

Class Is in Session:

An Interview with Tim Fagan, President of Blue Kangaroo Packoutz

Growing a contents restoration brand requires a compassionate heart and attention to detail. Learn how this past educator, wrestler, and police academy star easily achieves all of the above.

By Samantha Hager



Tim Fagan is a name that resonates in the restoration industry. With over 25 years of experience in the field, he has established himself as a knowledgeable and reliable expert in the business.



Fagan's journey to success has been marked by a passion for restoration work and a deep commitment to helping people recover from the devastating effects of disasters. Today, he is the president of Blue Kangaroo Packoutz, a company that provides innovative restoration solutions for clients across the United States.

In a recent interview with Cleanfax, Fagan shared some insights into his career and the industry at large, shedding light on the key factors that have contributed to his success.

'Wrestling' with destiny

Tim Fagan's background is a testament to his determination, endurance, and adaptability. Growing up in the Ann Arbor area, he excelled in wrestling, eventually leading to a partial scholarship with the University of Michigan wrestling team. This experience taught him the importance of perseverance and stick-to-itiveness, traits that have served him well in both sports and business.

After college, Fagan pursued law enforcement, becoming a sheriff's deputy and working in marine patrol and as a school police liaison officer. But when his father was looking to sell his carpet cleaning business, Fagan saw an opportunity for change and jumped at it. Despite having no experience in the field, he successfully transitioned to running the business and even changed its name to Coach's Catastrophe Cleaning and Restoration Services, recognizing the more significant potential for restoration services. As he shared, "The margins were much better, and it fits my personality as a law enforcement guy and a former principal. You know, being there for people in their worst times and creating work from chaos just fit."

Under Fagan's leadership, the company grew from 17 employees with \$700,000 in sales to 70 employees with \$7 million in sales, becoming one of the largest mitigation companies in the country. Eventually, the company caught the attention of Belfor, another Michigan-based company, which acquired Coach's Catastrophe Cleaning and Restoration Services. Fagan then joined the Belfor team and later became President of 1-800 WATER DAMAGE, followed by Blue Kangaroo Packoutz and 1-800- BOARDUP.

As Fagan noted, he currently holds the role of President for all three brands, showcasing his expertise and leadership in the restoration industry. Fagan's background in law enforcement and education, combined with his experience in running and growing a successful business, has given him a unique perspective and skill set that has proven invaluable in his current role.

Regarding the franchise aspect of his job, Fagan explained that restoration just makes sense, "While I never say restoration is completely recession-proof, it's undoubtedly

resistant. I have been in this industry since 1995 and have managed to grow through some rough economic times in Michigan, whether with my own business or with Belfor."

'Jumping' up in the rankings

When asked about the continual success of Blue Kangaroo Packoutz, Fagan shared the importance of having compassion and a "servant's heart." As he explained, "That sense of service and a servant's heart that is at the core of people is what makes our most successful franchisees. They say, 'Hey, I'm here on your worst day, and I'm here with some solutions to help bring order back to your life from this chaos because you had a fire last night.'"

"Being there for people in their worst times and creating work from chaos just fit."

He also emphasized the success of their selection process, "We've grown so much because of many factors, including a good culture and selecting the right franchisees. Not everyone who wants to join us is a good fit, and we have to make sure it's mutually beneficial for both parties. We provide a lot of services and want to ensure together that we succeed."

Customer service and marketing strategies are also significant components of BKP's success, according to Fagan. He shared, "Customer service is number one. We have put a lot of priority on their service, surveys, and reviews, such as the Google Reviews, Guild Quality, or Review Tracker. We emphasize these because it is not something you can buy, like your SEO rating for your group...Customer service is the most essential piece. You can do a great job and have a great bottom line, but if you are not serving the customers, it is not a sustainable business. It is not even plausible to sell because people will say you are a one-and-done...Customer service is number one; if you are not serving the customer, you are only serving the insurance company or the insurance adjuster or solely for your own pocketbook. If that is all you care about, you might do well for a year or two, but it is not a sustainable business model."

'Leaping' ahead and mentoring others

Now, Blue Kangaroo Packoutz continues to expand and focus on receiving the accolades it rightfully deserves as a stand-out restoration brand run by a true leader. For Fagan, this means a strong emphasis on staffing, "We are expanding our team substantially. It is important for us to ensure that we are

properly staffed, with regional business coaches and support personnel for our rapidly growing franchise unit while also prioritizing the unique challenges of the industry.”

