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Force. Find Out How To
Build A Winning
Sales Team



Property Tax Assessment Sticker Shock Business Owners Should Know They Have A Right To Appeal Their Assessments

Commercial reassessments may not be the first thing on a business owner's mind, however, this year's average property tax increases should push them to the forefront. According to Tad Berry, president of Property Tax Assessment Consultants (PTACs), reassessments occur in odd-numbered years (two-year cycle), and the notices of assessed value that taxpayers are receiving reflect the assessor's opinion of value for their property as of January 1st, 2017. "In St. Louis County, commercial assessments have increased nearly 15% on average, while residential assessments have increased nearly 8%," says Berry.

According to Berry, the improvements seen in the real estate market since the historic 2008 recession are the cause of these increases. "The St. Louis County Assessor, Jake Zimmerman recently told KMOX, 'This year, the rising tide seems to be lifting all boats'," says Berry. "On the surface, this makes sense, however it overlooks the basic principle of real estate that all properties are unique. This means that the Assessor's application of such a broad stroke will inevitably lead to overvaluations."

Quite often unfortunately, overvaluations are made. "In the last reassessment cycle (2015), there were 17,277 appeals filed in St. Louis County," says Berry. "Of those appeals, 48% were adjusted or settled at the Board of Equalization hearings. Hundreds more have been resolved at the Missouri State Tax Commission, which hears complaints of taxpayers not satisfied with their local Board of Equalization decisions."

As taxpayers, all business owners should know that they have the right to appeal their assessment to their County's Board of Equalization, and some assessment issues can even be resolved through informal negotiations with the Assessor. "In either instance, it is vital that the taxpayer understands the various deadlines and does not miss their opportunity to appeal," says Berry. "Missouri does not provide for a second appeal window in most circumstances, meaning when you get your tax bill in November, it will likely be too late to appeal."

There are experts available to support business owners when it comes to the appeal process. Berry's company is one such source of expertise. "Property Tax Assessment Consultants will perform a thorough review of a client's assessment, and share the findings with our client," he says. "If an appeal is warranted, PTACs will file and manage that appeal to its completion. Our goal is to keep our clients informed, but to let PTACs do the heavy lifting."

At PTACs, Berry and his team realize that just as every property is unique, each appeal is also unique. "We therefore can't guarantee that a property will be successfully appealed, but we can promise that our clients will have reasonable expectations after consulting with us," he says. "At the end of our relationship, our clients should be satisfied that they are fairly assessed."

With a contingency fee structure, PTACs are only paid a percentage of the tax savings resulting from an appeal. "Our clients enjoy this as they only pay for results,



Tad Berry of PTAC helps business owners lower their assessments.

"Time is of the essence in the St. Louis area," says Berry. "Most assessors will be concluding their informal hearings by mid-June, with formal appeal deadlines set for July 10th in St. Louis City and County."

and even if a client thinks their assessment is only a bit high, it may still be worth pursuing," says Berry.

Business owners interested in lowering their assessment with the help of PTACs can call (314) 446-4305 or visit www.ptacs-stl.com. Clients are not charged for a consultation – only for tax savings. "Time is of the essence in the St. Louis area," says Berry. "Most assessors will be concluding their informal hearings by mid-June, with formal appeal deadlines set for July 10th in St. Louis City and County."

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OUR EDITORIAL FOCUS

Our country was founded by visionaries who believed in free enterprise through individual determination. We support that spirit and hold that the future of our area lies in the growth and development of small businesses and the efforts of entrepreneurs. We are dedicated to supporting and promoting that growth.

St. Louis Small Business Monthly is St. Louis' locally owned business publication, bringing business tips, strategies and analysis to the presidents, CEOs, owners and top executives of 16,000 businesses in the St. Louis Metropolitan region. SBM, founded in 1988, publishes every month and also provides information at www.SBMon.com and through a variety of business-related forums and events.

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Sales in a slump? Maybe *you* are the problem. Through your attitude and actions, are you unknowingly undermining sales performance? Mike Weinberg, president of The New Sales Coach and author of "Sales Management. Simplified" discusses how to improve your sales culture and team.

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Less than 30% of businesses survive for 10 years. That's what makes our Top Family Business award honorees so special. They have not only survived over time, they have survived thanks to generations of family members keeping the dream alive. Learn how they've continued to succeed over the years.

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(In)Famous

Are You The Problem? Placing A Mirror In Front Of Owners

finally did it! After 25 years, I've finally landed my mug on the front page. My Mom would be so proud. With all due respect to Oprah and her personal covers each month, I always felt like our covers were reserved for those who deserve it most. That's why I've never been on a cover. I'm certainly proud of the 400+ folks that have donned our cover over the past 29 years.

Of course, I'm on the cover with caution tape wrapped around my head. Not exactly how I dreamt it up, but when photographer Bill Sawalich came to me with an idea to highlight our cover story on sales management, I couldn't resist. Building and managing a quality sales force is one of the most difficult tasks any business owner faces. I'd do whatever I could to promote the article.

Our sales expert helping shed light on the topic is Mike Weinberg, author of the book, "Sales Management. Simplified." If you don't want to hear the truth, don't hire Weinberg. He's very upfront about the issues facing his clients, and when they listen, they usually solve them. He wrote the book after years of going out and helping clients solve their sales issues. What Weinberg learned, in most cases, is the problem wasn't really the sales staff. The problem was the owner and/or sales manager.



It seems like I have a recurring discussion with many owners when it comes to sales. They'll tell me members of their sales staff are underperforming, they fire them and hire new staff. In time, those staff members are on the outs as well. During all of this change, one thing is constant: the owner. Weinberg's book and our cover article on page 18 shines a mirror in front of owners, hopefully getting them to think about how they manage their sales staff. In many instances, owners are asking too much of their sales staff, asking them to be both hunters and nurturers. In other instances, they are bogging them down with administrative tasks and leaving them no time to actually sell.

I hope you read the article with an open mind and rethink the way you are managing your sales staff.

Shifting gears, I want to congratulate our 2017 class of Top Family-Owned Businesses (pages 21-29). According to the Family Firm Institute, only 30% of family-owned firms make it to the second generation, only 12% make it to the third generation and only 3% make it to the fourth. Our new class has more than beat

the odds.

Many of our companies featured are in the fourth generation of ownership. One of the honorees, Thomson Printing, Creative & Graphics began in 1905, 112 years ago. Theodore Roosevelt was the president of the United States when the company opened its doors for the first time. Life expectancy was a mere 47 years old at the time, and 95% of childbirths took place in the home. What an amazing accomplishment to still be in business today. Other winners in business for more than 100 years include G Lighting (founded in 1908) and First Bank (founded in 1910).

If you attended the breakfast honoring the winners on June 21, you heard some amazing and inspiring stories of how these companies survived and thrived over the years. As the odds prove, it is no easy task building a business over generations. There is so much talk about building new startups and encouraging startups throughout the region. The amazing thing is we have many businesses all around us that continue to beat the odds and survive and thrive generation after generation. Unfortunately, they don't get much recognition. I'm proud to be part of the team that is highlighting their unique accomplishments.

Congratulations to all of the honorees. My hope is that these companies will continue to survive the test of time. Let's hope we are profiling them again in 100 years. ■

Ron

“

SPEAK WORDS THAT MAKE YOU SOUND SMARTER

From the customer side of the decision, the simple rule is: The sale is made emotionally and then justified logically. (First you say, "I love this house." Then you say, "I wonder if we can afford it.")

Jeffrey Gitomer, page 9

There are people in the sales business selling new tools, platforms, etc. They claim they can solve all your sales problems. Owners and managers are looking for the quick fix, throwing dollars down the toilet.

Companies need to do the hard work and build the right culture. Stop looking for the easy solution. There is no magic bullet in sales. Get the right people on board and hold them accountable. Sales managers need to spend more time with their people. Encourage them and pay them appropriately. Do the basics and I promise you will do well.

Mike Weinberg, page 19

In all things, be awake; determine your options; feel them out fully, considering all positive and negative consequences; and then make your choices and put your stake firmly and fully in the ground for each, giving full effort. Then, no matter what happens, you will live a life you love because it is one designed from the most responsible, courageous and loving side of you.

Judy Ryan, page 36



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Take algebra? Why? I'll never use it in real life!



When I have more money than I need (which these days seems farther away than it did a few years ago), I want to travel around the world and speak to high school freshmen and sophomores. Ninth- and 10th-graders.

I want to talk to them about the hidden power of mathematics. In math of all sorts, you're given problems to solve. In the beginning, they're easy. Add, subtract, multiply and divide. Then come fractions. But still the same big four solve all the problems.

Then algebra. And a whole new language of math appears. It's pretty confusing at first, but as you're given each series of similar problems to solve and you begin to work them, at some point you "get it" and can figure out the answers to the rest relatively quickly.

Many people say: "Why do I have to take algebra? I'll never use it in my real life!" And that may be the most incorrect statement of their life.

Algebra teaches you to solve problems logically.

When you're given a math problem, here's what happens:

1. You study it to see whether you know how to solve it.

2. If you do, you go to the next step of using the prescribed system, process, formula or answer path to solve it.

2.5. If you don't, you have to do additional study and research to figure out, or learn, how to solve it and then go back to step 2 and come up with the correct answer.

"Jeffrey, what's your point?" you whine. "Come on, I've got a quota to meet, cold calls to make, e-mails to follow up on and voice mails to leave that will most likely go unanswered. Help me with the real stuff here."

Relax, Euclid breath. This is a "big-picture answer" that transcends your self-created sense of urgency and lack-of-sales dilemma.

Math is a science. A logic-based, formula-based science.

Selling is also a science. An emotion-based science.

In sales, business, and life, you are presented with problems and obstacles. You may know them as customers, competition, bosses, co-workers, service issues, complaints, overcoming objections, and other sales and business hurdles that you must solve or resolve in order to have a successful transaction, or resolution.

It's the logical side of what would otherwise be seen as an emotional process. Emotion is to engage; show your passion, love and belief; be compelling; prove by example; congratulate when completed; and celebrate the victory.

I admit, I'm an emotional salesman, but I am a superior salesman because I am able to add the understanding of logic into the total sales and relationship-building process.

The reason you need to study math is that it provides you with the logical side and the thinking side of the sale.

From the customer side of the decision, the simple rule is: The sale is made emotionally and then justified logically. (First you say, "I love this house." Then you say, "I wonder if we can afford it.")

"Eh, what's up, Doc?" is the emotional opener. In the world of logic the question converts to, "What's up, Spock?"

If you want to rediscover how logic fits into your selling, business, and life process, go back to your algebra class and you will find the answers:

- Math taught you to think about the solution or the answer logically and use the

process or the formula to come up with an answer.

- Math taught you to see whether the answer applies to all the problems or there are exceptions.

