REDWOOD MEDIA'S TOP 100 MAGAZINE

THE TOP 100 CANADIAN PROFESSIONALS

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Featuring

TOMMY BALTZIS

Co-Founder, President & CEO
WhiteHaven Investment Group

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When Paramount+ Canada premiered the second season of *The Fashion Hero: A New Kind of Beautiful* on March 31st, the show swiftly ascended to the top, becoming a fan favorite. This was built on the unprecedented success of the first season, which enamored 35 million viewers across 160 territories. The show's success story is not merely a testament to its revolutionary stance against unreasonable beauty norms and transformative impact on the fashion industry, but also a shining example of the unique alternative investment opportunities that Canadian-based firm WhiteHaven offers. As the co-founder, president, and CEO of WhiteHaven, Tommy Baltzis sees it as an embodiment of the firm's mission to challenge the norm and create meaningful change in people's lives.

"For us at WhiteHaven, *The Fashion Hero* embodies our core values of excellence, integrity, respect, and innovation," Tommy explains. "We are proud to be the only firm in Canada to have one of our investment opportunities transform into a mainstream reality TV show on a premier streaming platform. This is a landmark achievement."

"Challenge the status quo."

It was with these four words that Tommy, in 2014, embarked on a bold pursuit to transform the financial services industry. Born into a middle-class family, Tommy aspired to establish a company that would democratize access to early-stage investment opportunities in promising private enterprises. Within a decade of its inception, WhiteHaven had already amassed over $1 billion in assets and became a leading figure in Canada's alternative investment landscape.

"The conventional system, which prevented everyday individuals like my parents from exploring the wider world of investments and the potential and value that these opportunities could bring, didn't sit well with me," Tommy explains. "My goal was to democratize access for everyone – from retail investors, family offices, and institutional investors to individual investors and mom-and-pop shops. With no minimum investment requirement, everyone can participate in these unique opportunities."

WhiteHaven's approach to identifying alternative investments is far from traditional. Instead of focusing on specific sectors, they embrace the

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distinctive opportunities each venture brings and tap into the limitless potential of a myriad of prospects and innovative concepts. Tommy continues, "We collaborate closely with the entrepreneurs, supporting them in their journey towards success. Our investors, in turn, get an opportunity they usually wouldn't have, helping them diversify their portfolios in order to reach their financial objectives."

We met with Tommy to hear more about the inspiration behind WhiteHaven, how they helped bring *The Fashion Hero* to life, and what drives him to continue to defy convention—one game-changing investment at a time.

Q: What was the driving force behind starting a firm with a mission to challenge the status quo and have a real impact on people's lives?

A: The inspiration is PEOPLE. Opportunities are born through people. My thought process revolved around finding a way to connect with those daring enough to believe they can change the world, and turning these ideas into possibilities to collaborate. Traditionally, these opportunities would go to the public market early, but nowadays, they stay private longer. Consequently, most value creation happens in private markets. The question was, "How can people access these opportunities, these investments?" The reality was, unless you were affluent or had specific connections, you couldn't - until now.

Q: How does your close collaboration with founders and companies benefit your investors?

A: Our philosophy is that by providing entrepreneurs with the necessary resources—legal, financial, strategic advisory, and accounting—we enable them to focus on achieving their vision without the distractions of public market "noise." Does our hands-on involvement create regulatory conflicts of interest? Absolutely, but we believe the benefits significantly outweigh the drawbacks, and we strive to manage these conflicts through transparency and disclosure.

Q: *The Fashion Hero: A New Kind of Beautiful* is just one of the ventures that WhiteHaven and your family of investors helped bring to life and has made big news. Can you tell us a little bit about this?

A: *The Fashion Hero* is an opportunity that came to us years ago. Caroline Bernier, the driving force behind the project, had a vision to challenge the unrealistic beauty standards of the fashion industry and showcase the unique qualities that everyone possesses. We saw this as an extraordinary opportunity to invest in a project that could change the world. What stood out about Caroline was her passion, determination, and unwavering commitment to her vision. We look for individuals, like Caroline, who are driven to persist, through good times and bad times, to achieve their ultimate goal.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about your work, and what keeps you motivated?

A: It all comes back to PEOPLE. The joy of collaborating with other passionate individuals, the collective achievement of milestones, the thrilling journey of building something improbable yet possible, learning from a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds, the moments we capture and reflect on, identifying potential future leaders and mentoring them—all of this motivates me to continue on this path every day.

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