



V.I.P.

GRAD

Brock Macpherson finds rhythm at Commtech Office Solutions; makes partner without missing a beat

A lifetime playing drums couldn't help Brock Macpherson find his rhythm in his first year at Red River College.

Enrolled in the Business Administration program straight out of high school, he says his priority was decidedly freshman: hanging out with friends at downtown watering hole the King's Head Pub, not studying.

But just five short years later, he's senior account manager and part owner of a Winnipeg-based Xerox sales agency, Commtech Office Solutions. He joined their team after college in 2012; now, the 24-year-old helps to oversee some 900 small- and medium-sized business clients in the city.

Good thing he took a year off from college and "got the 19-year-old out of [his] system" before returning to school a year older and wiser.

He found his footing in a year-long group project for an entrepreneurship course. Each group of 16 students needed a leader and no one was taking the initiative. Macpherson "stepped out of his comfort zone" and volunteered.

"That moment... basically set the tone for the rest of my years," he says.

Evening sessions of pizza and exam prep now took priority over extracurricular pints. Macpherson discovered how motivating it was to teach materials to classmates, and how effective it was for

his own learning – they trusted him to know his stuff, so he didn't want to let them down.

It's no different today in his role at Commtech. Macpherson is quick to explain that Xerox isn't simply a company that sells printers to offices – their competitive advantage is a suite of "software solutions" that help companies digitize documents, manage data and increase security.

Xerox has found innovative ways to extend their reach beyond the traditional office place – even the red light cameras keeping us in check at intersections throughout the city are run by a division of Xerox, which focuses on business process outsourcing.

Macpherson finds the right solution to help clients run their business more effectively. He likes to problem solve.

"There are situations where I've actually made a substantial impact on the way that somebody does business," he says. "That's the biggest thing. The real thing that gets me out of bed in the morning is solving a business problem."

Macpherson's clients can range from a one-person office to a staff of 100-plus. He credits his experience as a server at a local restaurant with teaching him how to tailor conversations to the unique needs and personalities of his customers.

That hands-on approach mirrors his experiences in the small class environment at RRC, and comes out in the management style he uses with his own sales team.

Macpherson says his goal is to continue to grow the business with owner Dan Misko, who's been with Commtech since the company first set up shop in Winnipeg in 2001. He sees a greater stake or even outright ownership in his future – a prospect he and Misko have discussed.

"Dan and I have had those conversations," Macpherson says. "We're very transparent with each other in terms of where we see things going."

One of the pitfalls to chasing success can be the risk of failure. Macpherson admits that not every deal goes his way, but rather than view those losses as a deterrent, he uses it as motivation.

"The important thing is to understand why you lost that [deal]," he says. "And then be able to get better at what you're doing."

He credits Red River College with preparing him to "hit the ground running," and has no plans to slow down. Finding a release from a hectic work schedule is the key, he says.

Jamming on his drums usually does the trick.

**Profile and banner: Red River College, 2015.*