



Notable Alumni

From Golf Balls to Landscape Lighting, There's an Opportunity Around Every Corner

Tom Wilkinson '89 B.S., Business Administration, is a man who began working when he was a boy, and will perhaps be working when he is a retiree. Certainly, the work attracts him. But it's the opportunity that shouts to him.

He first caught a glimpse of opportunity when he was just a boy. He lived across the street from a golf course, where nearly new balls went unclaimed all over the course's lawns. He gathered them up, washed them off and sold them each for 50 cents to a dollar. He was his own boss, and he liked the feeling. "From the time I was 10, I was working hard to make money," he says.

After his first foray into entrepreneurship, he began founding or acquiring companies the way other men collect cars. While still a student at UNH, he founded a maintenance company in which his doctor and his dentist were among his first clients. He remembered a realization he had in a marketing class about name significance: "I knew it was better to be at the beginning of the first column in the Yellow Pages," he says. Hence his company's name: Advantage Maintenance Inc.

He graduated and acquired a company that cleans carpets, another that repairs exercise equipment, and another that specializes in air quality. A do-it-yourselfer, he tinkered with landscape lighting at his

own home, decided a lucrative market existed for the product, and became a franchisee for a major landscape lighting company.

A head for management, an unparalleled work ethic and tremendous persistence — "When you are a businessperson, you don't

take no for an answer. I keep going until I get to yes," he says — has made for a successful career. He's far from done, though. "I'm conservative; I enjoy risk that I can manage," he says. "If it's a good opportunity and preferably related to the core business, I'll go for it."

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UNH alumnus Tom Wilkinson
in his offices in Woodbridge