



Eclipse Awards

From a crowded, 400 square foot office in Yaletown to a bright, carbon neutral space in Strathcona, Eclipse Awards International has much to be proud of. Founded in 1998, the two-man operation run by Toby Barazzuol has become a world-class supplier of recognition awards and has earned respect along the way for adopting innovative technologies and sustainable practices. The local company has reduced operating costs, garnered publicity, and now has an “army of loyal clients.”



eclipseawards.com

Eclipse Awards International Inc

614 Alexander Street
Vancouver, BC
V6A 1C9

Telephone: 604.482.0166

Facsimile: 604.482.0161

Toll Free: 1.888.294.7121

E-mail: general@eclipseawards.com

But the road to success has not been easy.

The first few years of operation were difficult at Eclipse Awards as sales lagged and the company struggled to find new customers. However, Barazzuol's passion and perseverance prevailed and today the company has seven employees, is approaching \$1 million in sales, and supplies crystal awards, glass awards, and green awards to over 1,500 corporations across North America. The company offers a full range of services including personalized graphic design and sandblast etching and maintains its mission statement to “create happiness by helping people to recognize one another in meaningful, thoughtful and beautiful ways.”

Personal and Professional Growth

It wasn't until 2003 that the hard work started to pay off for Eclipse Awards. Barazzuol says he was proud of his success to that point but wasn't satisfied. Making money was nice, but he pondered what else there was. He wondered whether there was a deeper purpose for this new resource he had at his disposal.



“To create happiness by helping people to recognize one another in meaningful, thoughtful, and beautiful ways.”

~ Eclipse Awards Mission Statement

Eclipse Awards had moved to Strathcona the year prior and Barazzuol immediately began to get involved in the community. He read *The Ecology of Commerce* by Paul Hawken and says “it changed the way I thought about business and the role it could play in building the planet.” Over the next year, he learned how humans consumed resources, how businesses function, and the small but powerful changes many were making to reduce their environmental footprints. Needless to say, he was inspired.

Barazzuol decided he wanted to figure out how Eclipse Awards could implement similar changes in its business and industry and become a leader in rebuilding the environment and the community. His business was at a point where it could implement change and Barazzuol committed to rebuilding the entire business from the bottom up, driven by a focus on sustainability.

Going Green

The idea of making a positive impact on the world excited Barazzuol and he assumed his employees and customers would share his enthusiasm. Unfortunately, it wasn't that easy. Some of his colleagues didn't share his views and getting his employees on board proved challenging.

But he was determined.

In 2004, Toby took a bold step and made Eclipse Awards one of BC's first companies to purchase green power certificates from BC's Green Power Certificate Program. At \$200 a year, the cost was minimal but more importantly, Barazzuol says it made a statement about the company's principles and its commitment: “This is what Eclipse Awards stands for and we, as a company, are committed to making the world a cleaner place.”

Both customers and staff responded positively to the idea of green power, and were proud to be associated with an organization with a social cause. With this positive reinforcement and a new understanding of the connection between the company's actions and its stakeholders' satisfaction, Barazzuol and his company were unflinchingly determined to become a sustainable company.

Building Renovations

Eclipse Awards first called Strathcona's Blueberry Building home when it moved into the neighbourhood. With no windows to let natural light in, Barazzuol and his staff would often go hours without seeing sunlight. That all changed in 2006 when renovations began and windows were the first to go in. Not surprisingly, there was an immediate improvement in employee mo-



“We’ve come to understand some of the surprising intricacies about the power of recognition – how it can motivate and engage people, how it can create new opportunities for them, how it can strengthen organizations, how it can help build community, and most importantly, how it can make people happy.”

