and for the future,” he said. “What we do as people make decisions so they can do better including jobs, they do it by looking at decisions making to teach them everything about quality thinking.” The T-shirt slogan is: “We make organizations smarter.”

Barth launched Dialectic Strategies in 2010 and since worked with organizations in the public, private and non-profit sectors. “I provide what I call sessions, workshops or critical-thinking skills,” he said. “The ease comes from one hour to a half a day full day or to a couple of days training.”

He will also work with organizations to develop customized training programs. With each session...

Dialectic Strategies

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Barth said the response to his work has been positive because the tools he is providing apply to everything regardless of your position or profession. “I read this study of 1,000 executives and 10 per cent of them said they are not looking for critical thinkers, problem solvers and good communicators as opposed to people with specific knowledge,” said Barth. “It’s how you think, not what you think and the great thing about philosophy is that we ask and explore these big questions about things like truth, knowledge, right and wrong using critical-thinking skills.”

Barth discovered his passion for philosophy and teaching while exploring his lifelong love of mathematics.

There is a really nice interaction between mathematicians and philosophers,” he said. “The kind of reasoning that underpins mathematics is what underpins the study of philosophy as well.”

Barth was born in 1979 in Guelph, the youngest of three and the only son of Saul and Goldie Barth. “My dad owned a canvas back gas station on the north end,” he said. “My mom worked in social services as a case worker and then with the elderly.”

Barth went to Brock Road Elementary School and Centennial CVI. In 1998 he moved to Kingston to get a degree in mathematics at Queen’s University. One summer instead of returning home to Guelph, he decided to stay on at Queen’s and take an elective. “I took a philosophy course and I just loved the teacher,” said Barth. “What I loved about philosophy was how you could teach it.”

Upon graduating in 2002, he shifted his academic focus toward Western University in London, Ont. While there from 2003 to 2008, he had the opportunity to teach. “When even I was young, I realized this connection with my best teachers,” he said. “I always loved the idea of teaching and I really identified to the philosophy department. They saw good a student to be a teacher. Not just the teachers’ assistants, but we got to instruct and I realized I really love being up in front of a class teaching.”

After graduating, he spent the next year developing his concept for Dialectic Strategies. He teaches a critical-thinking course at Western, but the challenge was to adapt the material for adults in a work environment.

“How critical thinking is taught in the philosophy department is very different from how you teach it to working adults,” he said. “It has to be interactive and people have to be able to place those skills and the ideas within their own experiences.”

Adults respond better to practical examples. “Their ears have actually it out or a need drive,” said Barth. Others refer to the course on things such as problem solving, collaboration and ethics.

“The dialectic process — the art of arriving at truthful through dialogue and reason — was made famous by Socrates and recorded by Plato in the fourth century BC.”

Barth said it has never been more important. “Right now, you know what is so important because access to knowledge is so easy and so present,” said Barth. “But to think about it, how to filter through it, how to use your brain, that is the new skill that is important for taking in information whether it is on the web or a job.”

People can’t do it anymore, but they can’t necessarily teach how to think and that is what we do.”

Sears Canada chief says some of its business is struggling, needs ‘reset’

TORONTO — Sears Canada chief executive Calvin McDonald said there is still much work to be done as the department store recovers, recovers what it sells in its stores and how many locations it operates.

“We don’t have our balance 100 per cent,” McDonald said at the company’s annual meeting on Thursday.

“There are still businesses that we’re in today ... that are struggling, declining in the market— those are the personal offerings and outdoor products, for example. We are going to potentially exit some of our business is retail, but play it very heavy in another channel,” he said.

Sears has been hurriedly re-working how it organizes its com- piece in the retail sector inte- tion across and for the faculty of Target into Canada — which opened its first stores outside of the United States last month.

Other U.S. retailers such as Marshalls have also made inroads into the Canadian market, adding extra pressure to stand out.

“If we want to remain relevant, we’ve got to continue to adapt,” McDonald said.

Come from its main depart- ment stores will be electronics and window coverings. Toys are now sold only online and more changes are in the works, including a pulled back lineup of its Crafthouse hardwood products.

“We are going to potentially exit something in retail, but play it very heavy in another channel,” he said.

Sears will substitute those lines with a wider selection of au- the ‘right mix’ of their broader product offer- utes, for example.

The company’s latest quarterly results showed weaker revenues and some stores sales in the impor- tant holiday shopping period.

“Right now, what you know is so important because access to knowledge is so easy and so present,” said Barth. “But to think about it, how to filter through it, how to use your brain, that is the new skill that is important for taking in information whether it is on the web or a job.”

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Aaron Barth stands in his Alice Street office for Dialectic Strategies, a company he launched in 2010 to offer workshops on critical-thinking skills to organizations.

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