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## THNWEST PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR: COREY MARSHALL

**Anderson Vacations' Corey Marshall chats about family, New Zealand and the infamous elf costume**

*Katie Lister*



*Uguette Chiasson, Publisher, THNWest.com; Corey Marshall, President/CEO, Anderson Vacations; Charmaine Pang, Editor, THNWest.com*

THNWest.com's Personality of the Year award of merit was given to Corey Marshall, President and CEO of Anderson Vacations in Calgary. Voted in by travel professionals across Western Canada, Marshall is surprised and honoured with the title.

"I've kind of been out of the frontline part of the business for a couple of years so it's nice to still be remembered by the agents, and that's who voted on it, so that's pretty cool."

Interestingly, if it wasn't for dressing up in an elf costume to direct a Christmas lights tour that his parents were running years ago, Marshall said he would have been a chiropractor.

A one-time student of science and psychology, he had aspirations of becoming a chiropractor after his father was hit by a three-quarter tonne truck while biking and was

successfully rehabilitated.

"That's why I wanted to get into that industry...to help people," explained Marshall. "Long story short, through that process is actually how my parents bought Anderson."

After the accident, his father took a separations package from his former job with Telus and the family used the money to buy Anderson Tours from Dave and Lorraine Anderson.

One Christmas, Marshall was host to a bus full of seniors for a Christmas lights tour, dressed as an elf, which was the moment he realized that travel was the business for him.

"When they were smiling back at me and fully engaged in the experience we had created for them as a travel company, that's when it really kicked in...that I can still help people and still be in travel. And that's when I dedicated my life and career to it. Since then I have just tried to continue to expand on the principles of great customer service, exploring our own backyard and providing travel agents with multiple ways of booking across our country."



### Passion and drive are the keys to Marshall's success



Anderson Vacations used to be simply a fully escorted touring service when Marshall's parents were running the show. Although they still do that, Anderson has evolved into a Canada wholesale travel specialist.

"It was a really good mix because my parents were the conservative, pull-the-reigns-back, whoa whoa not so fast, and I was the one driving forward, trying to create new business units and to create these massive preferred relationships and to work more and more with suppliers so that kind of worked really well." Over time Marshall proved

that he had what it took to run the company and on the request of his parents, he bought them out.

Marshall attributes his success and the success of the company to his own personal passion for travelling in Canada and the South Pacific (his wife is from New Zealand).

"I'm Canadian and I love to travel around Canada and it's great that we've been able to develop such a well-rounded FIT program. When we looked at the second destination that we were going to sell proactively in this marketplace [the South Pacific], it's because we're passionate about it and it worked out really well."



*Anderson Vacations staff photo*

Dedication and hard work make up the rest of the puzzle. "As an entrepreneur you work hard all the time. There's no real standard work week and I think that's how you stand out in the minds of a lot of people, the extra effort that you're willing to put in to get the job done."

### **When at play...**

When he's not hard at work, Marshall competes in Triathlon. "I do half-iron man and [full] iron man events. And outside of training for that, I also love spending time with my family." Marshall and his wife Karen have a two-year-old girl, a sixteen-year old stepdaughter, and a boy on the way, due in July.



*Marshall doing the Ironman in New Zealand*

His other love is travelling. "I was away from the office 113 days last year but my family was with me for 81 of them so that was really excellent. In my girl's first year of life she was in 37 different cities. [We are a] well-travelled family. That's what we love to do: travel and spend time with family."

Marshall's favourite place to travel to is the Coromandel Peninsula in New Zealand. "It's very non-touristy still, which is what I appreciate the most. There are just some amazing white sand beaches that aren't super popularized because Australia is seen as the beach community and New Zealand is seen for the landscape and culture. But these beaches are amazing to hang out on and you'll be with local Kiwis because that's where they holiday." Anderson Vacations has a joint venture in Auckland, which allows Marshall to travel to New Zealand often.

The Tour de France finishing in Paris is Marshall's ultimate must-do. "That's my trip. I'd love to get there for that specifically."

### **Brains and personality**

If he was not in the travel business, Marshall confesses that he would be interested in becoming a certified accountant or a CMA (certified management accountant). "I like numbers. I'm a math guy."

Or perhaps something in law: "And the legal field also interests me because as entrepreneurs, we pay all these legal bills and sometimes wonder what we're getting...so going down that path and maybe not being as expensive as some of the law firms out there and trying to help small businesses."

His proudest achievements are being named the fourth fastest-growing company in Alberta by Alberta Venture magazine and being able to integrate a dual life between Canada and New Zealand.



*Marshall and his wife Karen in Hawaii*

"With immigration and residency and all the steps you have to go through...to make that happen

and have a long-distance relationship succeed is something that's really special to me." Marshall and his wife were apart for 18 months while they were dating before she moved to Canada and joined him at Anderson.

### Happy 30th Mr. Marshall!



*Marshall & daughter Lily*

THNWest.com's personality of the year has no regrets so far. "I'm pretty happy with where things are at with my career," said Marshall before he revealed that he had just celebrated his thirtieth birthday.

"You know you have those life goal lists and I had a bunch of things that I wanted to accomplish by 30 and I was able to tick them all off so I'm pretty happy at the moment."

When asked whether the current economic situation has affected his business so far, Marshall replied that with Canadians spending more time travelling within Canada, that Anderson is actually up in that product line.

"Travel agents who have been engaged with us since 2004, 2005 and starting to market this idea to their customers that they can book Canada have done really well. And I'm sure they would say that they're really happy with their sales."

That being said Anderson Vacations does rely on group business out of the US, which Marshall said is down this year. "But we were predicting that," he added. "So there are some parts of our business that are being affected but all in all I think we're doing really well so far."

### His future goals for Anderson

Marshall's future goals for his company are to increase their annual revenues by another 100 per cent by 2012 and to be known in the Canadian travel industry as the primary and premier provider for South Pacific trips on top of their Canadian product.

And with Marshall, it always goes back to the customer. "[We will] just continue to service the customer well on top of all the growth, which is kind of the key to our success."

If Corey Marshall was stranded on a deserted island, what would he have in his travel survival kit? "I would want a photo of my family, for morale. I have this massage ball for sports massage...I think that would be handy. And then I need water so I would have to have a shovel so I could dig for a well. And then I'd be happy, live for a while."

*TRAVELHotNews Western Edition would like to thank Corey Marshall for his time and cooperation for this interview.*



*Family trip to New Zealand*

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