- Math taught you to think about and visualize your moves in advance (chess is a great example for thinking three moves in advance—so is predictable customer service after a sale).

- Math taught you to see elements of the solution, the answer or the probable outcome in advance.

- Math lets you see that there's always a way to solve the problem and arrive at the end desired result. Math logic says if you study it hard enough and deep enough, you can find, or should I say discover, the answer.

- Math taught you to solve problems logically, and you will continue to face problems the rest of your life, in every aspect of your life your job is to balance the emotional side and derive the best results.

These math awareness bites will help you understand why you should have paid more attention in your math classes. And these are messages I'd like to deliver to every high school kid in America.

If you want to see the Spock-versus-Bugs-Bunny answer that will create more sales, go to www.gitomer.com and enter the word "Spock" in the GitBit box. ■

Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of "The Sales Bible" and "The Little Red Book of Selling." President of Charlotte, North Carolina-based Buy Gitomer, he gives seminars, runs annual sales meetings and conducts internet training programs on selling and customer service at www.trainone.com. He can be reached at 704-333-1112 or salesman@gitomer.com.

Do humans make small-business-loan decisions, or is the process automated?

When you apply for a home mortgage or other consumer loan, chances are good that your lender will approve or deny your application using an automated system that evaluates your credit score, credit history and other financial information you provide.

Small-business-loan decisions, however, are different. Most are still made by real live human beings.

There are a couple of reasons for this. First, there is no such thing as a business credit score or business credit bureau that an automated system can use to evaluate your business credit history. That's one reason why lenders ask for your tax returns—they provide proof of your business income.

Second, many lenders understand that numbers don't tell your whole story. They want to get to know you. Developing a relationship with a banker can, in fact, often improve your chances of loan approval.

Online lenders are different

Not every small-business-loan application, however, is reviewed by a human. Online lenders, for example, typically base decisions on data alone. These lenders tend to cater to higher-risk borrowers who may believe their chances of approval from a traditional lender are slim. Interest rates tend to be higher as a result.

Traditional small-business bankers who know you are typically better-attuned to your plans and long-term needs. They can help you navigate your options to find the best solution for your situation and steer you away from choices that may not serve you well in the long run.

Automation can be a great time- and money-saver. When you need a small-business loan, however, it still pays to look for the human touch. ■



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The Value of Integrity in Culture



One value that seems to be universal is integrity. Wikipedia's current definition of integrity is "the qualifications of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness. It is generally a personal choice to hold oneself to consistent moral and ethical standards." I am not familiar with a company that has thrived over a lengthy period of time without integrity. There are many examples of people who have fallen because of lack of integrity and have taken down a company because of their indiscretions.

High-quality employees want to join a company with integrity. Clients expect integrity from those they do business with. They will leave at the first experience of lack of integrity.

Lots of organizations have created their visions and values statements. The important aspect of these statements is that they should be modeled by the leaders and the leaders should hire and develop people by them. If an employee cannot live by the company values, no matter how effective they are in their job, they should be provided an opportunity to find a more suitable job elsewhere.

Some assume that everyone knows they should have integrity. Assumption has a large amount of risk associated with it. I encourage you to take a hard look at the importance of integrity as a stated and preached value within your organization. If your organization does get bigger over time, the leadership of the company cannot be aware of all the frontline people. Making integrity a non-negotiable value will reinforce it no matter how big your company gets. Look at your values statement. Is integrity on the list? Should it be? What are you doing to reinforce the importance of integrity in your culture? ■

Jonathan Jones (Jonathan.jones@vistagechair.com or 314-608-0783) is a CEO peer group chair/coach for Vistage International.



Why Your Emails Fail When You Lead With Product

This is a tale of two emails — one good and one bad.

I'll start with the bad one from a company I'll call Acme (no need to reveal the culprit).

I received an email with the subject line "Acme + Google Analytics/AdWords."

My first question: Why would I want to open this email?

I opened the email anyway. It said: "Did you know that you can see actual company information within your Google Analytics and AdWords? Give our whitepaper a quick read. We'll show you how integrating Acme's data will greatly enhance your dashboard and reports with company name, website, employee count, revenue, industry, and more."

Second question: Why do I need to see actual company information within Google Analytics and AdWords? Why do I need a greatly enhanced dashboard?

This email is bad because it doesn't answer those questions.

Now for the good email.

The subject line: "How they got their first 1000 subscribers."

Repeating my first question: Why would I want to open this email? Easy. Because I want to grow my subscriber list.

"Do you ever wonder?" the email said, "how some of the big names across the interwebs built their email lists way back in the day? ... I asked 12 leading digital business owners to share how they got their first 1000 subscribers. ... This is a quick read that will inspire you to take action on your list building goals. Click here to get the exact steps that these 12 successful entrepreneurs took to get their first 1000 subscribers."

Repeating my second question: Why would I want to click to get the steps that successful entrepreneurs took to get their first 1,000 subscribers? Easy. Because I want to grow my subscriber list.

When I clicked through as the email suggested, I learned about a software product—with a fancy dashboard and great data that will help me build my list.



I'm probably going to test the product and consider buying it.

This email works because it targets people who want to grow their email lists with a message that quickly and clearly gets their attention. The subject line promises an answer about list-building. The email copy dives deeper, promising to reveal secrets from experts that will instruct you on list-building.

Compare that with the bad email. The subject line (Acme + Google Analytics/AdWords) offers no compelling reason to open the email. And the copy immediately starts pitching product without ever telling you why the product really matters.

This brings me back to the second question: Why do I need to see actual company information within Google Analytics and AdWords? Why do I need a greatly enhanced dashboard?

Because that information helps me identify warm prospects more quickly so I can sell more efficiently. Sure, the folks at Acme may say, "Well, duh ... Of course that's the reason that you need such data." But is it really so clear to the target audience?

There's an old adage in sales: If you lead

with the product, you're bound to fail.

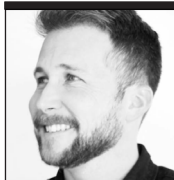
The good email led with the outcome: Build your email list. Once it got my attention with that benefit, it led me to the product that could help me achieve the outcome.

The bad email led with product without ever revealing the ultimate outcome.

If I were selling the Acme product, my subject line might say, "How Analytics/Adwords Can Reveal Prospects to Target." The copy might read, "For most businesses, Google Analytics is a black box full of traffic counts and sources. It's easy to tell how many people visit your site, but it's difficult to tell who. What if you could know who was visiting your site—and whether those visitors align with your ideal prospect profile? You could identify warm prospects more quickly and sell more efficiently. Acme's Dashboard gives you this insight..."

If you lead with the outcome, you're more likely to sell your product. ■

Tom Ruwitch is founder and president of MarketVolt, a St. Louis-based marketing technology firm. Visit MarketVolt.com/grow-your-list for an expanded set of list-building techniques.



The Leads are Not Weak. Your Culture is Weak.

These are the new leads. These are the Glengarry leads. And to you, they're gold. And you don't get them. Why? Because to give them to you is just throwing them away. - Blake, Glengarry Glen Ross

One of my first gigs after college was door-to-door coupon sales. I would knock on a suburban Chicago home's door and try my best to ensure the owner of the dwelling I was not selling something crazy. They needed to stop what they are doing and purchase coupons from a stranger sweating at their door.

It was a numbers game. A good closing ratio number according to the "special training" was 10 percent. With a 20 bucks per coupon book commission, I needed to average around 10 sales per day to meet expenses. That's 100 door knocks. That's if I was good.

Well, I was good. I don't say that with any hubris. Attaining the title of "top door-to-door sales guy in the Chicago suburbs in the early 2000's for a few months" is not an honor I set out to achieve. But, I could beat the closing ratio nearly every day. I averaged 25 percent. My improved performance was not because of experience or specialized knowledge or talent. It was, I hate to say it, because I made my job into my own game.

One weekend morning our sales meeting consisted of watching "Glengarry Glen Ross." The film's irony was lost on the management. But I did pull a gem from it: I did not have to play a numbers game. Sales, at least from what my recently college graduated mind could gather, was a game I could play any way I wanted to.

Here was my game setup: I would request the accounts that had the lowest sales. I would interview the previous sales people to learn what their tactics had been. Then I would make sure there was a new guy with me for the day – my two weeks of tenure made me a veteran.

Here is what I did: I would call the number on the coupon book and learn something from the manager about why they were in the neighborhood. Then I would study the previous sales guys' pitch and take the opposite approach to the



first doors. I would use the new guy as a set of eyes and ears and have him review my pitch every time.

The results: I could find compelling messaging and a general posture that was most successful after about ten doors. Then I would hustle. I could walk faster and take a shorter break than my counterparts, so I could get smarter and close more.

Today, the reductionist idea about sales is more pervasive than ever. And I have seen my industry touting this "numbers game" in the form of data-driven marketing. Those marketing campaigns work – at least on the surface. They churn out a bunch of leads.

But what happens when you dump all of these leads into an organization that has not been brought into alignment with your strategy? And, worse yet, what if your only strategy was to generate numbers? I have seen what happens. A lot of whining and then nothing.

I would encourage you to not reduce your company's growth efforts to a numbers game. We are a species that is capable of much more, and sales still take place within the minds of humans. Rather than focusing on the transactional side of the

sale, you can create an environment where the humans in your organization can create their own game. The question for you is: How much are you allowing yourself and your employees to create a game so they can succeed?

Here is an exercise to try: Gather your team. Tell them they just received a promotion, and they are all partners in the company. Divide them into groups of three or four and present them with a growth-oriented challenge. Based on the knowledge they have and the resources they have available, ask them to detail the strategy they would use to solve it.

They may not have better ideas than you. The strength of this exercise is the exercise. You allow for the emergence of leadership and the idea that they can innovate their own solutions. It provides you with a look into their psyche and how well they can problem solve. Most importantly, it is a beginning toward creating an environment that is thinking about growth. ■

Jeremy Nulik (jeremy@bigwidesky.com) is evangelist prime at bigwidesky, a human business consultancy, in St. Louis, Mo.

Succession Planning for Family Businesses: Plan Your Exit Before Entering the Future

Transferring a business to the next generation can be a formidable task. With many factors to consider in the process, it's no surprise that only roughly one-third of all family businesses in the United States are actually passed down successfully. Despite the odds, business owners can substantially increase the chance for success with early planning. Consider the following important questions and implications before creating a succession plan:

Family questions:

- Does the next generation want to own the business?
- Is the next generation capable of managing and operating the business?
- Does the next generation have the financial means to purchase the business?

Financial implications and other challenges:

- Can the current owner(s) afford to sell and/or transfer the business?
- If there are children not involved in the business, how does this affect the business owner's estate plan?
- If a "buy/sell" agreement is executed, how is the funding accomplished, and if there is life insurance, who pays the premiums?

