

STEPHEN PETASKY 29

Family is at the centre of everything Stephen Petasky does. And it's not always his immediate family he is talking about, but rather a larger group of clients, employees and friends. As president and founder of the Luxus Group, a unique vacation property investment group, Petasky believes that all people should be treated with respect and, in turn, good things will happen. "You can't demand respect, you have to earn it," he says. It's a good motto for the young executive, who often deals with clients and employees more than twice his age.

Luxus began after Petasky and his family visited various holiday destinations and became frustrated with the vacation properties and hotels available. In a quest to find travel accommodation that included the comforts of home, the entrepreneur created his own venture. Since its 2007 start, it has grown into a multimillion-dollar vacation property investment company. With

JOB TITLE: President and founder of the Luxus Group

WHY TOP 40: For leading two very successful entrepreneurial careers and still finding time to give back to the community

Luxus, clients invest varying amounts of money (starting at \$150,000) and, in return, can have the use of 15 properties in Canada, Arizona and Cabo San Lucas. But don't confuse the investment model with a time-share, says Petasky; rather, it's a co-ownership model where clients receive a return on their investment as the value of each

property increases. To date, over 80 people have invested more than \$14 million into Luxus's unique model.

"Sometimes, it takes people a while to absorb the fact that what we do is quite different, but we are not about pressure." As such, word of mouth has been the most successful marketing strategy for the group, as initial investors, who are much more than just numbers on a balance sheet, spread the word to their friends, thus widening the circle. Petasky hopes to expand the company's portfolio to 30 properties within the next 18 months, but says the company will only continue to grow within its model of zero long-term debt. "We have been very surprised. [The company has] grown faster than we thought," he says.

In addition to his work with Luxus, Petasky is president and part-owner of the family-run



grocery stores, Sobeys Nottingham and Sobeys Lakeland, which have more than 350 employees and over \$50 million in annual sales.

Despite his busy calendar, Petasky remains firm that his main priorities are spending time with his family — wife Carrie Doll, CTV anchor, and their son Kasha — and giving back to the community. His involvement includes contributions to the Strathcona Food Bank, the Robin Hood Foundation and the Alzheimer's Care Centre. "Community and family are so important to us that we make time [for them], which for us includes community work. If that ever gets sacrificed, then we would have to take a break."

— Colin McGarrigle >>