



# HIGH-LEVEL COMMITMENT IN THE HIGH ARCTIC

How two business owners are working with and for their community

Hills and high cliffs wrap around Arctic Bay, a tiny hamlet on the northwest coast of Baffin Island. High Arctic birds nest in the cliffs, and narwhals and bowhead whales migrate past every year. Just outside the community is a place called Arqvirtuuq, where Moses Oyukuluk's family often camped when he was growing up. So when he and his wife Zipporah decided to launch their own business, they named it after the place that carries a lifetime of fond memories.

In 1993, the couple established Arqvirtuuq Services Ltd. as a taxi service, shuttling people between Arctic Bay and Nanisivik, a nearby town built around a lead-zinc mine by the same name. As the business gained traction, Arqvirtuuq purchased a bus to transport workers to the mine, while their taxis continued to serve locals as well as workers.

As opportunities grew, the company branched out, adding on a construction company and a hotel. Over the years, they have counted more than 100 employees, most of them locally hired. One of the challenges of staffing is finding skilled tradespeople, so the company sometimes needs to hire subcontractors for certain projects.

With Arctic Bay being so remote, running a business isn't always easy. Nanisivik Mine, which had been operating since 1976, was closed in 2002, and the townsite is now abandoned. The hotel sees fewer guests in the winter as the number of visitors to Arctic Bay drops.

Despite the obstacles, Arqvirtuuq has thrived. In 2005, the company began working with Atuqtuarvik Corporation, which offered financing and advice. "Arqvirtuuq was timely in their reporting, positive and always communicated well with us," says Reanna Sateana, Operations Officer at Atuqtuarvik. "They weren't afraid to come to us for advice and I was very impressed with Moses' business acumen and his ability to recognize an opportunity."

In 2010, the Oyukuluks once again recognized an opportunity and expanded their hotel, the Tangmaarvik Inn, with the addition of a bed and breakfast. This was a significant achievement for their company, offering more options for visitors to Arctic Bay. With a new health centre under construction in the community, the inn is almost always full.

If you ask the Oyukuluks, success in business comes down to your relationships. **"Be involved in your community,"** they advise other Northern business owners, "as support from the community plays a very important role in your success."



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