

# All entrepreneurs must be vulnerable

It's usually not long before those with the entrepreneurial spirit reach beyond corporate walls to start their own companies and become their own bosses.

Sometimes it starts with a conversation around the dinner table — if you could have any job you wanted, what would it be?

Sometimes it's a stream of phone calls from friends and former clients who encourage the leap.

Whatever leads them down the path, entrepreneurs all have one thing in common — a willingness to be vulnerable.

Drew Hansen, contributing writer to Forbes magazine, describes entrepreneurial vulnerability this way:

"An entrepreneur's work, like that of an artist, is a form of self-expression. When painting, an artist injects his canvas with his beliefs and values — knowingly or unknowingly — and the completed painting becomes an extension of himself.

"Likewise, when an entrepreneur founds a company, he imbues it with his opinion of how the world ought to be. It, too, springs from his deepest yearnings, making it unique

and personal.

"There is no guarantee that the audience or market will accept his work. Vulnerability, then, is the willingness to reveal one's true self and risk misunderstanding, ridicule, and even rejection."

In attending the Richland Rotary Entrepreneurial Awards for the third year, I once again found myself amazed at the entrepreneurial talent flourishing in the Tri-City area.

A varied group of gifted and driven individuals was honored this year, people who opened themselves to vulnerability and took the leap of faith into the unknown world of entrepreneurship. Some left their well-paying corporate

jobs with steady paychecks for the uncertain world of business owner. Others maintained their corporate jobs and with tenacious determination and certainly a lack of sleep, opened the doors to their dream business.

The diversity among the individuals recognized this year ranged from a remodeler, a baker and a spirits maker to an IT guy, a couple of engineers and label maker.

Honored at the 17th annual Entrepreneurial Awards Program were: Rich and Lisa Hempel, Earmark Construction; Byron Martin, Teknologic; Rocco Luongo, P.E., Power Focus Engineering;

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**Diane Kahler**

Economic Diversity

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Hall, Rippedsheets.com; Angela Kora and Scot Newell, Ethos Bakery; and Brian Morton, Blue Flame Distillery.

Another common theme was the support they receive from the Tri-City community, whose spirit and infrastructure supports and fosters entrepreneurial success.

In recognition of this, a community leader is honored each year for providing support to entrepreneurs in our region and for demonstrating successful entrepreneurship over time. The Entrepreneurial Leadership Award is named in honor of Sam Volpentest, who was one of

the greatest promoters of the entrepreneurial spirit in our community. And this year, for the first time, there were co-recipients, John and Carl Cadwell.

Their list of accomplishments and community support is long. From founding Cadwell Laboratories in Kennewick in 1979, which now lays claim to the title of No. 1 seller in the U.S. for electromyography products and tops in the world for intraoperative monitoring equipment, to investments in at least a dozen companies, co-ownership in several local businesses, holding seats on the boards of directors for a number of organizations, and supporting numerous causes including United Way, Habitat for Humanity, the

Mid-Columbia Regional Science Fair, and Kennewick General Hospital.

Entrepreneurs and small businesses are the backbone of America. When you're next out running errands around town, take a minute to consider the surrounding businesses, and maybe, just maybe, you'll decide this time to stop at the small business on the corner — the one that's being run by someone who's not afraid to be vulnerable.

► *Diane B. Kahler is a communications specialist for Technology Deployment and Outreach at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. She can be reached at 372-4133 or [diane.kahler@pnnl.gov](mailto:diane.kahler@pnnl.gov).*