



ENTREPRENEUR

HEADLINE

SEPTEMBER 2024

THE MOST
Successful
BUSINESS LEADERS
TO FOLLOW IN 2024



Founder & CEO, True Modular Building Group

CAREL VAN DUUREN

Making Affordable Housing Viable

Meet Carel Van Duuren, the founder and CEO of True Modular Building Group an asset-light quasi-vertical Integrated family of companies. Carel created TMB as his legacy project to offer affordable housing, minimize carbon footprint, and promote sustainability throughout the value chain. Thanks to his holistic approach, Carel has created an innovative system capable of producing a diverse range of building types. This pioneering technology ultimately supports mass customization and fast development of BTR residential housing while helping to decarbonize the construction industry reducing costs and lowering emissions for a sustainable future. Under Carel's leadership, True Modular Building Netherlands is now exploring possibilities and setting up joint ventures worldwide to market, order, and assemble residential buildings for communities.

The Steadfast Leader

Carel's leadership style has evolved with increased knowledge, experience, and time. He has been reading books since the age of 25 and continues to do so. He firmly believes that maintaining clarity and consistency in addressing unconstructive behavior ensures that everyone is treated equally and fairly. This helps them understand what they can expect and where the boundaries or no-go areas are.

"I have been in situations where I had to fire people or close or replace a company and start from scratch. I have been hospitalized four times,"- he states. "Health challenges are the most difficult to cope with. These events influenced my leadership style. It's a fact that you can't please everybody and always look at the big picture."

Fostering Innovation

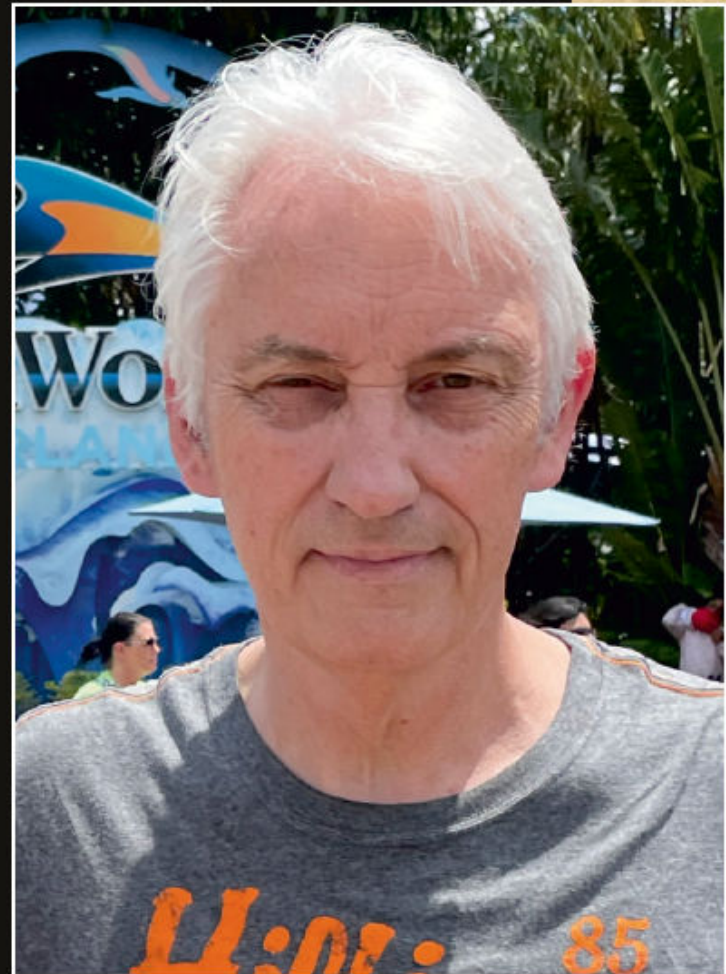
Under Carel's leadership, TMB fosters innovation and remains open to new ideas and technologies. The organization focuses on creating its own products, variations, or systems using its own product specifications based on market demand. By maintaining control over the value chain and manufacturing process, TMB is not at all dependent on major companies or suppliers, which in return allows the company to make independent decisions and avoid policies it may not agree with.

"People often think that a great idea is 90% of a product, in fact, it's only 5 %. The other 85% is needed for getting the product to the market. (size, look and feel, price point, packaging, transport, etc.),"- explains Carel.

Navigating Challenges

Carel believes challenges can arise from both internal and external sources. External challenges include changes in technology, political preferences, fitting new and improved materials in an already existing manufacturing process, health crises like COVID-19, or issues like climate change, CO2 pollution, or political instability.

Carel firmly believes while all companies must address these external problems, it is often the internal challenges that are





most crucial. In his opinion, internal challenges including management issues, communication breakdowns, or operational inefficiencies, typically pose the maximum threat to an organization's success.

Top Priorities

Under Carel's leadership, the organization will continue to globally expand its TMB system while focusing on producing as many affordable housing components as possible. TMB/Orange Kit components help to make traditional buildings in a modular, modern, and effective way. Last year TMB created and produced two building prototypes and a small series of Orange Kit components. TMB owns all its designs and takes a measured, step-by-step approach to product development, free from external pressure, as all TMB activities are self-funded.

The Key Differentiator

Sustainable construction includes using recyclable and

renewable materials in building projects and minimizing energy consumption and waste production. The primary goal of sustainable construction methods is to reduce its impact on the environment.

However, sustainable construction doesn't end after the completion of the building project. The design of the building itself should have minimum impact on the environment during its entire lifespan. TMB buildings are very easy to adapt to changing conditions, and all the components can be reused, or easily released. The company uses bio-based insulation and focuses on reducing energy consumption, further promoting environmental sustainability.

Work-Life Balance

While maintaining a proper work-life balance, Carel's top priority is to stay healthy and fit, eat good food, and do regular exercises. Spend quality time with family and take time off. Visit other countries to witness and experience the cultural differences.

"My wife and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary last year. Professional responsibilities mean you always need to deliver what has been agreed upon and keep your knowledge up to date. How you balance these are depending on the circumstances," - Carel explains.

Advice for Young Entrepreneurs

Carel suggests young entrepreneurs evaluate their proposals regularly and compare them with what competitors are offering. Persistence is key but avoid investing in sinking ships; they are destined to sink. He also underscores that there is no one-size-fits-all advice, as each situation is unique, and they need to be dealt differently.

