



RISK-TAKER, DREAM MAKER

Marie Delorme gives gifts, shares gifts...and even sells them too.

She is the founder and president of the **Imagination Group of Companies**, which includes Nation Imagination—The Aboriginal Gifting Company, and notably the first Indigenous-owned firm to franchise its operation nationally.

Through her life journey, Marie Delorme has acquired a wealth of experiences. She shares her knowledge through her company's national consulting practice, which engages with Indigenous communities, governments, corporations and educational institutions to help them address the spectrum of challenges that leaders face.

She also gives of herself by investing in the futures of the next generation of leaders, innovators and world-changers. This was a lesson she learned from her parents.

“My parents raised their children to understand that we have a responsibility to give back to the world,” says Marie, the recipient of the 2014 Indspire Business and Commerce Award. “Although we were not a family of means, they were generous to all who crossed their doorway.”

She believes that walking alongside youth can unlock potential that will lead to true greatness that will not only benefit the individual, but will transform communities with impact across cultures.

“When young people are guided and mentored by adults who nurture their ambitions, they are given the gift of self-knowledge and courage,” says Marie. “They understand it is important to achieve in life, to draw lessons from life’s challenges and to always put others before themselves.”

It was her involvement and engagement in her son’s future that actually altered her own.

Marie’s son, Colby, was an entrepreneur long before she ventured down the self-employment path, and she says her son has provided tremendous encouragement and support.

“He is a wonderful, talented and generous man who has been a mentor and an inspiration in so many ways,” she says. “We have a great responsibility to our children—to ensure they enter adulthood with self-esteem, with respect for others and with a social conscience. I like to think that I had some small role to play in who my son is today.”

Marie’s desire to protect and nurture future entrepreneurs is evident, as the third company she operates under the Imagination Group is a service that enables artists and cultural artisans to protect their copyrighted material through an on-line registry, cataloguing database and a widely recognized seal of authenticity.

She understands that walking into the uncertainty of entrepreneurship requires the support of peers as well as a great deal of courage.

Marie herself left an executive position with the country’s second-largest telecommunications company 15 years ago to launch the Imagination Group.

“I did not have any entrepreneurial background and the large corporate world really doesn’t prepare a person for the myriad realities of running one’s own business,” she says. “Leaving the security of 26 years as a wage-taker involved significant risk.”

It was a risk, however, that has resulted in significant reward.

Marie has received numerous awards including the Métis Nation of Alberta Entrepreneurial Leadership Award, the Alberta Centennial Medal and Canada’s Top 100 Most Powerful Women. She serves on the boards of the RCMP Foundation and United Way of Calgary and is an advisor to two universities. Her research focuses on inter-cultural leadership.

Marie says integrity, respect for all, a great attitude and a sense of humour are all hallmarks of a great leader.

“In my first management position, a woman who was retiring gave me the best advice of my career,” says Marie. “She said, ‘You must perform to stand out but, at the end of the day, which comes for all of us, no one will remember you for the awards, the report, or the career accomplishments. They will only remember how you made them feel in your presence.’”

Syncrude is a proud sponsor of the Indspire Foundation and congratulates Marie on her award.



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