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FACE TIME

KENNETH HODGE

Kenneth M. Hodge is not afraid of difficult decisions. Last January the 39-year-old director at Trident Trust Company (BVI) decided to give up his decade-long career at the established company to venture out on his own. "If you have a primary aim for your life, and if you realize that you can't do it where you are, you have to be brave enough to pursue your dream," said Hodge, who also previously worked as financial comptroller of the BVI Electricity Corporation.

Hodge left the comfort of steady employment to dedicate himself full-time to several businesses that he and business partner Angel George had established. Trinity Financial Services Ltd., Virgin Gorda Insurance Agency Ltd., Trintek Home Center, and Trintek Computer Store offer a range of services, including fiduciary accounting, technology products, insurance, appliance sales, ship registration, and director services. "We realized that there are niche markets in financial services and that there were other markets we could tap into," Hodge said.

Hodge was raised on Virgin Gorda by a single mother, Marcia, until he was 11 years old, when she met and married his stepfather, Martin Belmar. Together Marcia and Martin have owned and operated M&M Bakery since. Hodge says that his mother taught him the value of hard work: "We learned early on that you have to work for what you want," he said.

Hodge married his wife, Anne-Marie, in the UK in 1995, and the couple have two daughters, aged 12 and 9. Outside of work, Hodge is active in his church, the New Testament Church of God. He enjoys golf and swimming, and he reads and listens to books by a number of inspirational authors, including John Maxwell (*The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*), Jim Collins (*Good to Great*), David J. Schwartz (*The Magic of Thinking Big*), Brian Tracy (*Eat that Frog*) and Napoleon Hill (*Think and Grow Rich*) and of course the Bible.

Hodge graduated as valedictorian from the Bregado Flax Educational Centre in 1986. He attended Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia where he graduated in 1991 with a degree in accounting and finance. "I believe it is very, very important to realize that there is a bigger world outside the BVI," Hodge says of the experience going to school so far from home. "I can remember seeing snow for the first time. It was a whole different experience outside the BVI and I met and mixed with people from a cross-section of society. Just being there alone gave me something very valuable – it opens your eyes to competition."

As for the future, Hodge is optimistic. He acknowledges that quitting a steady job to focus on his businesses in the midst of an unprecedented economic recession is risky, but says "now is the only time you have." Hodge considers the downturn as the right time to lay a foundation so that when the economy bounces back, he is ready to capitalise on it. "Some people wait for all the street lights to be green before they leave the house. I don't do that," he said.

