

Dynamic secrets of successful Seattle



Phillip O'Neill

I AM in Seattle and it lives up to its reputation. Seattle is very cool. It also lives up to its reputation for weather. Every day is wet, windy and cold.

Seattle sits at the head of Puget Sound, south of Vancouver Island. Across the Sound, between the city and the Pacific Ocean, are the snow-capped Olympic Mountains.

The city wraps around the water. Its commercial downtown is modest but modern. Away from the downtown, wooden bungalows spill down to the water. There are some seriously nice places to live.

You have a sense of isolation here. Seattle is America's north-west sentinel watching over the export of timber and grains and minerals, and receiving manufactured goods in container ships from east Asia.

Seattle has three million people. Its nearest three million-plus neighbour is San Francisco, 1300 kilometres to the south.

Seattle is in Washington state. Washington is tough country. A group of local businessmen at an adjoining dinner table the other night spoke loudly of their guns and weekend shooting in the wild country nearby.

Seattle is also a successful urban society. Its capacity to generate world-class companies is astonishing. Seattle's top five are Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon.com, Starbucks and Nordstrom.

Boeing is the oldest. Its founder was Bill Boeing, a British migrant, with an engineering degree from Yale University in Connecticut on the east coast. Bill arrived in Washington in 1903 and made a small fortune in timber. He came to Seattle in 1908 and built furniture and boats. Then in 1914 after a plane ride during a local air show, he decided to build planes, and the rest is history. Driving past the Boeing plant on the site of the 1914 air show you shake your head at the enormity of the 100-year-long Boeing success story.

Another migrant, John Nordstrom, arrived in the US from Sweden in 1887, equally adventurous, only 16 years old. He landed in New York and headed to the north-west seeking work in timber and mining. Then he



BILLIONAIRES' ROW: Talent, enterprise, adventure and good ideas have made Seattle great.

teamed with a mate in 1901 and started a shoe store in Seattle. A second store was opened in 1923, and a family started. That family today runs more than 115 department stores across the US and another 100 speciality stores, all bearing the Nordstrom name. I bought an umbrella in one of its stores the day I arrived here. The store assistant said she was one of 50,000 proud Nordstrom employees.

Seattle is also the birthplace of Starbucks coffee. Starbucks is everywhere in this city, on every corner, inside every other store, even here on my desk on a serve-yourself dispenser. But you don't have to come to Seattle to drink Starbucks. Its 16,000 stores in 48 countries provide enough opportunities.

Starbucks started in 1971 when a couple of school teachers and a writer began roasting coffee beans in a store in the Pike Place markets down by the waterfront. In 1982 they took on a marketing manager, Howard Schultz, from New York. In 1987 Schultz bought out his bosses and changed Starbucks into a chain

of coffee lounges, just like the cafes he had seen on his buying trips to Milan in Italy.

Schultz is now a famous local billionaire but, if taxi drivers can be believed, his popularity took a dent when Schultz, who owned the town's much-loved basketball team, the Sonics, between 2001 and 2006, flogged it off to out-of-towners, who then shipped the team all the way to Oklahoma.

Another famous Seattle entrepreneur, Jeff Bezos, is also a "blow-in". Bezos worked as a financial analyst in New York and had been visiting family in Texas. Company lore says he put together his business plan as he drove to Seattle in 1994. His idea was to use computing systems to sell books online. Soon after he arrived in Seattle Bezos established Amazon.com. Today the company employs more than 30,000 workers and is the world's largest online retailer.

The most famous Seattle entrepreneur, however, is the world's most famous billionaire: Bill

Gates. Bill is a local. His childhood friend was Paul Allen. At school a teacher arranged for them to play with an off-site computer. At university they fooled around writing software for miniature computing circuits. In 1975 they founded Microsoft. They launched Windows in 1985. Today Microsoft employs nearly 90,000 workers worldwide. Its head office is just around the bay here at a place called Redmond. Each morning its freeway turnoff is choked to a standstill with Microsoft employees heading to work.

