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From business owner to public servant, Alvord does it all

By: Press Tribune staff



Scott Alvord recently won in the Press Tribune's Best of the Best competition in the following categories:

1. Best Computer & Software company
2. Best Event Venue
3. Best Elected Official

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Scott Alvord is Roseville's famous multiple-man, running several businesses while being a front-and-center public servant. Alvord explained to the Press Tribune how he finds the time.

PT: Given that two of the three categories you won in were for separate businesses, what's your secret to successfully multi-tasking in your professional life?

Alvord: My daily schedule on my merged Google calendars is nothing short of breathtaking sometimes when I look at it beyond a daily list. Scheduled appointments, color codes, reminder notices, and plenty of client notes help keep me on track. My Windows phone has an excellent address book that merges with my social media list of contacts. It also has a prioritized to-do list app that is getting a lot more use than before.

PT: What has been the main types of ambiance and experience you've worked to bring to Dash of Panache that resulted in it being such a popular events venue? [note, it's "A Dash of Panache"—folks keep forgetting the "A"]

Alvord: We've been in our 1920's building in Downtown Roseville for over a decade now. When we first opened, there were 12 tea parlors in the greater Sacramento area. Now we're the only one left close by. There are competitors, more like friendly industry partners, in Auburn and Dixon but the economy pretty much wiped out everyone else. The Davis parlor was the latest victim.

We're unique in many ways and I think it has helped us survive. I can't think of a more perfect location for our business than in the beautiful downtown area. The changes that have occurred downtown during the last five years and that will

occur during the next five years are incredible. We're also the only French-deco tea parlor in Northern California, possibly the only one on the west coast, which draws guests from Redding, the Bay Area, and Tahoe. Most tea parlors are Victorian or English designs. Our layout lends itself to a lot more flexibility. Our business model is solid as

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well. Our 3-section building has three distinct environments that feed each other. The front café is a feeder for our primary services of the tea parlor and the party room. We open up during many major downtown events (e.g., Downtown Tuesday Nights) and we always get future reservations and visits because of it. Our reservation-only tea parlor has a Vanity Closet where ladies can borrow hats, boas, scarves, jewelry, and glasses to accessorize during tea sittings or other events. We host a lot of over-the-top baby showers, bridal showers, and ladies night out events. We currently host a variety business-related groups, book clubs, etc. who use our facility for their weekly or monthly meetings. Our back Party Room hosts several different types of full-blown, themed little girls birthday parties (Royal Princess, Diva Salon, Crazy Hair Salon, and Tea Party). We've held over 1,200 of these parties. I think we're a popular event venue because so much of the public knows about us and several tens of thousands of guests have been served at our facility

PT: What is the most enjoyable thing for you and your staff when it comes to running a café and events venue?

Alvord: When I train new staff, I always review our mission statement and discuss what it means to us as a team. The mission statement is, "A Dash of Panache exists to serve our community by fostering friendships in a variety of unique, fun, and memorable ways." Our team doesn't just work here to collect a paycheck. I've had those types of employees in the past but my current team is over the top about serving our guests to ensure their experience with us grows their friendships and brightens their day. There is no better feeling in the restaurant industry than to know someone had great food and a great experience while they were here and it was because of the way we treated them.

PT: What are key services Advanced Development Concepts brings to the public?

Alvord: The tagline is "Helping Businesses Thrive!" and that's what we do. We do a wide variety of business and tech consulting as described on our website at ADCBiz.com. We have helped owners turn a failing business around and advanced businesses to a higher level of efficiency. We excel as an unbiased, outside resource when we are brought in to help on strategy or design teams. Our best skill is helping analyze a company and walking them through the process of really honing in on their target market and then designing a marketing strategy that focuses on that target. Many local business owners have heard our very interesting can creative password security presentation that helps companies lock down their biggest vulnerability.

PT: When people think of computer and software companies, they often imagine tech giants: What would people be surprised to know about the experience of running a computer software company as a small business owner?

Alvord: Back in the late 80's, 90's and early 2000's, my software company was literally able to run circles around the big guys because we could crank out quality custom software in a fraction of the time and cost. The key was having a team of analysts and developers who were well-educated and had serious experience and knowledge in how to properly analyze a client's needs first, and then to design excellent databases and user interfaces that met those needs. As I grow older and busier, and as the industry has moved almost entirely online, I have migrated more into the analysis and design side of the process, and leave most of the coding to the younger developers who don't have the experience to "learn" the client's business needs. What I love about the industry today is that the technology is much more sophisticated and you don't have to develop everything from scratch anymore, so costs are a lot lower than they used to be. My first major website back in the late 1990s cost the client \$30,000, which was \$70,000 less than the next highest bidder. Today, it's really hard to justify a website that costs even as much as \$5,000. Because so many people know me and I don't have much overhead, I get to pick and choose the projects that we work on now.

PT: You serve on a commission, a board and an association: What are the biggest challenges that come with each?



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Being self-employed has given me a lot of flexibility. I often tell people that now I get to choose which 12 hours of the day I work. That means I can schedule in a lot of meaningful service and life experiences during those other 12 hours, including a little sleep here and there. I currently serve on the Roseville Parks & Recreation Commission, RCONA Executive Board, our family's church board, Downtown Roseville Merchants (President), Fellowship Networking Group (President), Chamber of Commerce's CORE Committee, Pleasant Grove Neighborhood Association (President), the PBID steering committee, Successful Thinkers (lead ambassador), and several other ad-hoc committees around the city. The biggest and most exciting challenges have had to do with revitalizing the downtown area. I was honored to be on the original Downtown Specific Plan Steering Committee and I have been involved with almost every revitalization-related commission/committee/board/group since then. It takes many years between design and completion of major projects like the Town Square, and it is very challenging to educate the public that a community's investment in revitalization really does pay for itself many times over. Ignorance of economic concepts is frustrating sometimes, but it's very rewarding to watch someone's eyes light up when they finally "get it" and understand how every \$1 of revitalization eventually turns into \$12 back to the city government to be used for future public safety, more parks, wider roads, etc. There are very few city expenses that can claim this type of return.


Another challenge is in regards to RCONA, our awesome network of neighborhood organizations. Trying to get some our citizens to take an active role in their own neighborhood can be challenging because everyone seems so busy these days. But watching neighbors come together at events like Movies In The Park is heartwarming.

PT: What do you personally like most about public service?

Alvord: Karen and I have lived in Roseville for close to 30 years now and I initially spent most of my spare time serving on my church board, a school board, and coaching sports for my children. Once I started really getting to know my community and spending more and more time in the neighborhoods and business areas, I started realizing that I could join forces with others and give a lot more of myself than I have been giving. My favorite quote is from Woodrow Wilson: "You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand." My purpose in life is to enrich the world around me. That includes my family, neighbors, business community, and local government. God has blessed my life in so many ways that I do not deserve, and it would be wrong for me not to give back everything I can.

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