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Buzz Talk with Larry Blankenstein [INTERVIEW]



product. Every project is different so it makes it very interesting.

BBH: When did you become interested in the industry?

LB: It's been a family business for over 55 years so I grew up in the business. I was involved in every aspect of the industry when I was growing up. I also took on various roles in industrial, commercial, residential and high-rise. I've always been interested in this business because that's what I grew up around.

BBH: When did you begin working at the Lash Group?

LB: It was after university. I graduated with a degree in urban planning. Before university, I started as labour on a site and went on to become an assistant super. I've worked in marketing and planning and acquisition and many different aspects of the company to where I am today.

BBH: Do you think that on the ground experience still helps you operate the company from day-to-day?

LB: I think what it does is give me a greater outlook in dealing with the labourers on the site and knowing where they're coming from and appreciating every aspect of everybody's role. It's a team role, it's not an individual role in this business. The better the team, the more successful you are.

BBH: What are some key attractions of Cloud9 that you think will entice buyers?

LB: Definitely the price. We thought there was a lack of pricing that is achievable for a lot of people. The design of the building is also important. It looks like a downtown building but it's not in the downtown core. The amenities are above and beyond what most buildings have. And finally, the location of it within the city and the GTA is a big attraction.

BBH: Why did you choose this neighbourhood in Toronto for the development?

LB: We tend to be trendsetters based on my father's history of going out to the suburbs and building. We seem to come into new neighbourhoods. We can into the King and Bathurst neighbourhood about ten years ago and that area has become the Entertainment District now. We've paved new paths in the St. Clair and Bathurst area which has created a buzz in that area. We have three buildings in that neighbourhood and we were the first to start developing high-rise in that area. It's always good to be on the forefront with regard to location, design and amenities.

BBH: Why was E.I. Richmond a good fit as the architect for Cloud9?

LB: We've worked with them on our St. Clair projects. They've done three buildings for us. We think that our design is as good as or better than anyone else's. We get a lot of compliments and I think they have a flair for being a bit different.

BBH: What are some of the Lash Group's other projects that you're really excited about right now?

LB: We're finishing off two buildings at St. Clair and Bathurst and moving people in this fall. It's always an exciting time because you get to see your finished product. We're busy working on a new site called Me at Markham Road and Ellesmere. It will be several towers and townhouses combined. We're breaking new ground in new neighbourhoods.

BBH: Do you expect more developers to join you in the Cloud9 area over the next decade?

LB: I believe so. Since we've opened, there's been another major condo site that opened six months later. I believe other developers will follow suit and try to recreate what was once a great family neighbourhood.

BBH: You've got a few days off. Do you prefer a view of a skyline or view of a lake?

LB: Definitely the lake. I'm a water person so a lake view is my preference.

BBH: So you're cottaging in the summer?

LB: I have a cottage on the lake and when I'm on vacation just sitting and being able to look at the ocean is a must.

BBH: iPhone convert or Blackberry holdout?

LB: I'm a Blackberry holdout but I will be trying the new iPhone 5 shortly and then will decide which one to go with. There's more apps that are relevant to my business on the iPhone than there are on the Blackberry presently.

BBH: Have you ever tried to switch out in the past?

LB: I've always had a Blackberry.

BBH: What's your favourite Toronto neighbourhood?

LB: They're all great! It depends on my mood and my appetite at the time.

Thanks for buzzing with us Larry!

Today we're buzzing with Larry Blankenstein, President of the [Lash Group](#), a trendsetting developer in the GTA whose roster of projects includes [Cloud9](#), [Me Living](#) and [The Rushton](#).

The [Lash Group](#) is known for bringing projects to neighbourhoods that have yet to see a lot of new development activity. Those neighbourhoods ten years after the [Lash Group](#) has moved in? You might have heard of them... King and Bathurst and St. Clair and Bathurst are two notable areas that the developer moved into early.

We chat with Larry about his vast experience in the Toronto market, why the neighbourhood surrounding [Cloud9](#) will see more activity soon and the odds on him exchanging his Blackberry for the new iPhone.

Enjoy!

BuzzBuzzHome: What do you love about the development industry?

Larry Blankenstein: The development industry is always a moving target. It's evolving from start to finish. You're starting basically with nothing and developing a finished

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