



Small Business Spotlight: Titan Boats

More often than not, you can find John Stanners in the workshop of Titan Boats instead of in his office. The founder of the company has spent the better part of 30 years doing custom built aluminum fabrication and doesn't have any plans to stop now.

Stanners learned his trade building race cars during an apprenticeship at Smith Racing. He was then contracted to build custom parts for large fishing boats like a dragger, before he started Titan boats in his garage in 1995.

"The whale watching companies on Vancouver Island were just getting going, and I saw an opportunity," he says. "All of our boats are custom built to meet the clients' needs, and are built in a way that makes them last a long time. But it is our backend customer service that really sets us apart from other companies."

Titan's reputation grew and so did the company, going from one man in his garage to employing 30 people and working in state-of-the-art facilities that provide over 5,400 sq. ft. of fabrication space and another 1,600 sq. ft. shop for outfitting and rigging the boats.

"There is no magic formula for growing your business," Stanners said. "It is a lot of hard work, and your reputation is on the line so you have to make a high quality product that is very durable."

Titan boats are built to meet or exceed the standards for construction and testing of safety boats, and are used by RCMP, Canadian Coast Guard and the military extensively throughout Canada. The company is also expanding across the globe.

"We want to expand in the markets we're already in, but it takes time," Stanners said. "We're in the Caribbean and Slovenia, to name a few. But it's a tough business to get into, and it is the backend service and our highly customizable boats that are helping to make a name for ourselves."

Stanners also works with local schools, engineering students and apprentices and helps them with real world advice while working side by side with them in the shops.

"The main goal is to find out what you're best at and capitalize on it," he said. "Set goals for yourself, and be disciplined while working towards them."