

# in conversation

with...

## Jamie Baillie

President & CEO  
Credit Union Atlantic, Halifax



*Before he became Credit Union Atlantic's President & CEO in 2005, Jamie Baillie was an accountant, a corporate headhunter and the chief of staff in Premier John Hamm's office. Now, Baillie's career path is taking another interesting turn as he makes a bid for the leadership of Nova Scotia's Progressive Conservative party.*

**I've been a believer** in the political system all my life. People may hold it in low regard, but despite its obvious flaws, it's the only way we make decisions as a province about our future. I want to show Nova Scotians that there are people who still think of it as a calling.

**The challenges we face** as Nova Scotians—depopulation, healthcare costs, education, retaining our youth—we face together. We spend too much time thinking about our differences, such as who is urban, and who is rural. That's caused divisions, and our political parties have made those divisions worse.

**The squabbling that** goes on between us in Atlantic Canada is embarrassing sometimes, and it holds us back. The only way our region will have economic prosperity is if we work together to encourage businesses to start, grow and hire here, regardless of which province they locate in.

**We face a serious** talent shortage. We need to set targets for population growth, and focus on immigration and greater inclusion. That means welcoming and recognizing the credentials of immigrants when they arrive, and ensuring every Atlantic Canadian has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

**Frank McKenna is** an example of someone I admire, because he has succeeded in both business and politics. He not only had a vision of a more energetic, vigorous and industrial New Brunswick, he communicated it successfully. And he got New Brunswickers to believe in themselves. It's been 13 years since he left office and the province still possesses the same level of energy and drive.

**If you're a new** CEO, make sure you have the right people on your management team before you create your strategic plan. That's the approach I took when I joined Credit Union Atlantic; I looked for the right combination of skills, and then we tackled the strategy. That paid off, the company has almost doubled in growth since then.

**I'm more comfortable** with a clean desk and a blank pad of paper in front of me than I used to be. If that happened 10 years ago, I would have panicked that I wasn't adding value to my company. But having a team you trust, a team you can delegate duties to, gives you the opportunity to think about the future of your company. That's when you really add value as a leader.

**Encourage your employees** to think for themselves, and to speak up when they disagree with what's happening, or with you. And reward them for that on occasion. If you're the type of leader who can do that, you'll have a successful business, because you'll have many minds applied to the issues, not just your own.

**If there is anything** the current generation can teach the next, it's that there is still significant value in face-to-face communications. A tweet or an e-mail isn't always the most effective way to get your point across. I believe we will work together to find the right balance.

**My dad is a** real people person. Whether it's the Premier or the paperboy, he treats everyone the same. He has that ability to talk to anybody about anything. The example he set has been a big help to me in my career.

**Much of our family** time revolves around basketball, as both of our girls, age 12 and 10, are committed players on the West End Steelers basketball team. For those who don't know, mini girls basketball is far more exciting than the NBA. | **ABM**

*Interviewed by Kevin Stoddart, vice president, Knightsbridge Robertson Surette – Atlantic Canada's leading recruitment and human resource consulting firm. Leader's Insight conversations are published in each issue of Atlantic Business Magazine. Feedback: dchafe@atlanticbusinessmagazine.com*