However, he claimed that the stability of the industry hasn't changed much, and this is one of the reasons why people are considering entrepreneurship now more than ever. “With rumors of a potential recession on the horizon and the rising cost of money, making investments is expensive and risky. The franchisees are committed to being their own boss and making a difference in their communities.”

But, the current BFG challenge is staffing up for meteoric growth in a short amount of time. “Three more franchisees just graduated training and five more will be attending training later this month. Starting a business can be challenging, and new franchisees need the most help initially. That's when our business coaches and I will go out of our way, jump on a plane, and fly out to their locations and help them get their businesses off the ground. The industry itself isn't changing much, but we must adapt internally to support our new franchisees' needs. This is a new venture for the BELFOR Franchise Group as we developed the BKP franchise from the ground up rather than buying an existing franchise.”

When asked about advice he may have for others looking to jump into the contents restoration industry, Fagan stated, “As I mentioned earlier, take a moment to reflect on what truly makes you happy in life. If your answer is solely big money and big checks, I suggest looking elsewhere. The first step is to search inside and ensure you have a servant's heart. There will be times when you have to work for free, work weekends, nights, and holidays; it's a reality as a BKP franchise owner. But if it's the right thing to do, you should be willing to do it. So, search your heart before researching how much money to invest. The second step would be to contact existing franchisees and speak with them. Make sure that what you're hearing and what you believe is validated by those who are actually doing it. This isn't about having someone from BKP on the phone or making the joint introduction but talking frankly to franchisees to confirm and validate that they are receiving the level of service they expected when they invested their money with us.”

A 'chilling' reminder of leadership and perseverance


As we concluded our interview with this restoration expert, the question arose regarding tools and books the leader might recommend to others. As Fagan shared, two came to mind, “There was a book that came out years ago called ‘Endurance’ about Ernest Shackleton's journey. Ernest and his crew of 28 men were on their way to a Transcontinental journey across the South Pole. Their ship got stuck in the Weddell Sea ice and sank. They lived on the ice flows, and when those melted, they eventually rowed to and lived on a desolate Antarctic Island called ‘Elephant Island.’ This is an unbelievable story about leadership and how Ernest led men through unbelievable trials and tribulations. When it

was clear that they would never be found or rescued from Elephant Island, Ernest handpicked five other men to sail with him across the Weddell Sea in a small rowboat to a small island (South Georgia Island), then hiked over the mountains on the island to a whaling camp to seek help for the rescue of his 22 other men. When you talk about leadership, you're talking about leading from the front; you're talking about servant leadership. Ernest is a great example of a true leader and there are many takeaways from the way that he led his men. Every single one of his guys survived their two years in the Arctic. It's just amazing.”

Secondly, Fagan recommended Augustine “Og” Mandino's book called “The Greatest Salesman in the World.” As Fagan explained, “While it's not a common book, it's still a good read. In his book, Mandino talks about having a servant's heart and being a great salesperson who helps clients and people in need, whether they know their needs or not. The main themes of the book are easily transferable over to any business, but particularly to businesses where you're caring for people on their worst days.”

100 years and counting

The final question we asked Tim Fagan was about his thoughts on the impact Cleanfax and ISSA may have had on the industry, given ISSA's 100th anniversary this year. He quickly stated, “To me, it's an easy one. You have the ideal platform for sharing, both in print and digital formats. You were the first to bring technology and science to the restoration industry, which is the area I look at most. More importantly, you're present at every significant event that takes place in the restoration world. You're not just there in name only, but also physically there. That's the part that I think is crucial. There's a saying about trust that goes, ‘the definition of trust is consistent behavior over time.’ Trust isn't given; it's earned. From my perspective, having been in the restoration industry for nearly 25 years, Cleanfax and ISSA have earned that trust by consistently leading from the front and serving your constituents faithfully. That's my opinion.”

While Fagan may just be one of the many leaders in an ever-expanding industry of massive influence, his compassion, leadership style, and background make him the perfect example that every president and business owner should actively seek to learn from. For now, the best thing leaders looking to expand their brands and earn the trust of their customers can do is focus on Fagan's primary principle of building a team of “servant's hearts.” 

For more information on what makes Fagan and his team unique, check out the full interview at cleanfax.com/fagan-interview.



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