



Meet Andy Elder

Leaside Business Park Association

Q: Tell me a bit about yourself?

A: I grew up in Scarborough and completed my secondary education there. Then in the early 80's I went to Ryerson University for Hospitality Management, (yes I know I am old). I have been married for 32 years now, and my son just got married and my daughter is engaged to be married soon in April 2023. We raised our family in Leaside and have lived here for 30 years.

Q: How long have you been operating in Leaside?

A: I left my corporate chain restaurant job in late 2007 with the intent of opening my own business. I wrote a business plan in early 2008 and opened Grilltime in late September, as the markets crashed around the world. I joke that I forgot to include the effects of the crash in my business plan.

Q: How did you start GrillTime?

A: I had an itch to be entrepreneurial and open my own business. I have been in the food/restaurant business all of my working life but decided I did not want to open a restaurant. Instead, I decided to open a retail store with some aspects of restaurant services blended in. I built an open concept island grill so customers could have a more sensory shopping experience.

Q: What challenges have you faced in business and in life?

A:

Challenges in business; for the first five years sales were slowly trending up but we were not hitting my forecasted targets. Five years later when Longo's opened, my sales dropped and it forced me to reassess my plan and model and make some decisions. I decided to invest in some new equipment to expand offerings and focused on building sales outside of the location by offering catering services. Sales grew to a level where I had a viable business.

Challenges in life; I got sick late last summer 2020 and it worsened to the point I had urgent surgery at Sunnybrook Hospital in October. Never easy being sick and dealing with surgery but made more difficult navigating our health care system



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during these COVID times. I was to have a follow up surgery in late April but that got postponed, along with all other nonemergent surgeries in the Province. It was rescheduled for late July and I am now seven weeks post-surgery.

Q:What do you enjoy about being in Leaside and the community?

A: I am one of the rare ones where I both live and have a business in Leaside. It is an amazing community and we are thankful to have had the opportunity to raise a family here. Before opening the business I was active in the community as a Leaside hockey coach and convenor. Through business I have taken the approach that being a good community supporter would translate to good business. As a result we have worked hard to be known as great supporters of the community.

Q: Any words of advice for others?

A: Trust your instincts – listen with open ears and an open mind - be decisive but adaptable.