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FACILITYCalgary publisher Mark Kolke, in conversation with Simon Batcup

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Simon Batcup is a [Principal with Osborne group](#). He informed me over lunch recently about what is happening in Interim Management, Fractional Management and consulting generally where he's been hanging his hat since moving on last year from some longstanding adventures in software, turning around failing companies, starting new ones that get sold - a bon-vivant, the kind you'd like to have in your rolodex, someone's brain to pick or just to go for drinks after work.

Adventures with university buddies to bike England and Scotland from one end to the other - the [LEJOG ... 1,000 miles and 100 beers in 30 days](#) adventure; cycling, running, travel, business, [directorships](#) and community (Pres. [Signal Hill Community Association](#)) characterize this fascinating guy ...

Meeting interesting people in strange ways, innocuous, like ships passing, and too often those people never come into our lives again. It might be of great or little consequence, but rare examples stand out and call us to attention - such was my meeting Simon Batcup. It was 11 years ago, evening of the BOMA Awards & Gala (I was co-chairing that year), as I was sprinting out to the lobby for one more grip-and-grin photo-op with another category of award winners, there was a small horde of fiddle-playing children getting lined up to perform in the next segment of the Gala. A hand knifed out at me, my name was called - that is how I met Simon Batcup. His son was one of those fiddle-players. He saw my name on the program, knew me from my [daily Musings columns](#) - and wanted to meet. One of those prescient moments in life that we never regret, couldn't design and smile each time we appreciate them ... this is one of those. He wanted to meet me. I'm glad he did. We've stayed in touch, I helped one of his ventures source office space - but mostly we've commiserated from time to time on the state of our respective businesses. I think his story is worth telling, his perspective is insightful and his demeanor is wholly positive and useful ...

Simon began his journey in Blackpool, UK, had a stay-at-home mom, a younger sister. After school was done and university was next - his father, an executive with clothing manufacturer Aquascutum, was transferred to Montreal to head up that company for North America. Blackpool's loss was Canada's gain. University at Concordia in Montreal, student politics, marriage, Toronto, Vancouver Island, Toronto, Calgary - a long list on the resume with heavy emphasis on fixing broken businesses, with a strong focus on logistics, technology and smart marketing.

I asked Simon how he sees his business, interim management and business consulting in Calgary, currently ... looking forward over the next quarter?

... we are in the business of looking for work, not looking for jobs - and there is lots of it right now. We (40 of us) are looking at a very busy year - and everybody is working! My focus is on non-profits and news businesses.

And over the next 5 years?

... I'd like to be doing exactly what I'm doing now. No intention of retiring. Osborne group is ideal for people who don't want to stop work, helping companies who need expertise but cannot afford a full-time person in a role. I think we are ahead of the curve ...

What qualities distinguish your preferred colleagues, collaborators and suppliers?

... I support local businesses. Price is important ... so I look for the best price. I don't buy cheap shoes. I like people who sell good quality goods. I have a lot of time for loyalty (both ways).

What distinguishes you that causes people/employers to choose Simon Batcup to do business with, why have they hired you, over your competitors?

... personality, team spirit, experience. I've seen and done a lot.

Regrets?

... a professional designation would have been nice.

How would you describe your leadership style?

...I'm an inveterate planner. I set goals. My favourite saying: "Hope without action is a dream. A dream without a plan is a nightmare". I like to be hands-off, letting people do their thing. I encourage people, that if you have a problem, don't hesitate to solve it.

What do you lose sleep over, what do you worry about?

... I'd say 'nothing' but my wife would call me out! I worry about finances.

Who or what influenced you most - that has made a difference in your life, or that was a major turning point?

... Mike Binnion, confidante, friend, mentor - he has helped me, brought me to Calgary for a great opportunity - believed in me, in good times and tough times.

Work life balance?

... I absolutely have it. I run and cycle. I've been lucky to have a wife who has been supportive of my whims, career moves and travels. Empty nest soon after 25 years. Our youngest of three children is off to St. FX soon. Planning a Paris-to-Istanbul cycling trip with friends (and spouses) for Sept. 2015.

What do you read?

... I'm a slacker (my wife is a voracious reader - so I read what she recommends!), The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein, newspapers online, business publications.

His ride?

... 2013 Audi Q5.