara remained devoted to her community and became involved in developing and delivering record setting fundraising campaigns for organizations like United Way and The Nanaimo Hospital Foundation. Tammara also volunteered with Haven Society during this time, advocating for women and children. As a key board member and head of the finance committee, she dedicated herself to fundraising for an organization whose programs were at risk of extinction due to widespread government cutbacks. Carrying over her unique fundraising strategies from the Coastal Community Credit Union, Tammara tirelessly raised funds on behalf of this organization, which allowed all programs to continue and reinforced a strong foundation for future generations to continue her work.

MBA & GROWTH MODE

In 2004, Tammara undertook her Executive MBA with a concentration in leadership at Royal Roads University while continuing to work full-time. Graduating in 2006, she describes the leadership focus of the program as transformational, providing her with the tools she needed to not only further develop her vision and implementation of amazing workplace culture, but also to start to harness, develop and inspire the next generation of employees as leaders by seeding this mentality into their future workplaces.

In 2008, two years after the birth of her daughter Emma, Tammara returned to work leading a small entrepreneurial startup division for Custom House, where customers could exchange foreign currency online. During her 4-year tenure, she grew annual revenues by over 500% and expertly navigated complex global compliance regulations that many companies were unable to overcome in their efforts to expand. This growth, partnered with a one-of-a-kind 'qualification, fraud prevention and compliance' framework, made her business unit the crown jewel in a \$370M acquisition by Western Union. Following a successful period of integration, and thereafter moving all operations offshore to the Philippines and Lithuania, Tammara moved into a new role for a short period. When she realized the significant misfit in values between her and her new company, she decided to undertake her next professional endeavor.

In January 2012, she began leading the operations group at FriesenPress, a then-3-year-old publishing services company. The groups she was to lead had succeeded in certifying themselves with a union prior to her employment, and the process to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement was underway. Leading with her passion for people and her core values of trust, integrity, honesty and empathy, staff halted the collective bargaining process 3 months later and filed to decertify. After 9 short months with FriesenPress, Tammara was asked to step into the role of President. She accepted.

The highlights of her time in this role are many, and they only continue to grow. With a clear focus to implement a business model that blazes a trail in the industry but is based on all the values she holds dear, Tammara has created a model that focuses on: a needs-based selling approach, exclusively offering high quality services that are value laden; on teams that are domestically-based (not outsourced offshore); on educating and empowering every author; and finally, on consistently delivering on all of its promises.

Growth in profit after her first year at FriesenPress was 67%, and 314% in the second year, with sales following suit. Tammara knew she had succeeded in the mandate she set for the company when Chicken Soup for the Soul icon Mark Victor Hansen partnered with FriesenPress in early 2013, noting that FriesenPress was not the biggest player, but unlike its competition, a high quality, ethical company that delivers on its promises. In 2014, Mark would provide a reference for her 2014 Viatec Executive of the Year win, citing her as "a leading edge thinker, doer and result generator, doing it with style, class, joy and savoir faire".

In tandem with her efforts to build a financially vibrant company, it was equally important that she rebuilt the company culture. Centered upon that Servant leadership philosophy and a strengths-based focus, she believed that if staff were having fun, felt valued and were challenged to grow, then the community would collectively contribute to building the ultimate culture, and sales and customer service would take care of themselves. Her belief is that the root of any lack in an organization can be linked to a weak culture, and so her most important role is to nurture her people.

Tammara's passion for reading, learning and teaching is a life-long one. During her five years with the Surrey Public Library, she could be found in the stacks poring through books of every genre. Combining this passion for books with a leadership role in which she can exert influence in a highly competitive, rapid growth industry is a dream come true for her. Every day she gets to help authors realize their dreams, knowing that she is providing them with valuable products, the highest quality book and amazing personal service. Tammara enjoys extending her learning to others and finds her passions most ignited when she is in front of a group speaking or leading a discussion. This passion takes her away from the office throughout the year, most recently to lectures at Royal Roads' BCom class, the University of King's College's MFA group, and WSI's international conference. She has also delivered a number of educational webinars and podcasts.

Her evenings and weekends are filled with her daughter Emma and her faithful doggy companion and office buddy Lucy. She loves cooking, hiking, reading, climbing, dancing, wine tasting and travelling. And she thinks living in Victoria is paradise! ♦