

# New family-owned car business on its way to PEI

by Stacy Dunn

A new family-owned car business is coming to PEI. **Tammy Roach** is Dealer Principal, her husband **Robin** is General Sales Manager, and their 11-year-old daughter Genevieve is Cookie Maker at the new **Charlottetown Mitsubishi**, which will open in November.

“Genevieve will help make cookies for our dealership’s Open House and help answer phones and greet people on Saturdays,” Tammy says. “I am doing this startup for my family, and we are all in.”

They are adding 2,500 sq. ft. to the existing building at 451 Mount Edward Road, and plan to have a five-car showroom.

It’s been about 11 years since Mitsubishi Canada had a storefront location on PEI. Earlier in 2018, Tammy received a request from the automaker to start her own dealership. Mitsubishi is known for its 10-year/160,000 km warranty and for its SUVs, which Tammy says is the fastest growing market in Canada.

Charlottetown Mitsubishi is using Facebook to get the word out about the new business, advertise jobs, and count down to their official opening this December. “Robin is the techie in the family and is handling the social media.”

## Job titles

- Business Manager
- Sales Associate
- Apprentice Technician
- Service & Parts Manager
- Red Seal Technician
- Detailer

“We are currently looking for a Business Manager and two Sales Associates.”

Tammy is using her dining room table as an office, planning the design of the dealership, the employee manuals and uniforms, and more. “It’s been a rollercoaster. Getting money to start the business has been the hardest part. I called everybody I knew who could possibly help and kept calling.”

## Tammy’s career path

She began her career in the automotive industry nearly 20 years ago at Brown’s Auto as a Receptionist/Bookkeeper. Five years into her employment, she was offered the Controller position. Four years later, she was promoted to Fixed Operations Manager, overseeing detailing, service and parts. Five years after that, she was promoted to General Manager.

During her time as General Manager, Brown’s Volkswagen won the automaker’s Wolfsburg Award five years in a row. “There are 140 VW dealerships in Canada and usually about 20 win. It’s about reaching our new and used car sales and parts purchase goals, and doing well on our customer experience surveys. We also won the Diamond Pin Award, which is given to one or two VW dealerships across Canada. As well, the service department was named top 10 in Canada a few years ago.”

Tammy credits her success to team-building. “I always say what I do and do what I say, and I always tell my team what my expectations are. If an employee knows what is expected, chances are they will reach those goals.”



Tammy Roach, centre, Owner of Charlottetown Mitsubishi, and her daughter Genevieve is joined by Kerry Ann MacDougall, Sara Roach-Lewis, and Dawn Binns from Insight Brand & Marketing Studio, at the Get Up & Go Breakfast for Women Leaders.

She says there have been challenges to being the only woman at all the meetings. “The men soon get over my presence. I learned not to take offence and showed them I was there to learn and do my job well. Over time, I have learned how to earn respect.”

For more information on **Charlottetown Mitsubishi**, call **902-213-5519**.

Find the dealership on **Facebook**.

Check out the website **Auto Career Start** and explore careers in the automobile industry. There are videos, job descriptions, a job board and event listings, plus more.

Visit [www.autocareerstart.com](http://www.autocareerstart.com)



# Growing construction company in need of carpenters

by Stacy Dunn

Winter will not be a slow season for custom home building company **Premier Island Homes**, a franchise of Supreme Homes. They are currently looking for six more skilled carpenters to meet their deadlines.

“We are booked until late spring of 2019,” says **Joel Leger**, General Manager, noting the company has projects in the Charlottetown area, Souris, Montague, Hunter River and New Glasgow. “The demand is strong for regular homes, mini-homes, and summer homes.

“My typical, year-round work-week is 60 hours long, and occasionally it goes to 80 to 90 hours. It’s good to have a Sales Manager to do estimating, quoting and other customer service, and a Foreman to help me manage the job site.”

Joel has used word-of-mouth to find experienced carpenters, but has found it a challenge. “Because of the construction demand, it’s very difficult to find someone who’s qualified on PEI. I have employed people who have moved here from Ontario.”

## About his journey

The young entrepreneur started out as an apprentice carpenter in high school at the Supreme Homes location in Tracadie, New Brunswick, where he’s originally from. His brother is also in the industry.

A friend of Joel’s persuaded him to work in construction on PEI many years ago. “I liked it here and I have family here, so I decided to stay.”

Modular homes are different from the traditionally framed home, or ‘stick built’ home as Joel calls it. Modular homes are built off-site in a factory providing a controlled environment and high quality control, while stick built homes are created on-site from individual pieces of lumber, from the roofs to the floor trusses.

“I worked in the ‘stick build’ home construction business for four years and returned to modular home building because I always liked this type of work. Supreme has been very helpful as I grow my business here.”

He has used SkillsPEI programs to hire an apprentice and a skilled carpenter. “The programs were well worth it in the end.”

Joel has received financial support from CBDC Atlantic and Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

## About the industry

He sees a wide range of demographics buying a custom home. “Couples in their mid-30s and 40s are looking for permanent homes. Younger couples are looking for starter homes. Older couples are looking for summer homes or downsizing to a smaller home.

“Immigrants are buying more of the older homes on PEI, so Islanders are choosing to build new homes because existing ones are being snapped up.”

Joel says the high cost of building supplies is one reason housing has become expensive. “Mini homes on land leases could be part of an affordable housing strategy. The resale value of the homes is good as well.”

## Job titles

- Sales Manager
- Carpenters
- Site Foreman
- Bookkeeper

Premier Island Homes subcontracts electrical, plumbing, painting, siding, and roofing services.



Joel Leger, General Manager, Premier Island Homes. The business, which started in 2013, moved from Stratford earlier this year to Charlottetown on Paramount Drive, near the bypass on Mount Edward Road.

## About the hiring

Open positions have been advertised on Facebook, kijiji and Indeed. “The last carpenter I hired sought me out after he saw my interview with CBC.”

He hires year-round. During the job interview, Joel asks about job experience. “I am looking for skilled carpenters, so I want to know about their previous jobs.

“I set wages depending on the employee’s experience,” he says. “Across the industry, I see trades wages going up as more companies compete for skilled workers. Wages will stay strong as the demand for workers remains high.”

For more information, call **Joel Leger** at **1-902-439-8565** or e-mail [joel@premierihomes.com](mailto:joel@premierihomes.com)

Visit **Premier Island Homes** on **Facebook**.

