

# MEMBER PROFILE



## Justin Jacob, CPA, CMA Co-Owner, Bridge Drive-In

As the warm weather pours on, the Bridge Drive-In (BDI) is helping Winnipeggers stay cool by serving up their creamy and delicious soft-serve ice cream. The small business has become a staple among summer activities in Winnipeg, as the BDI has opened its doors for business every summer since the 1950's. "The business has a lot of history. Most Winnipeggers can remember coming here with their families as a kid," explains Justin Jacob, CPA, CMA. "You'd get your ice cream and then walk across the bridge and visit the playground. The whole BDI experience is one that gives you a genuine feeling of childhood nostalgia."

Before taking the reigns as Co-Owner at the BDI, Justin attended the University of Manitoba's Asper School of Business and majored in small business and accounting. After graduating in 2007, he went on to achieve his professional accounting designation. "The opportunity came up to work in public practice with a small firm out of St-Pierre-Jolys, Manitoba. It was an excellent experience," says Justin. "I worked with a variety of organizations and learned what the accounting function can provide for a small business."

That experience would soon come in handy. As Justin was finishing up his designation, Conquest Manufacturing in Altona approached his firm looking for someone to join their Accounting Department part-time as a Controller. Justin accepted the position and was offered a full-time role after he finished the CMA program. Shortly thereafter, Justin recognized a new once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"I always knew I wanted to be involved with a small business, but I didn't know which route to go as it pertained to my training in accounting. When my wife's grandparents decided to retire and sell the BDI, we knew we had to put in a competitive bid," says Justin. "Her grandfather was a businessman as well. Having the accounting and business background that I do assured him that we could take care of the business and continue its success."

Justin and his wife became the official owners of BDI in 2012, learning the ropes from her grandparents and shadowing managers to understand the day-to-day functions. On top of managing 25 staff members, Justin handles the bookkeeping, year-to-date statements, purchasing and building relationships with suppliers. "My designation has made it possible for me to be able to tell where we are as a business at any given time," Justin says. "Since taking over, we've made several minor revisions and have implemented improved systems and practices. My accounting background has been instrumental in making that happen"

With business booming at the BDI, Justin has decided to leave the Controller position with Conquest and focus his full efforts on ensuring the BDI's continuing success. "I decided I wanted to focus on being self-employed and dedicate my energy to this place," explains Justin. "I want to make it the best it can be."



Although he is focused on BDI's current strengths and situation, Justin also has his eye on expanding the business, Winnipeg style. "There's a big food truck craze going on in Winnipeg right now. I'd like to see us take part in that," Justin says. "We're looking at introducing a BDI ice cream truck within the next year or so. It would be awesome to get our product mobile, appearing at different festivals and venues around the city."

A financial roadmap is extremely important for BDI, and goes hand in hand with Justin's plans for the future of the business. "Our building has been around since the 1940's. We never know what the next item to repair and replace will be," Justin explains. "You can always set budgets and hope that everything falls under those guidelines. However, a strong plan accounts for variances and sets you on the right path for success."

The BDI keeps Justin busy from spring through to the fall. When he's not helping Winnipeg get its BDI fix, he runs his own office where he does personal and corporate tax returns. He credits his designation for allowing him to be so versatile within the profession.

"It's pretty remarkable that the program can prepare you for facets of accounting that are all so different. You don't have to hole yourself into one career path after doing the program," Justin says. "There's a number of ways you can branch out. For myself, I've done public practice, I worked for a company as a controller and now I'm self employed and running my own business. For each one of these roles, I've had to draw from the education in my designation program."

The Bridge Drive-In is open between March and October every year. If you're craving some BDI, [visit their website](#) to learn more and check out their special menu items!

