

Michael and Yael Silver
A Great Partnership in Business and in Life
by
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Even though Michael and Yael Silver grew up in the same neighbourhood, they didn't really get to know each other until they took Commerce together at the University of Manitoba.

Although Yael was studying for her CPA and Michael was in finance, they ran into each other in the halls and fate eventually managed to put them in the same place at the same time.

Michael said, "The Jewish Students' Association has an office in University Centre where I used to go to eat lunch and hang out with my friends. One day I went there and there was no one there except for Yael. So I stayed and we started talking. Then I called her and we started dating, and it went from there."

They began dating in their final year of Commerce, then got married in 2002.

When Michael and his business partner Jason (Bonneteau) bought Wealth Planning Group, it was a natural decision to bring Yael in as their Controller. Although she is an accountant by trade, she is involved in a lot more than that at Wealth Planning Group. Michael said, "She does our website, our marketing, our graphic design, and for our Benefit Planning Group department, she does all the group renewals as well. In the fall we are planning to add accounting and medical bill processing services. She basically runs the show here."

"The company has sent me to a few courses," Yael added with a laugh. "I took a web development course at Red River College, and I am currently taking graphic design courses."

Michael and Yael enjoy working in the same office. "We have our own things to do and I'm in meetings a lot, so we don't always spend a great deal of time together, but we see each other every day," Michael said. "And we can easily discuss who is picking up the kids from school. Fortunately, our kids' school is only a few minutes from the office."

“And I can work from home, or bring the kids here,” Yael added.

Wealth Planning Group is very close to being a family run company. Not only do Michael and Yael work together, so do Jason and his wife Somsamay, as does Somsamay’s sister, Jennie McLeod.

Another family member is Michael and Yael’s dog, Max. Michael said, “Max is a mix of a Springer Spaniel and a Lab. He’s eight years old and he doesn’t go anywhere without us. He comes to work every day. He doesn’t bug anyone. He stays in Yael’s office and follows her around all the time. When Yael is away, he sits in my office and waits for her to come back. If we are both away, he waits by the door in the back, waiting for us to come back. He is very quiet and doesn’t really bark. If we go out at night for a couple of hours, then he is alone, but otherwise he is always with us.”

Michael maintains that the greatest strength of Wealth Planning Group is the service they provide. He said, “If someone calls me at 7 o’clock at night, they will get a call back the same night. We call people back within a couple of hours always.

“We do investments, we do insurance and we do group benefits,” Michael said. “We try to do everything for our clients that we possibly can. For the Benefits Planning Group we do payroll spreadsheets and offer our in-house human resource consultant to all of our group clients.”

“We negotiate with insurance companies to get better rates,” Yael added.

“But what sets us apart is our service. We have 10 staff here, so when clients are with us, they don’t wait for anything and they get treated very well,” Michael said.

Wealth Planning Group is still in its growth stage. “This year has been a busy year for us,” Michael said. “We bought four other advisors out and three out of the four have stayed on and are working for us now.”

Much like Jason, Michael has been Past President of the Regional Advocis Board, the association for financial planners. Michael added, “I am also on the Rady Sports Dinner Committee, where Dan Marino is the speaker this year.

“I am also involved in the Jewish National Fund,” he added. “Yael’s family is from Israel, so Israel is very important to us. We were both there when we were kids and we went back in December 2014, January 2015 before my daughter’s Bat Mitzvah, and we plan to go back in 2019 before my son’s Bar Mitzvah.”

While Yael was taking time away from work to raise their kids, Naomi (12) and Ben (9), she started her own cake decorating company. “She used to do all the cakes for Schmoozer’s at Rady JCC. Amazing cakes. She could put logos or whatever people wanted on the cakes,” Michael said. “Now she only does it for our family.”

They also love to travel. “We took the kids to Italy and Croatia last year,” he added. “We’ve been going to Disney a lot, but I think we’re Disneyed out. We are going on a Disney cruise this year, but I think that will be it.”

They are also going on a road trip to Wisconsin Dells and Chicago with Michael’s brother and family. Michael said, “The kid’s love waterparks.”

They used to be cottage owners, but they sold it last year in order to spend more of their summer at home. “We like all the things we can do in Tuxedo,” Michael said.

“We bought the cottage before we moved to Tuxedo,” Yael added. “We found that we preferred being in our house in Tuxedo, than being at the cottage.”

“One of our goals is to do a lot of the local things that we weren’t able to do in the summer before because we were always at the cottage,” Michael said.

“We want to take the kids to the Morden Corn and Apple Festival,” Yael added.

“We are looking at the concerts on Corydon and the movies at Assiniboine Park.”

“My brothers both live in Tuxedo,” Michael said. “And their kids are the same age as ours, so they spend a lot of time together.”

The kids are also involved in a number of activities, from playing with their friends to organized sports. “Naomi plays for Tuxedo Lightning Basketball,” Michael said, “Ben and I go to Shindleman Park to hit baseballs. He likes baseball and may play next year. We are rollerblading, because he is considering hockey next year. Naomi plays Ultimate (Frisbee) at school.”

We like walking a lot,” he added. “One thing we like doing as a family is going for a walk in the neighbourhood, and to different places.”

“I was out for a walk today and I ran into six different people that I knew,” Yael said. “It’s nice.”

Max also likes going for walks in the neighbourhood, either joining Yael on her walks, or going out with the whole family. He loves to chase the local wildlife.

“We see rabbits when we go for walks, Max likes rabbits,” Michael said. “We also see a red fox. We don’t like the fox.”

“Sometimes we have deer on the driveway and he goes crazy,” Yael added. “And geese. Max loves to say hello to the geese.”

The Silvers all love animals. Naomi has a pet rabbit and they have fish. Michael said, “Everybody wants another dog, but I think one dog is enough for now.”

They are also huge sports fans. “We watch all the Jets games, all the Bombers games. We have Jets and Bombers season tickets, and we go to as many games as we can,” Michael said. “I think the Jets are going to be amazing this year. You can see all the memorabilia in the office. We like Winnipeg sports.

“Jason always says that if anyone wants to know why they should stay in Winnipeg, just ask me, because I am the biggest fan of Winnipeg,” he added with a laugh.

Both Michael and Yael have an abiding love for their home town, and although they will continue to grow their company and travel the world, Winnipeg will always be their home. Michael said, “Whenever we go anywhere, we always want to come back to Winnipeg.”