

# ***Akribela Surfacing***

***– Excerpted from ‘100 Women in Business Pioneers’***

What do you get when a seasoned business consultant with exceptional administration skills joins forces with a master fabricator? The foundation for a high-end, custom countertop business that will quickly achieve its goal of surpassing its customers' expectations for quality products and outstanding service.

When Karen Waters and Joey Lang decided to add a professional dimension to their relationship, they formalized their commitment to excellence by naming their business Akribela Surfacing. (“Akribela” means to do things precisely and exactly correct in Greek.)

Karen, an MBA graduate from Queens University, was a professional cellist, teacher and business consultant before spending four successful years as a mentor to real estate investors. Joey's skills as a craftsman were honed over 20 years working as a solid surface fabricator and he was ready to take his business to the next level. So in 2007, with the construction industry strong, the couple purchased property in Maple Bay on central Vancouver Island. They renovated a house, passing their first major test at working together, and built a shop for their business on the property, as well.

It was a dynamic first year. Strategic marketing put the company top of mind with local homeowners until word of mouth referrals took over, and additional business came in through architects, kitchen designers and cabinet shops. IKEA also became a customer. With a loan from WESBC, the company's ability to acquire and house a substantial amount of inventory sealed a deal with hardware giant RONA.

Key to the company's success is the couple's commitment to author Michael Gerber's E-Myth concept, which promotes systemization within a business in order to free the owners to work on strategies for growth and improvement rather than in the business itself. Karen says she has purposely stayed hands-on with the business up until now in order to understand every aspect of it, “but as we grow we will job out the areas so that we can focus on what we do best. I think a big mistake entrepreneurs make is thinking they can do everything well all of the time.”

“It's our ability to successfully combine our strengths that is enabling us to achieve our goals within all aspects of the business,” says Karen. “It's a great partnership!”