



TARA WALTON/TORONTO STAR

Tasha Mazza-Kelton and partners Mark Binns, left, and Mark Healy, of Torque Market Intelligence. The two Marks are graduates of the Ivey MBA school, while Mazza-Kelton is the blogger for this series.

The Torque method

Mark Healy, 32, co-founder of Torque Market Intelligence, on his firm's approach to business:

1. The market drives: Meaning, consumers are smart and well informed, and you have to respect that. Don't talk down to people. Think from the client's or consumer's perspective.

2. People business: Internally, consulting is a people business. Find good talent and hold on to it. Pay well. Create an open, transparent culture. We share the financials of the company once a month. When we make a strategic decision, we bring everyone into the room from partners to secretary. We give people autonomy over their

jobs. When we say you're in charge, we mean it. Hire good people, give them the resources and tools they need to do the job and then get out of their way.

3. Praise, criticism: Praise in public, criticize in private. You can learn a lot from bad managers. Both Mark and I have worked for a**holes. I used to have a boss who, if he praised me, did it in a closed office; if he wanted to tear a strip off me, he'd send emails to 15 people punishing me.

4. Business success: Constant communication, which is essential to incremental good decision making. Lack of information can result in poor deci-

sions. Torque's management structure is based on meetings twice a week to discuss the business, talk strategy and "big picture" stuff. All three partners have to agree on major strategic decisions. I have final say over people and operations; Mark Binns over finance and legal; Tasha Mazza-Kelton over marketing and business development.

5. Risk taking: People often characterize entrepreneurs as risk takers. In fact they're often risk-averse, and don't make a move without doing their homework. Which makes for solid decision-making.

—Steed