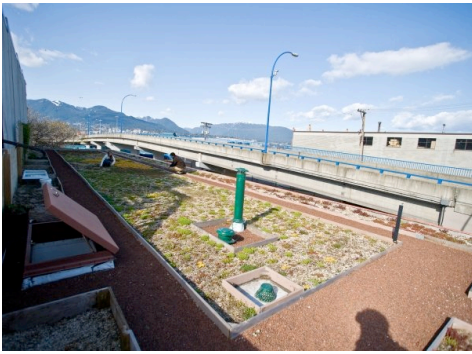
rale and productivity.

The next renovation project proved to be more challenging primarily because it was unfamiliar to the average tradesman. Barazzuol wanted to build a green roof to provide better insulation. While the concept of green roofs has been around for fifty years, the idea hadn't yet gained widespread popularity. He knew he needed help to build the 2,500 square foot roof so he began to collaborate with his staff, local experts and the surrounding community. His first step was to investigate the structural integrity of the roof to determine what it could support in terms of soil and plants. After concluding that three inches of soil was all the roof could support, they prepared the roof by installing a layer of protective material and added a layer of recycled plastic to retain water in the soil and prevent the plant roots from getting into the roof. At last, the soil was laid and small, hardy plants that don't require much water were planted. As the roof matured, it became a beautiful haven for birds and insects. It also filtered air pollutants and acted as an insulation layer, isolating sound and reducing heating costs by approximately 20 percent. Barazzuol refers to the green roof as a “living engine that never stops.”

Eclipse Awards outgrew the Blueberry Building shortly after the green roof was completed and purchased its second Strathcona building in 2008. Its new home had been a federal grow-op and required a complete renovation before staff could move in. Barazzuol saw an opportunity to

turn the run-down structure into a healthy and inspiring “living building.” Using what he learned from past projects, he installed large skylights in the ceiling and a garage door on the second floor to improve airflow, increase the amount of natural light in the office, and reduce energy costs. The entire renovation project was approached with sustainability in mind. Instead of purchasing new flooring, the existing hardwood floors were refinished, non-toxic insulation was used, deconstructed materials were given away to be re-used, and reclaimed building materials were used wherever possible. The result is a beautiful, bright, open concept work environment that is enjoyed by employees and clients alike.

Once the office renovation was complete, it was time to get to work on the company's second green roof. This green roof incorporated many new elements that were learned from the experience gained on the Blueberry Building roof. The second roof was designed to be accessible as a green amenity space for staff and was built around the principles of sustainability. The majority of the roof was created using reclaimed materials; the deck was created from reclaimed fences and the perimeter of the roof is lined with old laundry bins that are used as small gardening plots. Four years later, the green roof is still a work in progress. Barazzuol cites the unpredictable supply of building materials as one of the major challenges, but that doesn't stop the staff from enjoying what they have



“Truly magical and wonderful things happen when we de-prioritize money and focus on other things such as beauty, happiness, integrity, community and having great experiences.”

created. The roof is regularly used for staff meetings and social activities and will be completed as building materials and resources become available.

Through his building renovations and his collaborations to create two beautiful green roofs, Barazzuol has achieved his goal of establishing environmental and social values within the community. Now fully dedicated to the area, his efforts to create a positive impact on the people around him continue.

Employee Engagement

Being in the business of employee recognition, Barazzuol understands the importance of employee engagement and the results of his actions reaffirm his belief that people are the most important part of any organization. In 2008, Eclipse Awards introduced a number of incentives to attract talent and differentiate the company in terms of its commitment to sustainability. As part of the Zero-Emissions Vehicle Incentive, Eclipse

Awards pays up to \$450 towards the purchase of a zero-emissions vehicle (such as an electric scooter, bike, or hybrid car) if it is primarily used to commute to work. Additionally, Eclipse Awards also pays employees \$0.30 for each kilometer walked to work, \$0.20 for each kilometer biked to work (Green Exercise Incentive), and 50 percent of the cost of a transit pass if it is the primary mode of transportation to work (Public Transport Initiative.) Roughly half of his employees take advantage of these incentives which reduce the company's overall carbon footprint and encourage healthy lifestyles.