To discuss your current plan or for help developing one, reach out to your financial adviser, or for independent advice, contact David Heilich, partner and practice leader of the Brown Smith Wallace Family Wealth Planning Group, at dheilich@bswllc.com or 314-983-1273.

For more information on how a bookkeeper or CPA can help your business, contact Karen Stern, partner in charge, Entrepreneurial Services Group, at 314-983-1204 or ksfern@bswllc.com. ■



Karen Stern, CPA, (ksfern@bswllc.com), partner in charge, Brown Smith Wallace Entrepreneurial Services Group, provides tax and accounting services for companies ranging from start-ups to \$20 million in revenue.



Putting Your Time In

BENEFITS



Employees place great importance on the amount of time they have worked for their employer. Likewise, many companies base vacation time and other benefits on the employee's seniority.

Determining seniority is straightforward unless an employee either leaves and returns or is laid off and returns. When this happens, the employer must decide whether the employee's previously worked time will count toward benefits accrued.

The survey says:

According to AAIM Employers' Association's 2017-2018 Policies and Benefits Survey of 95 St. Louis and Central Illinois businesses, 91% of companies count seniority toward vacation accrual and only 43% of companies count seniority toward holiday pay eligibility when an employee who previously quit has returned.

What to consider:

• **Consistency.** A company has flexibility in administering benefit accruals for an employee who leaves and then returns. What is important is that the company remain consistent with employees in similar situations. Once the policy is determined, it is important for the employer to put it in writing and communicate it to employees.

• **Check with benefit plans.** With benefit plans that are regulated, such as retirement plans, it is important to check with the plan administrator to see how the plan is written for employees in these situations. Every plan is unique and may have specific guidelines for these situations. ■

Jessica Sullins, PHR (solutions.team@aaimea.org) is on the Research and Solutions Team for AAIM Employers' Association, which helps Missouri and Illinois companies manage their people and processes.



Performance Improvement Through Better Management

How often do you think about performance and the way in which it is managed in the workplace? If you're an employee, you most likely think about it every day. You ask yourself: How am I performing? How is my manager communicating that with me? Do I know what to expect when I receive my review? And the list goes on.

And then there are managers and business owners for whom performance management is top of mind only once a year right around annual review time. For businesses small and large, performance management is one of the most important organizational processes, yet according to Janet Brennan, it's far too often poorly managed. Such a statement might come off as negative. However, if you have the chance to meet Brennan, you will realize it's quite the opposite. Her entire professional career has been committed to improving the lives of employees by positively affecting companies' performance management processes. She has been in HR for nearly 30 years and has spent the past 10 years running her own HR consulting agency. Brennan decided to venture out on her own in order to do what she loves: help small businesses improve their HR processes.

Why is performance poorly managed so often? One reason is that many organizations have the same process they had 30 years ago. Organization leaders don't tackle their outdated performance management process because it's overwhelming. Most perceive a performance evaluation overhaul as a daunting, behemoth task that one can't possibly change or improve for an entire organization. However, it's not so daunting. As Brennan puts it, "performance management is an opportunity, not a task." She explained that as you improve the way in which you manage and communicate performance, the better off your organization will be. You will see improvements in many areas, including retention, loyalty, happiness and, maybe most important, business results.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT



It takes time to build an organization that manages its people in a way that facilitates success and growth. However, there are things you can consider and take action on tomorrow, and we want to share those with you:

1. It's more than a once-a-year event—Brennan couldn't say it enough times: "Good performance management is a process that helps managers communicate with their direct reports throughout their careers, and it's an ongoing area to address rather than a once-a-year event." Far too often, managers make the mistake of communicating project feedback at the end of a project and overall performance feedback once a year during a formal review. Brennan argues that you must communicate along the way. Employees care about how they are performing, and nothing is more detrimental than a disconnect between employee and manager regarding performance.

2. It's formal and informal. It's a combination of informal conversations and formal events. The formal piece of the equation is usually provided through a process managed by company leaders. It's the informal conversations that are usually missing. As a manager, you have to be consciously and continuously communicating with your direct reports on how they are

doing and what you expect of them.

3. Invest in a process ... then invest in training. As you put time and resources into changing the process, you must also commit to training your managers. You won't have effective performance management reform without both. You may have a stellar process, but if you have a manager that communicates everything incorrectly, the employee will have an overall negative experience.

These are just a few ideas to keep in mind as you evaluate the way in which your company manages performance. Join us at the next Sharp and On Point Speaker Series on Tuesday, July 18, 2017, from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Lodge Des Peres, where Janet Brennan, president at Brennan HR Group Inc., will share her insights into performance management and how to positively impact employees and managers. To reserve your seat or for more information, visit www.lopataflegel.com. ■

Laurie Griffith is a principal at Lopata, Flegel & Co. Accountants and Management Consultants. The Sharp and On Point Speaker Series is a free event at the Lodge Des Peres sponsored by Lopata. Learn business strategies you can immediately put in place to point your business in the right direction. For more information, visit www.SharpAndOnPoint.com.



How Small Businesses Can Save Lives And Money

These Three Programs Deliver ROI In Workplace Safety

Workplace injuries and illnesses have a major impact on your bottom line. The U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration estimates that employers pay almost \$1 billion per week in direct workers compensation costs alone. In Missouri, more than 25,000 nonfatal injuries occur each year, devastating families emotionally and financially, reducing businesses' productivity and driving up work comp insurance premiums.

There are many ways to promote safety in your business, but which investments will yield the best outcomes? Don't overlook these three programs as you consider options to reduce workplace injuries and save money.

Post offer employment testing

Also called POET, this valuable program seeks to reduce costly new hire injuries by testing if employees are physically capable of performing their assigned duties. Missouri Employers Mutual Insurance estimates that one in three lost-time claims involves a new hire, with an average claim cost of \$54,000. Implementing POET in your organization is a worthwhile investment that can return significant cost savings. Some work comp providers offer discounted POET services through a partner agency.

Telehealth

Your employees can access convenient and timely health care via remote consultation services like telemedicine and nurse triage. Using telemedicine, health professionals can diagnose and treat a variety of conditions from the convenience of the office or shop, reducing expenses and time away from work. Nurse triage allows an employee to speak to a nurse as soon as a medical concern arises. The nurse deter-



mines the urgency of the issue and recommends appropriate care. Many telehealth services require no specialized equipment and can be accessed with a smartphone or webcam.

Provider incentive programs

Work comp insurance providers share your goals of preventing injuries and keeping your employees safe at work. Establish a partnership with your provider to continually work toward injury-free status. Some companies even offer rewards when you demonstrate that safety is a priority in your workplace. MEM recently introduced safety dividends and safety grants, two programs that promote and reward safety initiatives.

These programs offer a serious return on safety by helping you prevent work-

place injuries, and manage them successfully if they do occur. Your business is unique, and your work comp provider should be able to help you evaluate which programs best fit your safety needs. All small businesses have one thing in common: They strive for the safest environment possible, which saves money and helps employees get home safely.

Visit worksafecenter.com for more information on workplace safety and work comp insurance. ■

Caitlin Way (cway@mem-ins.com or 573.449.4236) is a Marketing Communication Specialist at Missouri Employers Mutual, Missouri's No. 1 provider of workers compensation insurance. MEM can help you eliminate injuries and reduce your work comp costs. Visit www.worksafecenter.com for your workplace safety needs.

Gardening



"They (employees) are empowered in much the same way a gardener empowers seeds—not by forcing them to grow but by tapping the power that lies dormant within them," says Gerald Weinberg in his book "Becoming a Technical Leader." This analogy of a leader being a gardener recently became relevant to me at Mosby.

A direct report of mine was struggling for a few months. As I was focusing on why this was happening, it dawned on me that I was a part of the problem. And not only was I failing but this person's peers were contributing to the situation in a similar way. A way that actually affected other peers too. The bottom line is that most of us were not paying attention to the needs of each other. Just as a gardener has to tailor his or her approach to caring for different types of plants, peers on a leadership team must take the time to nurture each other in ways that match their fellow teammates' needs.

So, how did I address this? I wanted to emphasize the importance of the management team members making their relationships and support of each other a priority. To do this, I took the team out to lunch. At the table, I had a different type of houseplant sitting on the table at each person's place setting. I asked them what the significance of the plants was. We discussed how each plant has different care and feeding needs, much like each of us on the management team does. We also discussed how a plant will die just as a relationship will die if you don't continue to give it attention. In the end, we agreed to make our relationships a priority. ■



Mark McClanahan (mmclanahan@callmosby.com or 314.909.1800) is the president at Mosby Building Arts.

What Your Employees Should Know About Security: Part 1

BY SCOTT M. LEWIS

Security awareness: It is a huge topic these days. We hear a lot about it, and we even hear the questions such as, Why does this continue to happen? Or, Why can't we stop viruses, ransomware and hacking attempts? These and many other questions continue to baffle the technology professionals and corporations around the world, and I am going to try to tackle these issues.

According to the IBM Cyber Security Intelligence Index, more than 95% of cybersecurity incidents involve human error. One of the most overlooked areas in corporations' security protocols and practices is ongoing and active security awareness training for employees. I am also going to discuss how these programs work and what should be included in them to make them effective, interesting and fun.

Technology can go only so far in protecting your company. As technologists, we could make security so tight that it hamper and ultimately hurt the productivity of your employees and lower moral. Even worse, it could give so much control and influence in the management of your company to IT that you would wonder who was actually running your business.

As a technologist who has spent my entire professional career educating business owners on how to manage their businesses better through the use of technology, I have also realized that as technology experts, we have a supporting and empowering role within the organization. We need to design systems that promote business growth and empower employees to achieve more. However, now we have to do it in a manner that

protects the company we support at a level that has never been seen before and shows no signs that security awareness is not going to be a hot topic.

It is estimated that 59% of security breaches were done by insiders who had access to sensitive data and exposed it by accident, not through malicious activity. When you think about what fuels human error—or, as I call it, the human factor—that exposes sensitive data, you have to consider the following factors:

1) Fatigue. A common and accepted definition of fatigue as it relates to human error is based on a decline in mental or physical performance that is related to lack of sleep, disruption of the internal body clock, high workload, disruption in the workplace, prolonged physical exertion or a combination of any of these factors.

2) Audible and visual noise. A Cornell University study on human-computer interaction showed that in simple tasks such as pairing a Bluetooth device, people failed more often on the first try in a noisy environment than in a quiet environment. In addition, human noises such as talking or a baby crying increased the failure rate more than natural noises. It would be a reasonable assumption that human mistakes are going to happen at a higher rate in an environment that has a lot of human interaction and distraction.

