

Volunteering Vital to Business Success

Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Dinner



Matthew Mason's business, The Compleat Company, provides screen-printing, embroidery & promotional merchandise for successful companies.

Matthew Mason knows how to give in order to receive.

Since founding his business in 1989, he has cultivated The Compleat Company into a multimillion-dollar corporation. The company's services include screen-printing and embroidery of promotional merchandise, product development and merchandise planning. Its clientele includes some of the biggest names in the Northwest, including Microsoft, the Seattle Mariners and Starbucks.

But more than business success, Mason and co-owner E. Glenn Leimbacher believe that giving back to the community directly benefits Compleat. "We continuously encourage our employees to volunteer in some capacity in the community. We strongly feel that engaged employees are productive employees," said Mason.

The Seattle company leads by example and actively volunteers and contributes to several nonprofit organizations. Mason volunteered as a team captain for the United Way of King County's (UWKC) Day of Caring. The president and CEO of UWKC, Jon Fine, recognized the company's efforts in an event that "amounted to more than \$600,000 in donated labor. Numerous nonprofits and the people they serve will

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For the Northwest Asian Weekly*

benefit enormously."

In addition to their philanthropic endeavors, Mason believes diversity in the company is paramount to their success. "We feel this diverse base provides us with the perspective necessary to be more creative and representative of our community," said Mason.

When he started the company, the primary product was screen-printed clothing. Within a few years, Mason realized that the company could expand into promotional products, like mugs, writing instruments, coasters and golf accessories.

Tapping into their creative talents in a rapidly changing industry is critical for Compleat's survival. The competition can be fierce, and after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the company faced an uncertain future.

"When 9/11 happened, literally the phone stopped ringing. In our business, promotional product spending is one of the first budgets to get reduced in an uncertain economy," said Mason. He wanted to remain true to his employees during this tough time. "With them, we devised a plan to survive and ultimately rebound in a positive manner," he said.

Undoubtedly, it is for such fervent dedication to his employees that The Compleat Company was named one of the best small businesses to work for by Washington CEO magazine this year. Now, Mason is among the nominees for 2006 Asian American Entrepreneur of the Year, being given out by the Northwest Asian Weekly Foundation.

Compleat's equally passionate dedication to its clients is embodied in its "Ten Demandments," a list of company expectations that emphasizes trust, service, accessibility and knowledge. The company understands the intense nature of the competition in its industry and its need to continuously "exceed" customer expectations.

The Compleat Company's diversity and success have been recognized repeatedly with awards since its founding, and its dedication to its clients, community and employees has created one of Seattle's most successful minority-owned businesses.

Visit www.compleat.com for more information.

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