In 2010, Eclipse Awards became the eighth company in Vancouver to commit to the Living Wage Campaign. It's something Barazzuol feels strongly about.

“A living wage reflects a higher standard that people need to support their families based on the actual costs of living.”

This commitment is one of Barazzuol's proudest accomplishments. He



Toby Barazzuol is an optimistic, generous, and innovative entrepreneur. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing from the University of British Columbia and in 1998, one year after founding Eclipse Awards, Toby won the HRDC Entrepreneur of the Year Award. In 2005, Business in Vancouver named Toby one of Vancouver's Top 40 outstanding business professionals under 40. In 2008, his company, Eclipse Awards, was one of 10 finalists for Dell Canada's Small Business Excellence Award.

Toby commits 20 percent of his time to the community, serving on the Strathcona Business Improvement Association (SBIA) Board for the past seven years and holding the position of Vice Chair for the past five years. He is Chair of the SBIA's Sustainability Committee and a Board Member at Building Opportunities with Business.

Toby is an accomplished businessman who encourages community collaboration and is a valuable asset to the Strathcona and Vancouver communities.

If Pays to Go Green

New Urban Green Space:

Between two green roofs and three street gardens, Eclipse Awards has built over 4,500 square feet of new green space in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Reduced Energy Costs:

Eclipse Awards has cultivated two green roofs that have reduced energy costs by approximately 20 percent. Additional renovations to the current Eclipse Awards office included the addition of skylights, a functional garage door that acts as a giant window, and an instant hot water tank.

Waste Reduction:

Eclipse Awards' investment in an innovative computer-generated design technology to accurately display its product online reduced sample shipments and the associated packaging waste by 70 percent.

Reduced Carbon Footprint:

Eclipse Awards is the first carbon neutral awards company. The business is run on 100 percent green power and is 100 percent powered by green natural gas. Bullfrog Power supplies the utilities.

Increased Client Base:

Eclipse Awards' biggest client, which represented 5 percent of 2010 gross sales and is forecasted to be 15 percent of 2011 gross sales, chose Eclipse Awards as a supplier because of its commitment to sustainability.

Reduced Employee Turnover:

On average, employees stay with Eclipse Awards for over four years - significantly higher than industry average. This can be attributed to the company's commitment to the Living Wage Campaign, the open work environment, and the healthy and inspiring culture that Toby has created for the organization.

values his employees and strives to give his staff a great place to work and to provide them with a good quality of life. He understands that his staff works hard to ensure Eclipse Awards performs at the level it does, and in return, he recognizes them as often and as creatively as he can.

Investment in Technology and Product Innovation

Eclipse Awards is constantly looking for new ways to reduce its environmental footprint and maintain its status as an industry leader. Prior to 2007, Eclipse Awards shipped samples to customers to allow them to see and feel the final product. The process generated substantial volumes of wasted packaging materials and the shipping of sample products increased the company's environmental footprint. As part of its ongoing process improvement initiatives, Eclipse Awards invested in the development of a computer-generated design application that produces photorealistic images of its products. Over the next year, the project consumed a considerable amount of time and resources but the quality of the 360-degree images, the positive customer feedback, and the overall results speak for themselves. The number of sample requests has decreased by over 70 percent, which in turn has freed up resources to pursue additional sustainability initiatives. This investment in technology reiterates the company's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint and, in 2008, earned Eclipse Awards a Small Business Excellence Award as one of DELL's top 10 businesses in Canada.

Eclipse Awards continues to innovate with the development of a new line of green awards. These unique awards are designed with the principles of sustainability in mind. The company works with local suppliers whenever possible; the recycled glass awards are made by a social enterprise from 100 percent post-consumer reclaimed glass and the wood comes from locally salvaged trees. Green awards have been part of Eclipse Awards' catalog for just over a year and have been well received by customers. Barazzuol predicts that green awards will constitute 15 percent of sales in 2011 and 20 percent in 2012. As more organizations embrace sustainability, the demand for green products and services will increase substantially, placing forward-thinking companies like Eclipse Awards in an enviable position.