3) Consistency in the workplace. Don Norman, the author of "The Design of Everyday Things," puts human mistakes into two categories: "slips" and "mistakes." Slips happen when humans are on autopilot and make assumptions such as typing an email message and not

verifying the addressee to ensure they are sending it to the right Karen, which could result in confidential information being emailed to the wrong person. A mistake happens when a human has created a mental model that is not correct, so their mind incorrectly interprets what it sees. An example might be that we all know our email address. However, if someone spoofs your email address and makes minor changes such as adding an S to the end of your company name, would you notice that or would your mind incorrectly interpret that email address and think it was someone you knew? These types of activities create opportunities for hacking, the spread of viruses, identity theft and fraud.

4) Training. This is one of the biggest shortcomings when it comes to using technology to address human behavior. Technology is reliant on predictable conditions, and humans are anything but predictable when it comes to technology. If at first it doesn't work, we will try and try again. In most cases technology does not take into account human error prevention in the design of systems. It might prevent you from doing something, but that is only one small part of training and end-user awareness that needs to be addressed.

When it comes to security mistakes that lead to lost data, misplaced data, data being sent to the wrong person or unauthorized system access, typically it is not a matter of if but when something is going to happen that puts your company at risk. In order to understand how to put together a prevention model, we have to understand the most common mistakes that people make so that



countermeasures can be put in place to correct them. Companies have to understand that security is a tug-of-war between protection and convenience and at times convenience is going to win because when the system is blocking certain user activities that it concludes are putting you at risk, people get frustrated and demand relaxing security protocols to make it more convenient. ■

Scott Lewis is the president and CEO of Winning Technologies Group of Companies, an international technology management company. Scott has more than 30 years of experience in the technology industry and is a nationally recognized speaker on technology subjects such as collocation, security, CIO-level management, data and voice communications, and best practices related to the management of technology resources. Learn more about Winning Technologies at www.winningtech.com or call 877-379-8279.

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Sales In A Slump?

Maybe You Are The Problem



Through Your Attitude And Actions, Are You Unknowingly Undermining Sales Performance. Mike Weinberg, President of The New Sales Coach and author of “Sales Management. Simplified” Discusses How To Improve Your Sales Culture And Team

As best-selling author and sales coach Mike Weinberg steps into the offices of companies throughout America, his task is clear: Help solve the No. 1 problem plaguing most businesses in America: lagging sales.

Over the years, as he’s helped businesses of all sizes, Weinberg has discovered that most of the sales issues facing front-line sales management and business owners are self-inflicted.

“What I found was the bigger issue was usually at the owner or executive’s desk,” he says. For owners and executives, that means taking a long look in the mirror.

He felt so strongly about his experiences that he recently wrote a book to help owners and managers build better sales teams. The book, “Sales Management. Sim-

plified,” calls on businesses to rethink how they manage their sales teams.

“The whole front part of the book is a long rant, where I am screaming at executives, owners and sales managers,” Weinberg said. “I keep getting called into companies to solve their sales problem, and very often the problem was much greater than a sales problem. The problems were a lack of leadership, poor culture and a lack of talent.”

SBM recently sat down with Weinberg to discuss his new book and some things companies can do to build better sales teams.

When it comes to managing a sales force, what are the mistakes companies are making?

The biggest mistake is that ownership has lost sight of the sales manager’s job. Companies are treating the sales manager like garbage and burying him or her in crap. The sales manager has to lead the team.

In some instances, the business owner is the problem. Before you hire someone to fix your sales problem, hold up a mirror and take a close look at your culture. How do you treat salespeople, and how do you pay them and manage them? You can’t transform anything starting at the bottom. That must happen from the top.

As a business owner, what are the keys to developing that great sales team?

The keys are leadership and culture. First, you need clarity on goals. If you don’t have clear sales goals, I don’t know how you can build a great sales culture. The goals need to be results-focused.

How do you hold someone responsible if you don’t have achievable goals or if they

are not clear? Goals need to be specific. Not just to sell X amount. In sales, sometimes sales come from babysitting existing clients. So make sure your goals spell out how much new business or cross-selling a salesperson should be selling.

I know you also talk about sales managers actually working with their team one-on-one. Why doesn't this happen more often?

I am shocked at how little sales managers meet one-on-one with their salespeople to review results, talk about what is in the pipeline or view results. Those meetings just don't happen. They should.

Many times sales managers think they will come across as micromanaging if they ask to meet once a week with their reps. You have to meet often. You can meet without being an asshole or a micromanager. You have to meet to hold them accountable. Asking about results, looking at the pipeline and providing helpful ideas, tips and thoughts is not micromanaging. It is called management.

Your job as a sales manager is to help them make money. It is about looking at results. Managers don't want to have these conversations, and that is why underperformance goes on forever.

Remember, you need to build a culture that is results-focused. If you don't have a results-focused culture, you will never get anywhere in sales. This is not accounting or labor. You are not paid to move a box. You are paid to drive results.

What about the player-coach when it comes to sales management? Many times sales managers at smaller companies are also sales reps. Can that work?

This usually doesn't work in sales. Salespeople succeed when they are selfish and they focus on their own time and their own goals. So, a manager is the opposite. Managers cannot be selfish. A manager succeeds through a team member. Managers need to invest in their people.

So, if you are the sales manager, how do you divide your time and heart because you have your own quota as well? At the same time, you're supposed to be investing in your people. A lot of times that player-coach ends up competing with the other sales reps. How does it help when the sales manager is taking the best leads?

Some companies can't afford a sales manager. In that instance, my message to owners is: I would rather you (the owner) be the part-time sales manager for five to 10 hours a week rather than bringing in a player-coach sales manager. The truth is you are probably taking your best salesperson and making him or her the sales manager

The Two Questions

Two questions will let you know very quickly how effective a particular salesperson is:

1. Can you name for me the new opportunities that are in your pipeline today that were not here when we met last month? In other words, tell me what fresh opportunities you have identified or created in the past month.
2. Can you name for me the existing opportunities that you moved forward in the sales process since we reviewed your pipeline together last month?

Source: "Sales Management. Simplified."

the relationship, do the service and sometimes deal with renewals.

Just look at all the things you are asking one person to do and ask yourself if that is reasonable, especially if your sales are lacking. The No. 1 reason companies don't have enough sales is that salespeople don't spend enough time selling.

One of my clients had a guy who spent 25% of his time selling. The other time was spent on administrative duties, customer service, etc. That is not the same thing as sales. I told the client, "What would happen if your sales team created two jobs, one for service and administration and the other just for true sales, where the employee could spend time out finding new business?"

It is all about defining the roles better and finding the best fit for those roles. Everyone's default mode is the hybrid. Businesses want salespeople to do both hunting and farming.

We are all wired differently. Most are wired as nurturers. Don't ask people who are not wired to hunt. The other thing we do is take a hunter and ask him or her to

anyway. That doesn't make sense. You never want to take great salespeople off the field to make them managers. It is not easy to replace those folks in the field. It is a different skill set.

Owners always say one of the big issues in sales is talent. What can owners do to get more out of the talent they currently have?

In many cases, management sees this as a "one-size-fits-all" sales role. We hire one type of individual to find leads, follow up on leads, make appointments, have sales calls, write proposals, close the deal and then handle

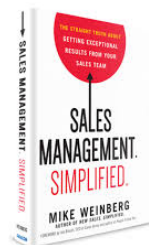


Every day expert consultants like Mike Weinberg are called on by companies large and small to find the answer—and it's one that may surprise you. Typically the issue lies not with the sales team—but with how it is being led. Through their attitude and actions, senior executives and sales managers unknowingly undermine performance. Mike Weinberg is president of The New Sales Coach and author of "Sales Management. Simplified."

be a nurturer. We'll always default on how we are wired.

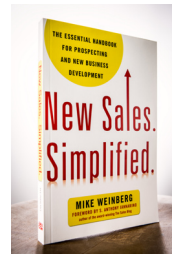
There are people in the sales business selling new tools, platforms, etc. They claim they can solve all your sales problems. Owners and managers are looking for the quick fix, throwing dollars down the toilet.

Continued on Page 20



Sales Management. Simplified.

Weinberg wrote the book "Sales Management. Simplified." to help owners and managers. As a consultant, he found that typically the sales issue lies not with the sales team—but with how it is being led. The book was published by the American Management Association (AMA) and can be obtained via amazon.com.



New Sales. Simplified.

Weinberg wrote the book "New Sales. Simplified." to help anyone in sales become more effective at his or her most important responsibility: acquiring new customers. The book was published by the American Management Association (AMA) and can be obtained via amazon.com.

FEATURE STORY

Companies need to do the hard work and build the right culture. Stop looking for the easy solution. There is no magic bullet in sales. Get the right people on board and hold them accountable. Sales managers need to spend more time with their people. Encourage them and pay them appropriately. Do the basics and I promise you will do well.

Sales Manager Time Suckers

- These are the five biggest time suckers/sins that keep sales managers from effectively leading teams and creating a healthy sales culture.
1. They are slaves to email, perpetually checking and replying while living in reactive mode.
 2. They sit in on a ridiculous number of meetings and conference calls that often have little to do with driving revenue.
 3. They get caught up playing either assistant GM or firefighter in chief.
 4. They are buried in administrative and nonsales crap, get asked to create or plow through an obscene number of reports, and live with their heads constantly buried in CRM screens.
 5. They don't own their calendars, protect their priorities or plan well.
- Source: "Sales Management.Simplified."

Potential Agenda Topics to Spice Up Your Next Meeting

- Personal updates
- Review of sales results with outstanding performance highlighted
- Success stories
- Product training
- Best-practice sharing
- Deal-strategy brainstorming session
- Execution or other department guest presentation
- Book or blog review
- Sales skills coaching/training
- Business plan presentations (or reviews)
- Brief, controlled bitch session
- Nonsales-related inspiration
- Takeaways

Source: "Sales Management.Simplified."

Hiring Right: Killer Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the last two significant deals you won due to your own proactive sales effort. Share the whole story from beginning to end.
 2. Let's assume we hire you and we completely leave you on your own. Sketch out how you'd approach the job. Where would you start? What would you do? Where would you go to learn more or for help when you needed it?
- Source: "Sales Management.Simplified."

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FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS AWARDS

Less than 30% of businesses last more than 10 years. That's what makes the success of our Top Family-Owned Businesses so phenomenal. Founded in 1951, Kirkwood Florist was originally focused on pottery. Generations have transformed the business over the years. Jon Kuhlmann, third generation owner, is now guiding the company in its seventh decade of business.



Section Sponsored by:





Focused Senior Communities

Al and Kathy Beamer; their daughter, Christie Tutschulte; and son, Matt Beamer (owners)

Website: CottagesLSL.com

Generation of ownership: first and second

Year founded: 2008

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

We first operated a 50-year-old skilled nursing community, turning it from being on the list of the state's worst to a top-10% status.

