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## A LITTLE TONGUE IN CHEEK

Gather 'round children while I tell you about the birds and the bees. It's time you learned where *Atlantic Business Magazine's* Top 50 CEOs come from.

Now this may come as a shock... they aren't ours. At least, not in the traditional sense. The seed is planted, if you will, by our readers. We set the mood when we issue a public call for nominations (you may have seen our print ads last fall, or heard about it through social media, or seen it in our newsletter—we're exhibitionists that way). But it's the readers who ultimately do the deed. And by 'do the deed', I mean fill out our online nomination form—it's cheap (i.e. free) and easy (less than five minutes and you're done)! Wham, bam, thank YOU very much.

How selective do you have to be? Not so much really—this is just to test the waters for a potential relationship, not a lifelong commitment. All we need is some basic background: nominee's name, title, company and contact information. As long as the person is a senior executive (CEO or equivalent title) who leads a company or organization in Atlantic Canada, or who is in charge of a provincial/regional head office and has significant decision-making and organizational autonomy, we're more than happy to check them out.

If they still look good, we'll try to get to know them a little better. We send every nominee—hey, gotta keep those options open—a detailed autobiographical questionnaire. If they fill it out and send it back, we know they're interested in taking things to the next level. That's when we introduce them to the family.

There are six people in our judging family: all of them proud Top 50 forebears with five of these prestigious award wins to their credit (you can meet them for yourself on page 90). I know they look scary, armed with all those red pens and calculators. That's just for show—they're actually really nice people when you get to know them. In the meantime, they're guaranteed going to give you a hard time before they decide if you're worthy of taking the Top 50 title home with you.

What will it take for them to accept you? They have a list. And they're keeping score.

What have you done with your life? Impress them with your leadership philosophy, team building and career accomplishments and you just might earn up to 20 points.

For another 20 points, do you panic or problem solve? You'll try to put your best foot forward but they'll insist on finding out how you react in stressful situations. The more difficult the challenge and the more creative (and solvent) your response, the more they'll like you.

What does your own crowd think of you? Do your peers shower you with accolades? Are you basking in regional, national or international award wins? The right answers could be worth 10 points.

Ten more points depends on the company you keep. Are you a member of multiple industry associations? What are you doing to stay ahead of the curve? Top score goes to the person with the target on their back (i.e. the one everyone else wants to copy and surpass).

Proof of a steady job and growing income are a given. This crowd expects more. A lot more. Have you grown your staff and revenue for the past three years? Succeed at both in a troubled industry and you could earn yourself up to 15 more points.

If your point total puts you among the 50-highest scorers, you win the prize. Welcome to the family!

And that, children, is how Top 50 CEOs are made.

### Fickle-dee-dee

We've just announced our 2019 Top 50 CEOs and we're already on the lookout for next year's winners. Interested? To paraphrase the immortal words of Mae West, why don't you come 'round our website and see us sometime?

DAWN CHAFE started with *Atlantic Business Magazine* as a freelancer 24 years ago, becoming editor in 1998.

### FEEDBACK

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