**BUSINESS SPEECH**

**FOR**

**ASHISH BHATTARAI**

Hello everyone and **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**!! Tonight we are here to celebrate **TEN YEARS** of Approval Genie, a company that was born from sort of a wild idea, a little bit of naïveté, a passion to contribute to others, and an insatiable determination to “make it work.” I want to welcome each one of you, family and friends, colleagues, neighbors, and distinguished guests. Here we are, ten years later, and my partner, Assad Dargham and I are honoring the not-so-little company that **could**. What began as that notion has grown substantially… into a network of **OVER** **seventy** employees, **SEVEN** locations throughout the country, and an archive of our impact. In the past decade, we have delivered **thousands** of loans to clients throughout Canada, making life a bit easier for so many people who choose to work with us to achieve their goals.

All that we’ve accomplished is very gratifying…. The **good** news is that we are able to have such a positive impact on so many lives. The **BETTER** news is that, while we began corporate life with me and a can of paint…. More about this in a bit… we have grown substantially… enough so that we had to hold this “shindig” in a **BANQUET HALL**!!! We’ve come a long way since those early days!!!

Did someone say, “**sweat equity**??? This company began, literally, from “a dollar and a dream.” For those of you that may not know, I came from humble beginnings…okay… truth be told, Assad and I both started from practically nothing…. In hindsight, I suppose we might be able to say that there was **NOWHERE** to go but **UP**!! (**Wait for the laugh**)… The truth is, we didn’t **REALLY** start from nothing…. We had our brains, an idea, and the “steely” determination to make a difference…. And by the way… that’s all we ever have… our own personal resources are our best allies in whatever we do. If there is one thing I have learned throughout this process, it’s that knowing one’s self-worth is **PRICELESS**. As Assaad and I went through the steps to build the business, I realized every challenge was an opportunity, every miss provided a much needed lesson to be learned.

I will never forget the early days… building from the ground up… they made me who I am today. I still remember sanding down the walls, choosing our color schemes, painting, and planning our branding and identity, ten years ago. The vision for this company was simple, we wanted to provide supportive solutions to as many people as we could, right across Canada, to rebuild and re-establish their credit with our twelve month credit rebuilding program. I remember doing our first deal at 2:00 am one morning, when someone noticed the lights were on and people were working inside. …. Yes. **TWO. A. M.** There was a tagline for a bank in the US that said, “The Citi never sleeps…”. Guess what??? Neither did we!!! (**Wait for the laugh**) A gentleman knocked on our door and we let him in, offered him a beer and sold him a Dodge RAM pickup truck! We were **ONLY FOUR** people, including myself, when we opened and now, I look around at all of you… it’s truly remarkable that we have made an impact on so many of you… colleagues…. family… neighbors…. friends… and we’ve formed some amazing relationships with our partners along the way. To paraphrase the ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day…. Lease a man a car and the possibilities are endless!!! “ (**Wait for the laugh)**.

While it’s true that Assaad and I began this business ten years ago with very little, the obvious truth is that we would never have been able to grow and sustain our success without all of you, our partners, colleagues, and employees. This business…. Actually **ALL** successful businesses, are built on relationships… to each other… to our vendors, and most importantly our clients. There is an art to maintaining connections and positivity, and I am so proud of the team we have had in the past … from those who contributed to setting the foundation of this organization, to the teams we have in place now. What is also amazing and **REALLY** noteworthy is the loyalty and dedication each one of brings to the party… I mean **work**… !!! I am very proud to acknowledge that **TWENTY** members of our staff have been with the company for **OVER FIVE** **YEARS**!!! That’s **HALF A LIFETIME** in Approval Genie years… and this is just the **BEGINNING**!! The English poet, Alfred Lord Tennyson, once wrote, “I am part of all that I have met.” I am humbled and filled with gratitude to be a part of your lives, and I count my blessings knowing that you’re a part of mine.

Henry Ford famously said, “Whether you think you can or you can’t, you’re right.” Everything we do in life, every challenge we face, provides an opportunity to “show our stuff.” We can choose to succumb to circumstances, or we can propel our ideas and actions to shape our own positive destiny. Having a true entrepreneurial spirit demonstrates an abundance of the latter. Really owning your participation… knowing deep down inside that you are an integral part of a forward moving machine, is what drives success…. And it’s definitely what has contributed to Approval Genie’s growth and impact throughout the past ten years.

It was the motivational speaker, Tony Robbins, who said, “It is not what we get, but who we become, what we contribute… that gives meaning to our lives.” As I said earlier, we began this enterprise with a dream… an idea…. And the willingness to invest the time, effort, and determination to **make something** of that flicker of a thought. All of that “secret sauce” lies within each one of you…. How do I know that? Because we are here, **TEN** years later, **SEVENTY** people strong, and were gathered in a **BANQUET HALL** and not a remote conference room twenty miles off the beaten path. We are here, with a capacity crowd, because **YOU. GOT. THE MEMO**. If you didn’t know this before, I’m going to tell you now. You are important. You make a difference. Your contribution to building something bigger than what might be possible as an individual, is recognized and appreciated, and we celebrate each one of you as a valued member of our team. In her book, The Secret, Rhonda Byrne lays it on the line… “There is a truth, deep down inside of you that has been waiting for you to discover it….” The truth is that hard work pays off. Determination leads to discovery…. And no matter how much you may think you have attained or have achieved… in any aspect of life…there are more layers to reveal.

While I often wonder what happened to that Dodge RAM, one thing is certain… I will **NEVER** forget the thrill of that 2 am visit. It was a gift of providence and a sign that we were embarking on something meaningful…. and here we are. I want to thank all of you for continuing to explore and reveal your own “super powers” when it comes to your involvement with Approval Genie, and I cannot wait to look back in the **NEXT** ten years to acknowledge all that we continue to accomplish!!! Thank you all!!