We have now built a new, state-of-the-art skilled nursing

community in Lake St. Louis, named Cottages of Lake St. Louis. It is the first Green House Project model in Missouri, offering private rooms with private bathrooms and only 10 rooms in each cottage. The cottages each have a large, open kitchen where the cooking is done, along with a dining room, comfortable hearth room, inviting spa and multipurpose den. The floor-to-ceiling windows provide an abundance of natural light and a view to the secure patio and garden.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

We determined early on that as we would respect and take care of our staff, they would respect and provide great care for our elders (residents). We have been hands-on with staff and elders, encouraging them through chal-

(from left to right) Christie Tutschulte, Matt Beamer, Kathy Beamer, and Al Beamer

lenges and celebrating their joys. We named the cottages after our grandchildren and bring them into the cottages often (their name tag titles are "VP of fun"), so our third generation is also touching elders' hearts.

What have been your family's keys to success?

We have kept up with the best practices, including high staffing levels and dedicating the same staff to consistently work in each cottage. Such practices have led to much better elder dignity, privacy, comfort, satisfaction and health outcomes. We listen to the elders, our care partners (certified nurse aides) and nurses and involve them in decision-making.

Kurtis Barks

Complete Auto Body and Repair and A2B Towing & Recovery

Website: www.completeab.com
Generation of ownership: second
Year founded: 1999

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

When the business started back in 1999, it was a venture that was started with the experience and drive of our entire family working together. We opened with an idea to be the best auto body repair shop in North County! We wanted to be the standard of auto body repair. As the years progressed and times changed, so did we. We came to realize over the years that maybe the way things have always been done is kind of in the past.

So as we grew together to add on an additional location, it became apparent that part of our family business wanted to go different directions. So as a family we agreed to take some chances and risk moving from the comfort zones that we had grown to over the 10 years in business.

In approximately 2009 we opened A2B Towing & Recovery and began our mission to grow and be diverse! We took on full auto repair, full auto body, rental cars in house and offered the “Complete Experience” to our customers.

So as the focus of the business adapted to our customers’ needs and wants, we added on more locations to provide this service to them. While we were adding locations and growing, we were always focused on the same thing—that is to be the leader in the automotive industry in the metro St. Louis area, and the best way to do so is to lead by example! We have now grown to locations in O’Fallon, Maryland Heights, St. Louis, Hazelwood and St. Charles.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

The values and beliefs are the No. 1 thing that I can say is being carried on and will continue to be carried on for generations to come. We are not here for the money or fame; we are here to build something



Kurtis Barks

successful that our customers can rely on and our employees can be proud to be a part of. Success is the drive that makes the magic happen. If we had to list out some of the traditions that are small to many but big to us, I would say one of them is that every customer that has a repair done leaves in a freshly cleaned and washed vehicle.

What have been your family’s keys to success in business?

Our key to success has been our ability to understand that things change and they always will. But to be able to adapt and modify our behaviors to grow and change with the changing times is our No. 1 key to success.

There is always a way that used to be done... We believe in the value of that but also understand there can always be a better way to do things too. By keeping this open mind and allowing ourselves to learn every day, it allows us to have a leg up on our competition.

A lot of our competition are large consolidators and or big franchise box stores. By being locally owned and operated and by treating a customer as a person, not a number... We Will always have that advantage.

Kirkwood Florist

Jon, Eric and Jennie Kuhlmann



Jon Kuhlmann

Website: www.kirkwoodflorist.com
Generation of ownership: third
Year founded: 1951

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

The original focus was on pottery, plants and fresh flowers and primarily was walk-in business and phone. The current focus is on fresh flowers, plants, gift items, weddings, and business is still walk-in and phone with online business increasing daily.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

Commitment to quality, utmost service and reliability.

What have been your family’s keys to success in business?

Hard work, loyalty and caring, productive employees.

FAMILY OWNED BUSINESSES

First Bank

The James F. Dierberg Family

Website: www.firstbanks.com

Generation of ownership: fourth

Year founded: 1910

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

Despite significant growth in our business and changes in technology, the focus of our business after more than 100 years is still the same. We seek to build long-term relationships to help our clients achieve their financial goals.

In 1910 the family acquired a small bank with a single, unassuming location in Creve Coeur, Missouri. The bank remained a single location until James Dierberg, the third generation of family leadership, took over in the 1960s. At that time, James bought out the rest of the family and then grew rapidly to more than 100 locations in Missouri, Illinois and California. In January 2016, Michael Dierberg succeeded his father as chairman.

Since the bank's early days, banking has become tremendously more complex, and the technology to support it has dramatically changed. But when it comes down to it, the fundamentals have not changed. The core of our business is driven by building strong relationships with our clients to help meet their financial goals. Even as our clients rely more on our technology for a variety of services, they still benefit from having a trusted name to call on when they need help, and we try to get to know them to identify solutions that might help them achieve their financial goals.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

Trust and integrity are critical in our business, and we have remained true to those values throughout our history.

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

One key to our success is a long-term perspective. We are able to set a course and stick to it without worrying about the ups and downs of quarterly results. Many of our clients are also family-owned businesses, and they appreciate banking with a company that is looking out for their long-term interests and that can be there for them as they transition from one generation to the next.

Another key to success is our connectivity between our clients and colleagues. Our company is big enough that we can provide all of the products and services of the largest banks, but we are small enough that we are closely connected to our colleagues and can take the time to get to know our clients. The close connections among our colleagues are vital to reacting quickly and acting with common purpose, and the close connections to our clients help us provide the best possible solutions to them.



James F. Dierberg (seated), Michael J. Dierberg, and Ellen Dierberg Milne.

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FAMILY OWNED BUSINESSES



Nick Gross



Mike Gross

Gross Chandelier Company, dba G Lighting

Nicholas Gross, Michael Gross

Website: www.glighting.com

Generation of ownership: fourth

Year founded: 1908

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

The founding focus of our company has been to provide quality lighting, craftsmanship and intelligent lighting solutions for both residential as well as commercial applications. The beauty of the product was just as important as the beauty of light coming out.

Today our focus has shifted away from the residential lighting sector to strictly commercial applications. We are represented by 62 lighting representatives located throughout the United States, 11 located in Canada, one in Ireland and one in Puerto Rico. Our products are manufactured at our factory here in St. Louis and are installed throughout the world.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

The traditions we have upheld within our company begin with our family values and principles. Our values of integrity, compassion, common sense, fairness, respect and perseverance are the foundation for our company. We have also not compromised the quality of products we manufacture.

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

There are many keys to success for our

business. Our employees are the backbone of this company, and they are the first key. Our teams consist of quality people who genuinely care about the success of the company.

The second key to success is innovation and adapting to our markets. Over the past several years the lighting industry has gone through a paradigm shift. The standard light sources such as an incandescent lamp or fluorescent lamp began to become obsolete in favor of more efficient LED light sources. The products we were manufacturing with those light sources became irrelevant, and the new technologies were in high demand. The standard has now become LED in various form factors. By staying on top of the trends and technologies, we were able to adapt and redesign current products, as well as grow new families of products. This shift has enabled growth and opportunity to our company.

The third key to success is that we are a customer-service-driven company. We believe in answering the phones and being prompt with inquiries. We make customer service a priority.

The last key to success is sticking to what we do best. Instead of trying to compete in various lighting sectors, we know our niche and our capabilities. This mind-set has enabled us to focus and continue to provide our customers with quality American-made products.

The Gund Co. Inc.

The Gund family and the company ESOP

Website: www.thegundcompany.com

Generations of ownership: second and third

Year founded: 1951

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

Ed Gund started the business as an industrial sales representative selling plastics and other nonmetallic materials to electrical manufacturers. Over time, local customers requested local stocking, so Ed purchased a small warehouse in University City and added the ability to act as a distributor for manufacturers that supplied products to electrical manufacturers. In 1963, Ed's oldest son, Paul, joined the business, becoming the first member of the second generation to join. The 1970s saw the business evolve into fabrication as customers began requesting parts made to print.

Members of the third generation began working in the business in the 1980s, and in the late 1990s, the business completed its first acquisition. The decade of the 2000s saw the company evolve yet again into composites manufacturing as a result of one of its acquisitions. Today the company has eight plants in four countries and more than 400 employees.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

The Gund Co. has always operated in accordance with our three guiding principles: Take care of each other, take care of the customer and take care of the business. We were not able to fully articulate this approach to business until the late 1990s. Initially, the business was focused on taking care of the customer. Everything in the early years of the company was about making sure our customers received the absolute best quality, service and lead times in the industry. By providing value to our customers, we earned repeat business, which is vital in an industry with no long-term contracts. Paul Gund has said many times, "Our only opportunity for a purchase order tomorrow is taking care of customers today."

Repeat business from our valued customers has allowed us to take care of the business with improved equipment, facilities and an occasional strategic acquisition. As the business succeeded,



Steve Gund

the Gund family decided to reinvest all earnings into the business and into our people. Each year the company increases its investment in training, benefits and work environment. Symbolic and material to this belief in our people, the Gund family gave 30% of the company to employees in 2009 with the formation of its ESOP.

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

While living our guiding principles of take care of each other, take care of the customer, and take care of the business has been the virtuous cycle that fueled company success, there are keys within each area that we found meaningful.

1) Trust in our people. Our practice is to share everything in our business with our people. Financials are on a shared network, and strategies are posted on the wall in each facility. Ideas for improvement are posted on index cards in each plant. Nothing is hidden, and everyone is expected to participate.

2) The value equation. The value formula tells us that customers will partner with the providers of highest value and that value is based on the optimal mix of quality, service, cost and cycle time for that customer. Originally developed by our customer Baldor Electric, the value formula allows us to see each customer's unique needs in objective terms and then develop products/services that meet those needs.

3) Conservative financial structure. We believe in keeping debt levels low and paying our bills on time. This approach allows us to reinvest in our people and our company resources.

Cooperative Home Care & Hospice

Mitch Waks

Website: www.cooperativehomecare.com

Generation of ownership: second

Year founded: 1986

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

Our business began when our founder, and my mother-in-law, Fran Sontag, began providing in-home education services for young adults with special needs. She introduced me to the business when she asked me to fill in for her while she took an extended leave to hike the Appalachian Trail. During that time, I observed that if we could also help our clients with their daily living needs, their education and their life qualities would improve even more. Our focus from the start that continues today includes serving the most vulnerable individuals compassionately and respectfully. The key is that we combine this care with smart and efficient business practices. We attribute our successful 30 years in business, in the challenging and unpredictable health care industry, to this approach.



Mitch Waks

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

I believe we recognize and appreciate one another's strengths. Fran's selfless dedication to serving others was complemented by my business savvy; my children have served as interns, and they've introduced technological advances that have continued to improve our efficiency. It is so noble to choose to serve others, but the reality is that you cannot maintain this type of business if you are not constantly trying to be smarter about how you do it. So we work together, maximizing each of our unique strengths, in order to serve people compassionately and responsibly.

