

work

NORTH SHORE GUIDE TO BUSINESS



NEWS photo Paul McGrath

BUSINESS is good for Jim Barnum, president of Spectrum Skatepark Creations Ltd., who plans, designs and constructs skateboard parks across Canada.

Half-pipe dreams

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NORTH Vancouver's Jim Barnum fluked into a niche market seven years ago that hit the rails rolling and hasn't slowed down.

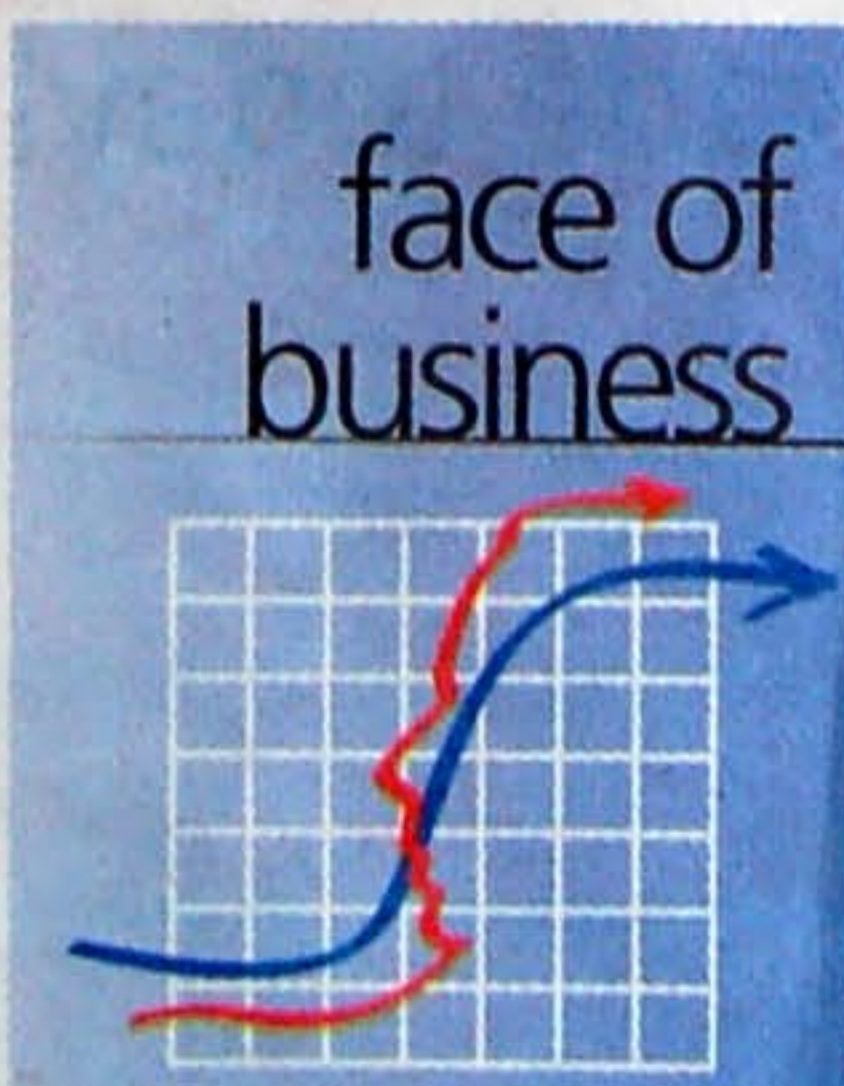
It was 1998, and the young entrepreneur was contemplating moving to Whistler, but knew that the town's beat-up skateboard park would get tired fast.

A longtime skateboarder, Barnum decided he would lobby the town council to help him refurbish the park. He took the lead on the volunteer project, organizing fundraising efforts and designing the park's elements himself.

When it was time for construction, the town council told Barnum he should be the construction manager.

"I was like, 'construction manager? I'm a dishwasher, what's a construction manager?'" says Barnum of the request.

Despite his lack of business know-how, Barnum quickly learned what he needed to know to



manage the site, including ordering materials, keeping records, and even pitching in with construction when he wasn't doing paperwork.

His hands-on training was invaluable and set him up for the unexpected flood of work when his business took off.

While he was working on the Whistler park site, visiting tourists from across the country took notice of his work and started asking him if he could set up similar projects in their hometowns.

Barnum printed up some business cards on his home computer and

started handing them out to anyone who was interested.

He formed Spectrum Skatepark Creations Ltd., and it quickly became a successful and award-winning company that specializes in planning, designing and constructing concrete skateparks throughout towns all over Canada.

Although he describes his start in the business as a fluke, Barnum admits that he does seem to have an inherent creative ability for the design of the parks.

He has a good sense of space and geometry, and that's important as skatepark designs continue to get more sophisticated and park users become more discerning.

Spectrum is the company behind all the new skateparks in North Vancouver, including the Lonsdale Avenue park, Kirkstone located near the Karen Magnussen recreation centre, and the park at the Parkgate recreation centre.

Although many of the jobs the company does across the country are a result of a bid process, many more are by referral.

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