A Green and Prosperous Future for Eclipse Awards

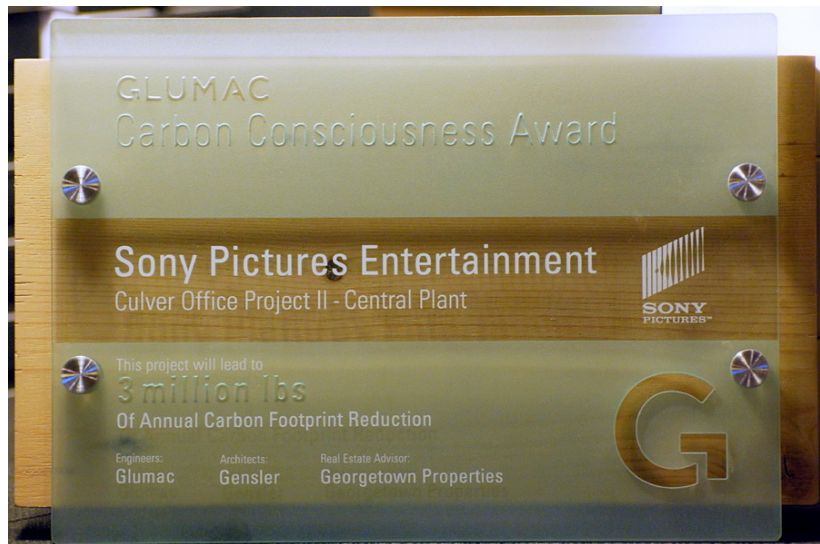
Eclipse Awards is committed to environmental and social sustainability and community involvement. Barazzuol is passionate about writing, communicating his company's message, and sharing his experiences. He's embraced social media and sees it as an invaluable marketing tool. In fact, it's his primary marketing tool, a technique he refers to as "Regenerative Marketing." Instead of putting its marketing budget into traditional direct-mail campaigns, Eclipse Awards invests these funds into projects that contribute value to the environment, the community, or both. The company then communicates these pro-

jects through social media sites like Twitter (@tobybarazzuol), Facebook, and the company blog, *Happiness Delivered*. Barazzuol doesn't directly calculate the payback period of his projects; however, he does consider the marketing value of the stories. Therefore, his strategy is to ensure that projects align with the company's values and then use the stories the projects generate as a personalized way to connect with customers.

Eclipse Awards aims to maximize the beauty and value created, while minimizing the resources consumed. This comes in the form of developing new products that are green and sustainable. However, working with reclaimed materials has its own challenges. Every piece has slight imperfections that make it unique. Eclipse Awards understands the perception of beauty is often varied and wants to help consumers understand that it is the uniqueness of the green awards that make them special. Often, the story behind the award is as important as the piece itself.

Barazzuol looks at the community as an ecosystem and is currently exploring how to create a community that supports sustainability.

"A company can only go so far on its own...once you've implemented recycling programs, minimized your energy con-



sumption, and streamlined your operations, you kind of reach a limit in terms of what you can accomplish in sustainability. To reach the next level, companies need to start collaborating with one another in order to obtain services and opportunities that they can't on their own."

With the help of the Strathcona Business Improvement Association, Barazzuol is connecting with like-minded businesses in Strathcona and is working to encourage collaboration and build community relationships that add value for everyone involved.

Over the past thirteen years, Eclipse Awards has touched the lives of countless individuals through its beautifully hand-crafted recognition awards and ongoing community involvement. It's a small company that has big aspirations and carries a commitment to people, the environment, and the community of Strathcona.

Written by: **Natalie Wheeler**
On behalf of: **Strathcona Business Improvement Association**
1222 East Hastings St.
Vancouver, BC
V6A 1S6

Phone: 604.258.2727
Fax: 604.258.2732
www.strathconabia.com
www.strathconagreenzone.com