What traditions have you upheld within your business?

We want our clients to feel special and cared for, and we want the same for our employees. This is reflected in our daily practices, as well as special traditions like our annual employee holiday parties. We gather; we indulge in delicious food and drink; we dance and sing. We present an annual Employee of the Year award, inspired by a former employee who had many physical disabilities that she overcame with grace and strength. While she passed away several years ago, we are proud to recognize and honor her spirit through this award. A new tradition we've introduced is our "Serving & Celebrating in our 30th Year" campaign, during which we are completing 30 local service projects to commemorate our 30th year in business.

STROCO Manufacturing Inc.

Kris Welhart and Keri Welhart

Websites: www.stroco.com,
www.aerospacebrackets.com

Generation of ownership: third

Year founded: 1963

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

My grandfather and grandmother Ray and Mary Strother were ahead of their time and were always seeking for ways to improve existing products and processes. My grandfather invented our first product line, the nutplate, which we are still manufacturing today for the aerospace industry. We have expanded our product lines over the years and now manufacture structural parts for Boeing, Bell Helicopter, Lockheed Martin, Gulfstream, Northrop Grumman, Triumph and Spirit AeroSystems. The foundation and vision has remained the same since that first product was developed: Build an awesome team and then allow them to use innovation to manufacture the highest-quality product and exceed the customers' expectations.



*Keri Welhart, left,
and Kris Welhart*

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

Competitiveness and cultivating an amazing company culture have allowed us to manufacture precision-engineered products in the USA for the last 50-plus years. We constantly seek for a better way to improve our manufacturing process. The requirements of our industry are constantly becoming more stringent, and without improvement and input from everyone on the team, we would be left behind. These motivators ensure that we maintain our personal commitment to our employees of providing the opportunity for all of them to make a better life for themselves and their families! My grandfather was a big jokester, so a sense of humor is another tradition that has not left the building.

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

Respect and hard work are our keys to success. This commitment has allowed us to have tremendous growth through treating all of our teammates like family and listening to our customers. Ultimately, the success of STROCO will be defined by the success of the team, and hard work and respect for one another is a keystone for winning the race.

Thomson Printing, Creative & Graphics

Mike Thomson and John Meilink

Website: www.thomsonprinting.com

Generation of ownership: fourth

Year founded: 1905

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

In the beginning, the company was founded as the local daily newspaper, The Banner News. As times have changed, so too has our business from a daily newspaper to commercial printing to web and software development.



John Meilink

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

Our dedication to the client, customer service, and embracing change and new technologies.

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

The company has evolved steadily throughout its existence, and while much has changed over the past 110-plus years, it continues to be family-owned. Being so brings a personal touch to every job. The commitment of the family extends to each of Thomson Printing, Creative & Graphics' customers. If you ask someone who has been either coming to us for years or one of our newer customers, they will both tell you they feel the enthusiasm of Thomson's staff and the dedication put into doing the best job possible.

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Generation of ownership: first

Year founded: 1956

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

The focus was on providing insurance coverage that would have excellent coverage at competitive rates. Today our focus is more in educating our clients on their coverage and how it is different from other options.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

We always had a tradition of being insurance professionals, not salespeople. We have helped people others didn't want to spend time on—we educate our clients on what their current situation is and what steps it takes to get them where they want to be. We never claim to have the cheapest rates because there is always a reason why one premium is higher since companies' policies, coverage, deductibles, endorsements and internal limits are all different.

What has been your family's keys to success in business?

Do what is in the clients' best interest even if it's sending them to another agent. Next, we are only successful because of our clients, employees and our community, so we are active in giving back to our community, as Fred, Sharyn and Brian Buchholz have nearly 150 years of community service experience.

Wharf Health Mart Pharmacy

Andy and Shanna Palans



Website: www.wharfpharmacy.com

Generation of ownership: second

Year founded: 1973

What was the focus of the business when founded, and how has that changed over the years?

Retail pharmacy started as and is still the main focus; however, we have expanded into medical supplies and compounding as well.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

Fast, friendly, accurate service. My father always said you have to kill the customer with kindness, and me and my staff have upheld his motto to this day.

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

In addition to fast, friendly, accurate service, we had to come up with a niche in order to succeed. That is why we expanded into compounding and medical supplies in addition to a huge gift selection.

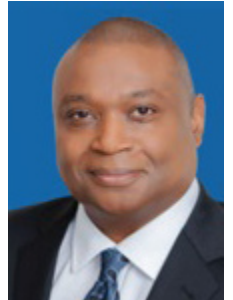
Platinum Roofing

Mike Sims

Website: www.platinumroofingstl.com

Generation of ownership: first

Year founded: 2003



What was the focus of the business when founded and how has that changed over the years?

The focus of the business initially was supporting my family. That has now changed to training my son to take over the business when I retire and have the business continue for generations.

What traditions have you upheld within your family business?

God first, family second and business third.

What have been your family's keys to success in business?

To go above and beyond for all my customers.

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St. Louis' Unsung

Above the Call of Duty

WORDS JULIA PAULUS OGILVIE

For most of us, all that is really required to achieve some level of professional success is to show up. There is no requirement to make the world a better place or to help your fellow human being. That is the sort of thing that is usually inconvenient to our time and goals. However, thankfully, there are some who take on that role.

Because, to truly make a lasting impact on a community takes more than just punching the clock. It takes more than showing up. It means that you devote your creativity, energy and professional acumen to solving a problem or helping to elevate others' interests and goals.

The heroes you see featured here are people that not only have achieved excellence in their chosen fields, but they also are devoted tirelessly to helping to make St. Louis a better region.



Sharing His Talent and Providing Joy

Doug McCauley | Mosby Building Arts

Through his children, Doug McCauley, lead remodeler with Mosby Building Arts, discovered Lifestream Church and was inspired to take action by the church members' spirit of giving. "I immediately began volunteering my carpentry skills to build wheelchair ramps and make repairs on homes of people in our neighborhood and larger community," says McCauley.

While McCauley continues to do home improvements through Lifestream Church, he also plays guitar, bass and sings in its worship band. "Since 2010, I have been a House Captain for Rebuilding Day through Rebuilding Together St. Louis," he says. "With a group of Rebuilding Together volunteers, we have one day to make major repairs and improvements on someone's home who could otherwise not afford to. We do this twice a year."

McCauley's faith is what motivates him today. "My faith revolves around helping those in need," he says. "I have skills that can almost instantly make someone safe, secure and happy in their home, so as long as I can, I will use those skills for that purpose."

McCauley is also motivated by the joy it creates. "A sincere smile

and big hug from a happy and relieved homeowner is what it's all about," he says. "No amount of money can buy that kind of connection and joy."

To McCauley, the reward of giving back should be enough to inspire others. "I hope that giving back becomes infectious," he says. "Maybe from my actions, others will see how rewarding it is to make people feel loved and special."

Another every day key for McCauley in creating positivity, both at work and in the community, is to treat everyone with respect. "Believing that we are all created equal and acting accordingly is how we create unity, and lift each other up," he says.

Within the St. Louis business community specifically, McCauley believes all businesses would benefit from asking their employees to do a certain amount of community service hours a year. "Find a cause or organization you can all be excited about, and make it happen," he says. "I know for a business owner, time is money. But if you ask your people to share their time, talent and resources to make a positive difference in someone's life, the rewards of creating good will just boosts your bottom line."

Heroes in Business

Providing a Hand Up to Others

Kathleen McCadden | Neighborhood Houses

For as long as she can remember, Kathleen McCadden, development specialist with Neighborhood Houses, has made giving back a part of her life. Starting as a child McCadden would go shopping with her mother to pull together baskets of food to give to families for Christmas. McCadden's focus on giving continued all throughout her school years, committing time to organizations throughout St. Louis and in her college town of Dayton, Ohio.

"I give credit to my parents, Helen and Michael E. McCadden, Sr., MD, for my belief in service," she says. "They raised me with altruistic values, always showing me that we have to help those in need. Looking back on my childhood, I grew up thinking the only option was to help those in need. If it weren't for my loving and nurturing parents, I wouldn't be who I am today and wouldn't have the drive and desire to help all I can."

Today, McCadden believes she is lucky to have found a career that allows her to give back to the community. In her role, McCadden wears a variety of hats while helping Neighborhood Houses to reach its goal of providing educational and empowering experiences to help close the opportunity gap. "Through my work at Neighborhood Houses, I'm helping to make a difference in the lives of more than 1,200 children and youth served each week," she says.

McCadden also volunteers for the APA Adoption Center occasionally. "For a while, I would walk dogs on a weekly basis," she says. "However, my work schedule was making it hard for me to do that on a regular basis so now I'll occasionally help the APA at community events or writing an article for their volunteer newsletter. I feel like the APA knows they can call on me when they're in need of extra assistance. I'll step up if the help is needed."

While much of her life is dedicated to helping others, the feeling of obligation to help those less fortunate remains ever present. "There are people who try so hard to break the cycle of poverty and just don't have the opportunities that I had to do so," says McCadden. "Knowing that the organization I work for provides a hand up instead of handouts really motivates me to get up in the morning and continue to do the good work that I do."

Overall, McCadden hopes that her service to the community will change at least one life of a child for the good. "I hope at least one high school graduate will go to college because of their time at Neighborhood Houses," she says. "I truly hope that we are able to help the St. Louis community become a better place by serving one child at a time."



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Making a Difference Close to Home

Carrie Brengarth | Backpack Blessings

At just 13 years old, Carrie Brengarth began to work at a summer camp for down syndrome and developmentally disabled youth in Missouri. Brengarth dedicated herself to the camp each summer, staying with the organization through age 21 and eventually became assistant program director. What she learned from an early age was the impact one person could have on the community.

Today Brengarth, a channel manager with Clarus Communications, has passed this same belief on to her children, leading by example as a parent. Whether leading women's teams for Habitat for Humanity or her daughter's Girl Scout Troop, Brengarth has found causes to dedicate her time. "Through my oldest daughter's Girl Scout Troop, I started working with Operation

Food Search, which provides food to families who are without food," says Brengarth.

Brengarth was stricken by the fact that children living down the street were going without food or were underfed. While she was beginning to figure out what more she could do for the cause, Brengarth was confronted with a personal battle when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. "I had my own health battle to fight but I thought that continuing with the idea of Backpack Blessings would give me something to focus on outside of being sick and feeling sorry for myself," she says.

Finding strength that most might not, Brengarth dedicated herself to starting her 501c3 organization, Backpack Blessings, which helps fill in the gap by providing backpacks full of nutritious, kid-friendly, non-perishable meals to be eaten over the weekend when resources to area students may be limited. Currently Backpack Blessings serves 20 students at Wentzville South Middle School. "For these children, the weekend no longer means empty stomachs," says Brengarth. "Many of these students are on free or reduced lunch, but they don't have to be. Teachers and counselors can identify students that they notice may be in need and let us know. They can say, 'Hey, can you bring an extra bag?'"

