

They've begun riding a stationary bicycle, connected to a generator, which coupled with a solar array out back, charges a battery pack which runs one of their printing machines. It's a good cardio workout and it's carbon neutral except for the CO2 generated by the huffing and puffing of the riders. As well, they have fully converted to 100% Post Consumer Recycled Paper. It's all green and it's all good. They spoke with Editor, Ray Hudson about their green enterprise and how it all started for them.

Partners Shane Fortune and Kevin LaHay, are the owners of PB Copy, a Newton printing business going green for both Health and the Environment



PB Copy; Changing the Power Paradigm



(Shane) We took over the successful business from Pat Bradley (a former Surrey Chamber of Commerce, President) and his wife Berna. I worked for BC Tel and Telus for thirteen years, and I got tired of the direction the company was going, so when there was a round of buy-outs I took one. Kevin, the Bradley's nephew, and I had been friends for quite a while. He heard I was looking for a business opportunity, and suggested I have a look at this business as the Bradleys were wanting to retire. They did a nice job of bringing us in for several months of training before they let us purchase the business to make sure that we knew what we were doing before they handed their customers, now our customers, off to us.

I (Kevin) worked for my father's swimming pool and hot tub company, C-Blu Pools, and decided I needed to get out and stretch my legs. I went to work in the oil fields of Alberta for a few years. I heard my aunt and uncle were looking to retire so I gave them Shane's name but they said it needed two people. About that time, my family decided the oil fields were a place they didn't want me to be any more, so here I am!

You have made a decision to turn your business in a green direction. Tell us about that.

(Kevin) It was a fluke really. I was at the Green Living Show and I happened across a guy who had a display of 100% Post Consumer Recycled Paper. That's paper which is exactly what the name says, however, it's as good or better than new paper and much better for the environment. I thought this was a great

thing and the following Monday we had a couple of boxes to try. We were so impressed that after we finished using our old stock, we began using this paper exclusively, except when orders require specialty or coloured papers, and that's not a large amount. That's all we use now in our regular printing. We liked it, we liked what it stood for.

Shane, how did you react to your partner's desire to go green?

I didn't go to the same show he did but I thought it was a good idea as well. I thought, the way sustainability was growing, it was going to be coming around later, so we might as well start doing it sooner. When you're forced to do it, we'll have been up and running for a few years, and we won't have any transition issues.

You've begun generating your own power to run a RISO printer. Kevin, how did you get onto that?

It started when my girlfriend wanted a treadmill and I wanted to get an exercise bike. I wondered if there was any way that I could generate electricity while getting fit. I'd heard that you could watch tv from peddling a bike, so when I found the apparatus, I wondered if there was anything at work I could power with it. So here we are, we have a RISO machine that draws about 600 watts, and with our solar and the bike, we can run it on 100% renewable resource power, completely off the grid.

The battery pack we use to power the machine consists of two sealed Gel Batteries and a 1 Kilowatt inverter. Although it's much more expensive than lead-acid batteries (about 1/4 the cost), we wanted our pack to be portable so we could take it to schools and so on. We completed the package with two solar panels and the generator for the bike and there we have our system. We figure the total investment is about six thousand dollars. With a full charge, the battery alone will run the RISO for about three hours. With someone on the bike and a sunny day, we can extend that considerably by recharging it while it's running.

Kevin, you're going to convert all your fluorescent lights to LED tubes. What will be the impact on your power consumption?

The electricity bill should be about 65% of what it is now. These lights look like the old fluorescent tubes, but in this tube, there are rows and rows of little LED lights (which draw about 15 watts). They're designed to fit in to the fixtures we already have. And there's a bonus, they don't require ballasts as fluorescents do, so we can just disable them in every fixture and plug in the tubes. Ballasts draw a lot of electricity and generate a lot of heat. Because of that, the shop will be cooler and we won't have the same air conditioning costs. As well, the light tubes are guaranteed for twenty years, so although they cost \$69 each, I'll never have to replace them.

You have some large printers. Can you run those as well?

No. We'd have to start from scratch with a building that had the right exposure, and it would take about \$100,000 for a solar system of that magnitude.

This is an expensive thing to do initially, and there's a lot of work to it, but we've cut the costs by us doing the work. We had help with the design of it from professionals, but the actual building of it was done by us. This has to be something you want to do it otherwise all you see is the money going out.

What would you like to see come of this work?

(Kevin) We're both hoping that the eco or green idea catches on and we'll be leading the industry with that and people will be looking at us first for ideas that they can do. You don't have to do it all, but by looking at what we've done, you can take the aspects which will work for you. Every part of our system is portable and one thing we want to do is take it to various functions, especially where kids are involved to demonstrate what can be done with the new renewable resource power or alternative energies. Ⓢ

