

## Business

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### 'Apprentice' winner speaks on what got him this far

By DAVID E. LEIVA, Staff Writer

The same kind of values and leadership training taught in the military are the ones that will spur success in business -- not to mention the respect of Donald Trump, according to the second-season winner of "The Apprentice."

"It's a no-brainer. It's helped me in everything I've done," said Kelly Perdew, a former Army officer who beat out 17 others on the NBC reality TV show last year to become a vice president for the New York real estate mogul.

On Thursday, Mr. Perdew got a warm reception from a crowd of military veterans at the Veteran Owned Business Expo in Annapolis. He urged them to instill an entrepreneurial fire and loyalty in their employees, which he's learned during his stint

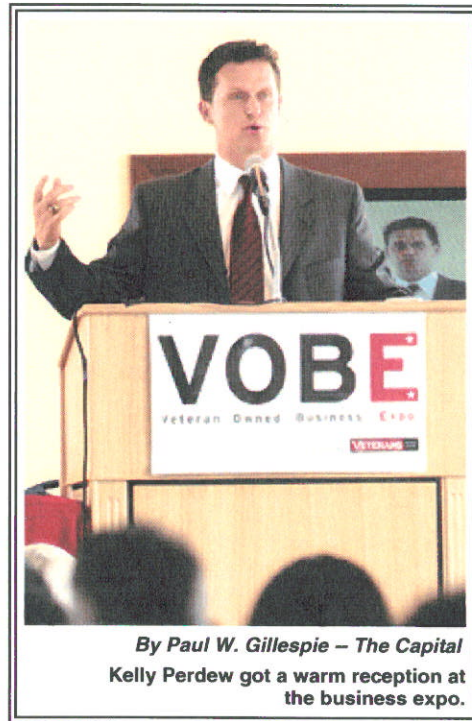
working for Mr. Trump. Many of his employees have worked for him more than 20 years.

"I have been very surprised at how entrepreneurial the Trump organization is," he said. "Loyalty is the most important attribute (to Mr. Trump). It creates a phenomenal organization."

Mr. Perdew also leaned on his previous experience preparing for a career as a corporate attorney. He found people hated their jobs.

"You have to be passionate," he said. "Without passion, you're not going to see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Mr. Perdew spent a semester at the Naval Academy during his West Point days. He was discharged from the Army in 1992. Three of his brothers have served in the armed forces, including one who graduated from the Naval Academy.



By Paul W. Gillespie – The Capital  
Kelly Perdew got a warm reception at the business expo.



After one summer working at a law firm, the 37-year-old Kentucky native shelved his law degree to start several Web-based businesses. He has since handed over their daily operations to work for Mr. Trump through 2005.

Mr. Perdew, who was cast as a military character during the four-month series, said his stock started rising soon after his team lost one of the early challenges. He created a standard operating procedure and conducted reviews after each challenge to learn what could be fixed the next time.

"The two came straight out of Ranger School," he said of the Army infantry course considered one of the toughest in all of the military.

Now, he's working on several projects for Mr. Trump, including managing leases at 71-story skyscraper on Wall Street and marketing Trump Tower Tampa, a reported \$220 million condominium complex.

But his main job is that of executive vice president of Trump Ice bottled water. Mr. Perdew is exploring ways to expand the Trump Ice brand nationally.

His newfound celebrity status has also led to other ventures, including a book that will be published in January. It highlights leadership principles he has learned under Mr. Trump, along with thoughts from former military members turned business executives, including Jim Kimsey, founder of AOL; Naval Academy graduates Ross Perot and Roger Staubach; and Pete Dawkins, vice chairman of Citigroup.

In an interview afterward, Mr. Perdew said he returns to Annapolis often, stopping at what he called his favorite restaurant, Cantler's Riverside Inn. He said no one recognized him during his last meal there earlier this year.

As for his "lucky" semester-long stay at the Naval Academy as part

of an exchange program with the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Mr. Perdew threw a slight jab at the room filled with Navy veterans.

"I had more privileges as a junior at the Naval Academy than I did as a senior at West Point," he said to laughs from the crowd.

- No Jumps-

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