With the success of her initial program, Brengarth has expanded Backpack Blessings to provide breakfast for a group of students who attend the Alternative Program in the Wentzville School District. "This program is for students who struggle in the regular classroom setting, and most attend there part-time," says Brengarth. "These students do not necessarily receive assistance with free or reduced meals, and most are not getting breakfast each day. We provide 200 breakfasts every third week of the month for 40 students."

To Brengarth, it's not about recognition, but the possibility of helping to make an impact. "The students never see who is bringing them food," she says. "It's not about that. But, they might feel that the community or God cares about them and it might have a positive impact on them later in life."



Empowering Individuals with Disabilities

Tim Combs | Hyatt Regency St. Louis At The Arch

For Tim Combs, director of human resources for Hyatt Regency St. Louis at The Arch, service had always meant being customer focused during his career in hotel operations. That shifted slightly after he joined human resources to a more colleague focus and evolved organically to include service towards external sources and that's when giving back escalated for Combs. He began to volunteer with organizations such as Paraquad and UCP Heartland's Talentconnect program, both empowering individuals with disabilities.

"My current role as director of human resources allows me to focus on community involvement, specifically driving our company's 'Hyatt Thrive' community initiatives with our colleagues and community partners in St. Louis," he says. "Our team partners with multiple agencies annually to give back."

Current and former Hyatt Thrive community partners include Kingdom House, St. Patrick's Center, Stray Rescue St. Louis, Ronald McDonald House, Missouri Special Olympics to name just a few. "Again, I'm fortunate that I get to work with an amazing staff of leaders and hospitality professionals who help us identify annually new community partners," says Combs.

Combs and his team also help lead the hotel's efforts with hiring individuals with disability. "We recently hosted a meeting for a dozen or so Missouri Vocational Rehab professionals at Hyatt in an effort to familiarize them with our UCP Heartland - Talentconnect partnership," he says. "I'm also a St. Louis Community College (STLCC) Foundation Board member and am currently working with the 'Tee for Tuition' golf Tournament committee. Proceeds go to STLCC students and programs."

Watching others learn, grow and achieve beyond their expectations is what keeps Combs motivated to continue building up the community by giving back. "I've personally benefitted from the support and mentorship of others at Hyatt and it's the give back you mentioned, that now motivates me to help others," he says.

Combs considers himself lucky to see the results of dedication to giving back. "As they say, 'Hope is not a Strategy'," he says. "We are fortunate that our teams are often able to see the positive impact of our community efforts on our hotel colleagues, community organizations and the individuals we serve."



Bettering the Lives of Veterans

Jennifer Jefferson | The SOHO Shop

Early on in Jennifer Jefferson's life, she was exposed to selfless individuals. Her father, whose Army career spanned her childhood, was particularly influential, and Jefferson eventually became a Marine herself. With that, Jefferson's focus on service simply became part of her as opposed to something done intentionally.

Today while running The SOHO Shop, which she and her husband started in 2008 to provide consulting services surrounding the technology field and home automation, Jefferson still finds time to give back. "My love for Marines led me to become involved with the process of their transition home," she says. "I started with the Focus Marines Foundation in December 2014."

Today Jefferson serves as the Secretary to the Board for the Focus Marines Foundation as well as a Team Leader for Focus. "It is an organization that aids in the transition from military life to civilian life for post 9/11 veterans with visible and invisible wounds," she says.

Outside of the Focus Marines Foundation, Jefferson and her husband recently started their third business in the St. Louis area for the sole purpose of giving a portion of the proceeds to support the Military through charitable organizations. "My love for veterans, specifically Marines, motivates me to volunteer at The Focus Marines Foundation," she says. "The people that volunteer there, and the veterans that come through the program, keep me coming back every session."

Her hope is that every veteran that comes through the Focus Marines Foundation knows that they are part of a network of Marines and volunteers that support their transition to become an active member of society. "I also hope that other people will see the tremendous sacrifices that our veterans have made for our country, and will also rise up beside them through volunteering support," she says.

Furthering the cause, Jefferson believes the St. Louis community needs a coordinated effort to bring Veterans into the business world. "Veterans' skill sets would prove to be invaluable to the community as a whole and the local economy would benefit from the growth of employment/more active members of society. The effort would definitely begin with more awareness about the skills of our local veterans and the intentional employment of such peoples," she says.



Looking Out for Others to Help

Marti Gurley | Midwest Trust Of Missouri

When Marti Gurley, executive vice president and head of the St. Louis office of Midwest Trust of Missouri, first moved to St. Louis, her career lead her to the world of volunteering. While working for AG Edwards she was exposed to the giving culture in business for the first time. "I began joining many of my colleagues with the Readers Create Leaders program in the St. Louis Public Schools where we read to third graders in a local elementary school on a regular recurring basis," says Gurley. "I then became involved with Discovering Options, an organization that works with at-risk youth to help them make better life decisions. I became involved because I understood the importance of how one individual can make the difference in a young person's life."

In 2008, Gurley was named Mentor and Stakeholder of the Year by Discovering Options. While Gurley continues to keep in touch with her first mentee, she has also become involved with a breadth of other charitable organizations. Today Gurley is a member of the SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Foundation Planned Giving Council and a member of the SMM Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center Development Board. "I became involved out of my own experience when my daughter Hanleigh, now 7, was treated at Cardinal Glennon Hospital as an infant for a heart condition," she says.

While Gurley's daughter turned out to be fine she knew that from her own family's personal experience that she wanted to extend the excellent level of care she experienced to other families whose children are experiencing medical challenges. "The way I knew to get involved was to leverage my legal talent and professional network to assist the Cardinal Glennon Children's Foundation Development Board and Planned Giving Council with planned giving efforts, long-range planning, and board development," she says. "Through the efforts of these two Boards, we can help raise funds to continue to obtain cutting-edge technology, and attract the best and the brightest doctors."

Since 2014, Gurley has been the Chairman of the Alzheimer's Association St. Louis Chapter's Planned Giving Committee and she is also the 2017-19 Chairman-Elect of the St. Louis American Red Cross Planning Giving Advisory Council.

Gurley is continually motivated on her path of giving back by the values instilled in her by her family and growing up in a small town. "When I was a kid, I was fortunate to be surrounded by an entire community that would look out for each other and help even without asking," she says. "When someone needed something, you would do what you could to help them."

Even her career path is all about helping others. "Families entrust me and my team to care for their loved ones' financial stability and estate planning and management," she says. "If you can influence and guide one person to develop the skills to stay on track to be self-sufficient, independent and kind, this is how I think we can make the greatest impact."



Turning Your Web Presence Into An Asset

Entrepreneurs Team Up To Teach, Implement Web Strategies

When friends Geoff King and Zach Raineri began talking with business owners about their websites, one common theme kept emerging. The owners had websites, but the sites weren't really working to help grow their businesses.

"We started thinking differently about web development," King says. "When you have a website, that's just the start. A business needs to invest in its website and a marketing strategy for that site so it can turn it into one of the biggest assets the company owns."

King and Raineri decided to help solve this problem. The two formed ZioSolutions, a website design and inbound marketing company. The owners didn't want to create just a web design firm, they wanted to create a company that not only built sites but helped clients gain results from the sites.

"In our opinion, a website should absolutely be a No. 1 marketing asset and a No. 1 salesperson because the site is working for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," says King.

King, a former sales manager, and Raineri, a former developer in the telecommunications industry, teamed up to create the company and focus on educating customers on digital marketing. "There are so many reports and so much data," King says. "We wanted to make sure our clients were doing something with this information. Once the sites are up and running, we want to grow those sites and make sure people were coming to the sites. Once they start coming, we want to convert them into leads and then sales."

The two entrepreneurs help clients set up, understand and track digital marketing tactics such as keyword search and SEO, content marketing, pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, conversion rate optimization, calls to action, forms and more.

Typically, the pair puts new clients through ZioSolution's Zio60 program, a 60-day program that includes a new website, or website re-design, and such things as competitor analysis, keyword research, landing pages, SEO titles and more.

"This program allows them to start out with everything they need to be successful online," Raineri says. "They have research data they need and they have a fully optimized website to help them along the path. This gets clients started, and they should start generating leads and business from that."

According to King, "This (Zio60) is really our platform for success. This is where we build you a strong and stable foundation. During this process, we're able to learn a lot about our clients. This helps us fine-tune our program just for their needs."

"We don't have a cookie-cutter approach to helping companies. Sometimes we've found they might have a website up and running but no way to capture leads, for example. If you can't capture leads, how can you use that website to help improve your



Zach Raineri, left, and Geoff King, right, have teamed up to help companies turn their web presence into an asset. The two are the owners of ZioSolutions.

business and your sales teams. Zio60 is how we get to know you and your business and build the website that works best for you. Once we are able to build their goals and needs into a solution that is tailored just for them, we've seen a major difference in the results."

Raineri believes ZioSolution's main strength is its ability to handle a client's inbound marketing and sales challenges. "Even in our development, we are always thinking about conversion paths, how visitors will view the site, work flows, search engine optimization, and other key factors outside of strictly development," he says.

King agrees, adding that websites aren't one-size-fits-all anymore. "They have to be personal and they have to be tailored to the needs of the business," he says.

Both King and Raineri spend a lot of their time speaking and presenting to other business owners throughout the region on websites, inbound marketing and digital marketing. In fact, King has been a featured SCORE speaker, sharing his knowledge with other business owners. SCORE is a non-profit, volunteer organization, whose mission is to promote the success of small business in the St. Louis area. The organization holds seminars throughout the year on a variety of business topics.

"This (speaking to business owners) has allowed us to teach people more about website design and development but also more about inbound marketing and sales on the web. We aligned perfectly with the SCORE mentality of how do we help people grow their businesses," says Raineri.

"We love being able to get out and teach. It is about telling people about the options. We're more of a trusted advisor," King says.

Top 5 Website Mistakes

Geoff King and Zach Raineri, owners of ZioSolutions, discuss the top five website mistakes:

- 1. Not being mobile optimized.** "Mobile browsing makes up the majority of internet browsing now and not being mobile optimized means greatly reduced conversion rates and less traffic from search engines," Raineri says.
- 2. Not optimizing sites for search engines.** "You are missing out on a massive audience," Raineri says. "A recent study showed 93% of web visits began with a search engine. In terms of generating business, your site has to be optimized."
- 3. Not publishing new content.** "New content will help improve your online search rankings," Raineri says. "If you are posting regular content, it helps your rankings massively as well as positions you as an authority in your industry."
- 4. Not thinking about the buyer.** Says Raineri: "A lot of companies don't think about the buyer's journey and they just go with what they like or how they think the site should look. It is important to also help your customers filter through the site and make it easy to interact and connect with you."
- 5. Looking at your website as an expense instead of asset.** "Your website should be your No. 1 digital asset," King says.



