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## Mover and Shaker



Anne Martin, president of Mississauga's United Van Lines was recently voted as Canada's Most Powerful Women, Top 100 for 2010. Her company was just voted one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies for 2010. Anne is seen here UVL's Mississauga offices. The moving business is very much in the Martin family blood. Her father Chuck was president for 37 years.  
*Photo by Stephen Uhrany*

BY HANNA DUNN

You've probably seen the blue and gold United Van Lines (UVL) trucks on our roads and maybe you know that they are Canada's largest network of moving companies. But there is so much more behind this success story, including an accomplished leader, President Anne Martin, who has a history with United Van Lines so deep that it spans her entire life.

United Van Lines was founded in 1953 by a small group of moving company owners to provide national service. Based in Mississauga, it is the only Canadian van line that is 100 per cent owned and operated by its members - some 200 moving companies across Canada, including industry leader Armstrong Moving, also of Mississauga.

I arrived at UVL to meet Anne Martin and stood in the sunny foyer, amazed at the huge tropical trees growing there - inside. A cheerful voice greeted me at the top of the stairs overlooking the foyer, asking: "How is your day going today?" It was Anne and I was immediately struck by her warmth. I felt genuinely welcomed.

A naturally attractive woman, Anne is attired conservatively and walks with a

confident stride. It doesn't take long to realize that I am in the presence of a polished executive who also happens to be a nice person.

Our meeting begins with a tour of UVL's offices as Martin proudly shows off recent renovations that leave the building looking impressively up to date, given its 26 year age. The design combines historical touches with modern convenience and décor. Our stroll ends in Anne's large, eclectic office that I'm surprised to hear she designed herself. Stunning white leather seating and glass tables are offset by classic pieces and artwork. The result is an elegant feeling of luxurious comfort. As we talk about Anne's life and career she is gracious, generous and obviously insightful.

Anne Martin is one of three daughters of Charles "Chuck" Martin, the former president of UVL for 37 years. She delights in telling stories of how much UVL was a part of her early life. At one point as a young

girl she slept under a huge UVL banner hanging in her bedroom. After graduating from University of Toronto, Anne began her career at Canon and Citibank developing her skills in sales. In 1982 she was hired at UVL and worked in a number of positions in training, marketing and quality assurance. More than a decade later, when her father retired, a formal selection process ensued to find a successor. You might assume that Anne was handed the top job...if so, you would be wrong.

After her years at UVL, she felt qualified to apply for the presidency, but after submitting to a very rigorous selection process including several interviews, written tests and psychological/behavioural profiles Anne lost the role to someone else. About a year and a half later, when the position was up for grabs again, Anne threw her hat in the ring, this time working with a coach. She succeeded and became the CEO in 1999.

"What's great about her job? 'The people.' She says. 'It's a people business.'"

Today UVL has a staff of 85 employees and annual revenue of \$110 million, built through an understanding that they are moving not only personal possessions, but "lives and memories".

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*'It's a people business.'*

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# UVL recognized as a top performer

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Over the years, Anne has overcome many business challenges, not the least of which is that the relocation industry has been slowly and steadily contracting for 20 years due to social, economic and technological factors. UVL and its members are continually challenged to identify and leverage their strengths and to diversify.

Nevertheless, UVL has long been recognized as a well run, top performing organization. With Anne at the helm they achieved the distinction of being one of Deloitte's "Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies" in 2009 and have re-qualified for 2010. Anne was also recognized with an award from "Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women" in 2010.

Anne Martin is one of those women that has succeeded in business without acting like a man or playing her girl card in a game primarily dominated by men. "I made sure I was prepared and had a worthwhile opinion. I did my homework and earned respect. I am not afraid to take risks and make mistakes"

Although a single parent of two (now adult) children and a workweek of 70+ hours, Anne also somehow found time in the past to serve as president and chairman of the board of the Canadian Employee Relocation Council and president of the Rotary club of

Mississauga City Centre.

Asked for her advice for young women with a goal to succeed in business, Anne easily comes up with a series of inspiring statements: "It's about the talent. Be assertive. Take a leadership role. Have a plan. Find a mentor. Create and seize opportunities. Make decisions. Be authentic." Coming from someone of Anne's accomplishments, this advice packs a lot of credibility. And she clearly lives every word of her own advice.

Finally she says: "Be prepared to speak up and to be better than a man, or you'll get passed over."

Although she is confident, a subtle humility weaves through Anne's stories. She frequently shares credit with others for her success. She mentions the ideas and hard work of her staff, her great respect for the member companies and customers, and how others have contributed to her life. Perhaps the biggest sign of her humility is that she asks herself every day if she has done a good enough job.

Both UVL and Anne will be 60 in 2013 – the year she plans to retire. When she does, the business world will be left missing one of its best. Until then, Anne Martin has got work to do, promises to keep and relationships to nurture.



*"Have a plan. Take a leadership role. Be authentic." Anne Martin*

## Survey will help understand economic growth

Mayor Hazel McCallion, recently announced that her Mississauga Works: the Mayor's Job Summit Task Force – with assistance from The Mississauga Board of Trade, the Mississauga Summit and LMI Canada – has launched a survey of the management, leadership and entrepreneurial skills of Mississauga companies to better understand Mississauga's capacity for

innovation and economic growth.

Many groups have argued lately about the importance of management skills in Ontario and Canada's innovation and productivity challenges. At last year's Mississauga Works: the Mayor's Job Summit, innovation, leadership and the willingness to take entrepreneurial risks were all identified as keys to Mississauga's economic success in the

future.

The Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity has issued a report which claims that Canada's lack of productivity improvement is a result of risk averse management.

Some comparative studies have argued that communities or economic clusters with more entrepreneurial attitudes or leadership skills succeed better in creating employment and economic development.

We want to understand better the management skills held by leading companies in Mississauga and compare them to others.

McCallion said, "ensuring we have the right management talent leading Mississauga companies is critical to our city's future economic success."

A similar survey has been conducted in Australia and New Zealand by LMI associated companies in the past and has proven helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses in company leadership.



Hazel McCallion

"Understanding how we compare to others in terms of entrepreneurial attitudes, leadership and management skills is sure to assist our City in fostering management that will produce innovation, economic growth and jobs," explained Brian Crombie, co-chair of the Mayor's task force that is implementing this survey with the help of LMI Canada.

All contributing companies will be provided with the full Mississauga Organizational Needs Inventory report which will be presented to the City at a future Mississauga Works summit. LMI Canada Inc., an organizational and leadership development company with its Canadian headquarters in Mississauga, has offered to conduct this survey on a pro bono basis, after participating in last year's summit.

For companies interested in being included in the survey please email Mississauga@lmicanada.ca or info@mississaugaworks.ca.

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Contingency planning, having thought through a number of scenarios, lining up your suppliers, streamlining your approval process, and responding to media in a timely way are just some of the things that will help you survive your next workplace crisis.

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