

# Book Excerpt:

## ***PROFILE 16: STEVEN PARKER***

***Chief Executive Officer, The CCL Group Inc.  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada***

In 1977, six years out of college, Steve Parker started a PR firm that generated \$42,000 in income the first year. More than a quarter of a century later, Parker leads a \$25 million integrated marketing and communications organization with 10 offices in three countries, 500 people, and \$5 million in public relations income.

All this from headquarters in Halifax, Nova Scotia, a city of 330,000 quite a distance from the closest major cities, Montreal, Toronto, and Boston. According to Parker,

We were an integrated organization before the industry term was even invented. Starting in a small market and wanting to have the best available talent and greatest opportunities, it was common sense to have different services within the same organization. Since we started most of these disciplines from the ground up, we have had relatively few issues bringing them seamlessly together for the benefit of the client. It is far more difficult for organizations that acquire various disciplines, each with their own culture, and try to put them together.

The CCL Group is remarkably diverse, with functions including market research, public relations, advertising, print and Internet design and production, video production, and customer relationship management.

Parker said,

The increasing importance of public relations with a marketing function helps us because we have the natural ability to integrate marketing and public relations. A growing number of clients come to us expecting that our diversity will lead to more cost efficient ways in which to promote their interests or products.

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In most markets The CCL Group uses local people to lead its offices. Additionally, the firm has specialists in its head office in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and elsewhere. Our specialists provide support in the background to regional leaders who know their customers and their markets extremely well.

It is a formula that is working for this Canadian company, which has quietly become a leader among independent communications agencies.

Source: *Managing a Public Relations Firm for Growth and Profit*, by Alvin C Croft