Put Your Stake in the Ground

Anything worth doing is worth doing completely. Yet often we hold back commitment, waiting for reassurance and commitment from others first. Doing this is understandable but not helpful.

A committed company

Recently I read the book “Delivering Happiness,” by Tony Hsieh, founder of Zappos. He and his leadership team put their stake firmly in the ground for their purpose of “Delivering WOW through service” for vendors, clients and employees. The book

describes repeatedly not only how they made their purpose operational in their business but also the times they almost lost everything and how financial success was not guaranteed.

The heroic journey

I bring this up because in my work helping organizations adopt a responsibility-based culture model (where everyone is taught and supported in managing their own relationships, productivity and motivation), they often run into situations in which they are similarly challenged. It reminds me of that scene in the movie “A Few Good Men” when after months of inspiring Lt. Kaffee (Tom Cruise) to live up to his potential, Lt. Cmdr. Joanne Galloway (Demi Moore) says to him: “Danny, if you don’t think you can pull it off, don’t do it. You’ll lose everything.” This is how I often feel with my clients. They are sometimes like people who climb Mount Everest, not sure they should try for the top because they fear they may literally die. They come to see that while rewards are great, there are no guarantees that purpose and values will win the day financially. Daily, they must consider and choose commitments over and over again.

Real-life scenario

Recently a company owner realized one of his employees was in what’s called active constructive misbehavior (when someone does something that looks

constructive but is actually doing harm to relationships and profits). In this case, his employee consistently overcommitted, overworked, underutilized his team, and underdelivered to clients and co-workers. To a casual observer, it would not appear this burnt-out employee was misbehaving at all, but this was once recognized, he was handed responsibility to come up with a solution (which he did)—to set healthy boundaries. However, he ultimately refused to put his stake in the ground to fulfill. Therefore he

resigned, which was, in my opinion, actually good for the company but a tough consequence all the same.

We need committed people

We are all inspired when we see live and mythical heroes face obstacles and win the day, and in my work I see a lot of this along

with outstanding results. But regardless of whether you always make it all the way to the top of the mountain, our world is desperately in need of responsible, high-integrity leaders. So my suggestion is this: In all things, be awake; determine your options; feel them out fully, considering all positive and negative consequences; and then make your choices and put your stake firmly and fully in the ground for each, giving full effort. Then, no matter what happens, you will live a life you love because it is one designed from the most responsible, courageous and loving side of you. And as Goethe says, “The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too.”

So go out and plant some stakes firmly in the ground. We need your courage and initiative. ■

Judy Ryan (judy@LifeworkSystems.com), human systems specialist, is owner of LifeWork Systems. Join her in her mission to create a world in which all people love their lives. She can also be reached at 314-239-4727.



Why Isn’t My Business Worth As Much As I think It Is?

According to the business broker community, the main reason deals don’t close is a valuation gap between seller and buyer. The second most common reason is unrealistic seller or buyer demands.

More than 40% of businesses don’t sell because of idealistic expectations of the business value coupled with demands driven by seller emotions.

Believe me ... I get it.

Owner emotion is a huge factor in the sale of a business, but if you let that emotion rule the day, you will end up losing—possibility forever—your opportunity to sell your business and fund your next life phase or retirement.

However, highly valuing something that you have devoted your whole being to is only natural; removing the lens of emotion is not easy. Add to that the seller’s personal fear of what a post-sale life may look like financially and you can see why a seller wants to overcompensate by asking for an inflated value for their business. Thinking you’ll just negotiate down to a realistic price means you’ve already chased away legitimate prospective buyers.

So, how do you overcome emotion when selling your business? With information and, ultimately, trust. I know, it can be hard to place your trust in a process with so much uncertainty...

The best way to develop trust is through information. The more you as the seller understand the process of what it takes to sell a business, the more you will trust your own instincts. The more your business broker’s valuation and selling process is based on comprehensive data and proven processes, the more you will learn and the more trust you will have in yourself and the skills of your broker.

Selling your business is likely the single most significant financial event of your life. To achieve the outcome you desire, you must educate yourself and work with knowledgeable advisers who have earned your trust.

When you break down the process of valuing a business, there really is not

much mystery. Businesses are sold as a multiple of the cash flow generated by the business. So, accurately defining the cash flow of any business is critical; this is where the skills and process of your business broker are extremely valuable. Once the cash flow is determined, the collective experience and wisdom of the business broker will guide the identification of the business’s value drivers.

Beyond cash flow, what enhances or detracts from the overall desirability of the business?

Is the business in a mature industry?

Is the industry growing, stable or declining?

How competitive is the space in which the business operates?

How easy is it to enter the business? How stable is the profitability of the business?

These factors and other unique circumstances determine the overall desirability of the business through the eyes of the buyer.

Finally, a weighted market value of the business is calculated by connecting the cash flow with the results of the value driver analysis, along with a multiple of cash flow guided by research of comparable segment deals.

As you can see, the market value of a business is based in data, information and facts. Not emotion! The statistics above demonstrate that, sadly, owners themselves can be the biggest obstacle to the successful sale of their businesses.

Advice from a seasoned business owner and business broker: Educate yourself about the process of preparing a business for sale and maximizing value. Select a business broker/M&A adviser who explains his/her valuation process in detail and then listen to your head rather than your heart. ■

Dave Driscoll is president of Metro Business Advisors, a business brokerage, valuation and exit planning firm helping owners of companies with revenue up to \$20 million sell their most valuable asset. Reach Dave at DDriscoll@MetroBusinessAdvisors.com or 314-303-5600. For more information, visit www.MetroBusinessAdvisors.com.

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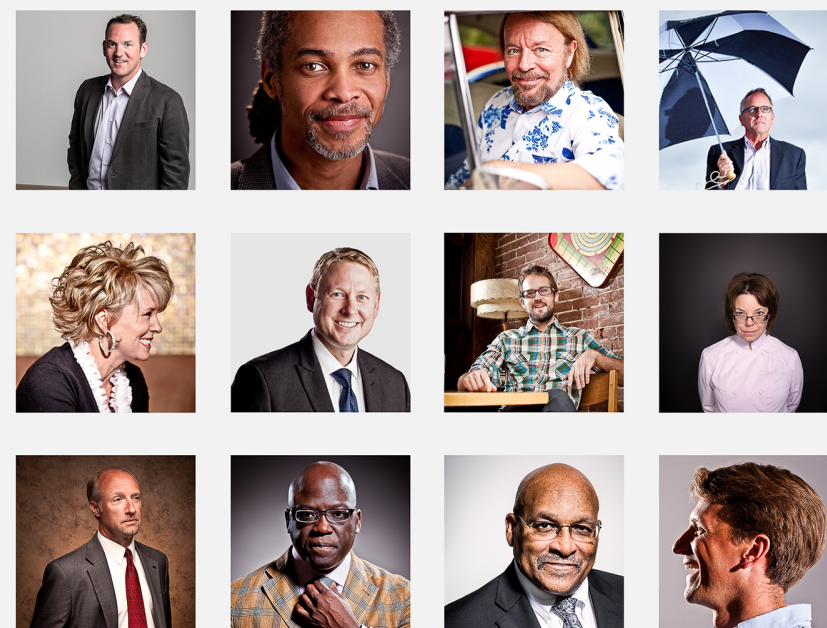
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For busy executives and rising corporate stars, Roberta Moore, founder of Conscious Choices and Moore EQi, blends lessons learned in her accounting/banking career and systems-based psychotherapy practice to specialize in helping business teams, sales teams, and individual executives achieve personal and workplace success.

While working in her therapy practice, Roberta noted the skills leading to successful personal relationships were the same skills needed to achieve workplace success. With this discovery, Roberta became certified in Reuven Bar-On's model of Emotional Intelligence and launched Moore EQi, helping companies succeed through improved emotional, social and cognitive intelligence behaviors and skills.

Moore EQi serves corporate teams, executives, entrepreneurs and other leaders who work for small businesses, middle market companies and non-profit organizations. Roberta is focused in the Professional Services Industry and works with financial service providers, wealth managers, insurance advisors, lawyers and accountants.

If you would like to know more about how raising the specific EQ skills that can make you a Star Performer in your industry, please contact Roberta.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a key indicator in predicting human performance and development potential. It encompasses a set of learnable skills that can be targeted and developed over time.

High EQ directly correlates to high productivity and profitability, success and happiness.



Moore EQi

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TIME WITH THE BOSS

Angela Ridenour

New Mint Media

Website: www.newmintmedia.com

Industry: video production and
family legacy



Education: Bachelor of Fine Arts, Indiana University

Family: husband, Roger, and two daughters, Rachael, 27, and Charlotte, 25 (son-in-law, P.J. Gretter)

What is your mission?

To use my creative talents to help people record and celebrate their lives and the legacy of their families.

What was your first job?

I delivered newspapers on my yellow 10-speed bicycle.

What was your worst job?

Working as a maid at the Anaheim Convention Center.

What led you to your industry?

I interviewed my mother's family after her death and heard stories about her upbringing that were a revelation to me. I was shocked to learn how much I did not know about my own family and saddened that she was not around to tell her story in her own voice. That's about the time I began to put down my still camera and pick up a video camera.

What was the smartest thing your company did in the past year?

I let go of commercial videos and portrait photography and focused on my niche of creating legacy videos for individuals and families. I am happy at work again.

Who is your industry role model?

Aron Ranen. He taught me the best interviewing techniques.

How do you try to differentiate your business from others in your industry?

I believe my service is for an underserved market. Not many videographers specialize in the creation of legacy video biographies.

What's the hottest trend in your industry, and are you going to jump on board?

Getting a DNA sample to find out your ancestry. It's fascinating for sure to find out your heritage, but for me, it's still just words on paper. I specialize in personal video interviews to tell the family story in a way that keeps the memory alive.

What's the hardest part of your job?

Time management.

What's the best part?

Creating that sacred space with a client that allows their story to unfold. It's a little like magic.

What best advice would you share with new entrepreneurs?

Join your local BNI chapter and/or chamber of commerce. You need to be around people who will support you and your business.

What's your favorite place in St. Louis?

The Arch; it's such a cool structure. Plus, I went to see Tom Jones perform under the Arch one Fourth of July and had a blast!

What book is on your nightstand?

"Lead With a Story," by Paul Smith.

What has made you successful in your industry and in St. Louis?

My clients trust me with their memories. They also appreciate that I can take their snippets of memories, vintage photos and old videos and tell their life story back to them in a coherent narrative that they can then share with family and friends.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I teach a group fitness class at my local YMCA, and I run about 25 miles a week.



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