Can we explain Seattle's extraordinary business success?

This is my list: very talented people, in a nation that encourages and rewards enterprise, in a part of the world where there is a spirit of adventure, at a time in history when each good idea was ready to flourish.

Professor Phillip O'Neill is director of the Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney.

Gratitude is not taking sacrifice for granted

The Diggers and Jesus had much in common, writes Kerry Haggar.

I FIND it is a rare Anzac Day when I don't get a bit emotional, particularly when reciting the *Ode to the Fallen*.

The idea of us going on with our lives, barely giving those courageous men and women a second thought, when they made the ultimate sacrifice so we could live free; yes, it moves me to tears.

I hope I never get to the point where I take what they did, and gave up, for granted.

For me, that's what it's all about. War is senseless and tragic. Atrocities performed by humans on other humans is "so not" what we were made for.

Anzac Day doesn't glorify war, as

some have postulated over the years.

It reminds us that there were men and women who went to serve their country; our country.

Many of them were too young and some were scared, but they went anyway.

And they served anyway. That's courage.

Anzac Day is a chance to stop and be grateful that there are men and women in the world who will stand for what's right; who won't sit back and let others be downtrodden simply because someone else is stronger and can impose their will.

It's a chance to say a belated thank you to those who fought so I can live in freedom, and a key motivation to pray for peace in our time.

Anzac Day also bolsters my resolution to be active in my own stand against injustice.

I think the most disrespect we

could pay our Diggers would be to let their sacrifice be for nothing. For us to allow the strong-willed and powerful in our society to continue to disadvantage and demean the weak and marginalised, to walk on by and ignore the helpless and broken people around us, to allow people to remain imprisoned by their poverty and lack of self-worth.

That's not what our Diggers fought for.

Every Anzac Day I'm also reminded of a verse from the Bible. The apostle Paul wrote: "Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Jesus died so that we could experience the freedom of living life "to the full".

He doesn't promise us a perfect life, but He does promise that He will be with us all the way.

Just as I don't want to disrespect the sacrifice of the Diggers, I certainly don't want to waste the sacrifice Jesus made.

While we can't control what life throws at us, we can choose what we do with it.

"Life to the full" is a very real option for us when we're making that choice.

Anzac Day and Easter are both about sacrifices on our behalf.

And me? I'm one very grateful recipient.

Major Kerry Haggar is divisional commander for the Salvation Army, Newcastle and Central Coast. Article submitted by the Churches Media Association.



Nightclub licence

The use of a catering licence by the Kensington nightclub to allow it to serve alcohol has drawn criticism from the Police Association and activist Tony Brown, and a state government review of catering laws.

Fancy wanting to open up an entertainment venue in the middle of a city, what are they thinking??? Tony Brown is doing nothing except ruin the city, and why do people keep going to him for an opinion or a quote. Ask the general public what they think.

- Nick

The police union and Tony Brown appear to both share the view that they can run around and express a loud minority view when they like and no matter what the harm. The club is doing what is legal, the authorities are notified in accordance with the law, and the club coincides with planning requirements. Leave them alone and let Newcastle city grow.

- Glasshalfull

He was refused a liquor licence so, in an attempt to make money out of drinkers, he just applied for a different licence. The system has loopholes for anyone with money.

- J

For god's sake its just another night club, its not the end of the world. let the young people enjoy themselves just like you older chaps did 60 years ago. The states liquor laws are already a joke and are taking the fun out of going out and enjoying a drink.

- N Dubz

Maybe they should just give the Kensington the licence! It seems to me there is a lot of excitement about the opening of this upperclass venue & you wouldn't have 500 people attending, if it wasn't wanted! Good on the Kensington for bringing life back into Newcastle! Isn't that what it's all about.

- JDFour

Good on them. Chase the wowsers into the harbour!

- Renee

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