AT DEADLINE

Strong Job Market Expected

Inland Empire area employers expect to hire at a healthy pace during the second quarter of 2006, according to the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey.

From April to June, 33 percent of the companies interviewed plan to hire more employees, while 7 percent expect to reduce their payrolls, according to Manpower spokesperson Evlyn Wilcox. Another 60 percent expect to maintain their current staff levels.

"Employers expect much less hiring activity than in the first quarter when 50 percent of the companies interviewed intended to increase headcount, and 3 percent planned to decrease it," said Wilcox. "However, employers are more optimistic about hiring than they were a year ago when 20 percent of companies surveyed thought employment increases were likely and 3 percent intended to cut back."

For the coming quarter, job prospects appear best in construction, transportation/public utilities, education, services and public administration. Employers in non-durable goods manufacturing plan to reduce staffing levels, while those in wholesale/retail trade voice mixed hiring intentions. Hiring in durable goods manufacturing and finance/insurance/real estate is expected to continue on page 30.

The Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach
The Very Best of the Best
by William Anthony

We all during our life have attended events that were good---some better and a few as bad as we have been warned to expect---should we ever visit "hell." Well this past month, this reporter had the pleasure of attending a social and sporting event which I rated as of this date---the best of my life. The content of the event of the Grand Prix "the big race" did not alone make this race great. No, it was all the surroundings combined.............the celebrity race....the drifting....the concerts....the races within the races....the food.....the fabulous weather....and the attitude and mood of all the paid workers, volunteers, and those attendees who paid for their tickets to be all a part of this happening.

The police---yes, they were there, in big numbers, and with smiles on their faces and there to assist the ones who were lost (like me). The police were there not to hassle, not to ticket, but to keep the crowds moving, happy and helping those families who needed assistance.

The Toyota folks, all wearing a sort of golf-collared polo shirt, treated everyone they met equally---VIP treatment for all who joined this excited and friendly crowd. Their guests were all given wristbands allowing access to various areas which were not part of the general admission ticket. Yes, we had a wristband, but no name tags, no gold or silver stars---only the wristband. As a result, you were nameless and you fitted in with the rest of the group. Maybe you owned a dozen Toyota dealerships or maybe you were a freeloader like me. It did not make any difference---equality was the name of the day. The food served was top-notched (I could give many examples but do not have enough space in this article to mention). I cannot believe that anyone who attended the Toyota Long Beach Grand Prix could have any serious complaints. This was a "class act" if ever I saw one---not only because Toyota and their partners spent a lot of money, but because of the attitude---the good kind.

A tip of this reporter's cap for a job well done---I would love to be a guest next year and experience all of the above again - please. Just a note to add that many scholarships were granted and many local Long Beach charities benefited from this racing event. Yes, it was a win-win for everyone, but especially for me.

DeVry University Appoints Dean

- Colton Location to Offer Undergraduate, Graduate Degrees in Business, Technology and Management

DeVry University has named Victor LeBlue dean of its new Inland Empire location, scheduled to open July in Colton. LeBlue has been involved in higher education as an administrator for nearly 20 years serving in academic services, admissions and career.

continued on page 26
Survey of Small Business Owners in California Shows Some Confusion but General Support for Approach to Providing Health Care

A survey conducted by Small Business California, a non-profit and non-partisan research and advocacy group, shows strong support for the Massachusetts approach to providing health care. Among those that clearly understood the proposal, the plan garnered overwhelming majority approval among small business owners surveyed.

"I believe this survey shows us that California small business-owners are willing to step up and be part of the solution, in terms of providing health care as long as it is affordable and reasonably implemented," said Scott Hauge, president of Small Business California and small business owner.

The snap poll was responded to by approximately 150 respondents of Small Business California. The survey did show some confusion about the mandates of the program. For example, some small business owners thought the cost was $295 per month, it is actually $295 per year and that it is an individual mandate to fully enforce their rules when you hire your kids, students or other temps.

"Your employees may go on vacation, but the IRS and DOL do not—they are going to fully enforce their rules," warns AIPB Co-President Steve Sahlein. "If you make a mistake—such as failing to withhold the right taxes on a summer replacement because 'they are just kids'—you can get hit with 100% liability for the employer and employee taxes not withheld, plus interest, plus penalties."

By comparison, DOL penalties for failing to pay summer employees properly seem almost mild, Sahlein says, at back pay plus penalties.

"The IRS and DOL don't care how tricky the rules are; they are going to fully enforce them," Sahlein warns.

Sahlein gives an example of how tricky the rules can be. "If parents are the 100% owners of the business, they need not pay immediate family members the minimum wage—but if they regularly hire nonfamily members, they must pay their children the minimum wage."

Another example: "If you hire your children and own 100% of your shop, store, partnership or partnership, you don't have to withhold Social Security taxes from the kids, but you do have to withhold federal income tax and give your kids a W-2," Sahlein says.

"Some rules help business owners, but only if you know them," he says. For example, if you give employees July 4th as a paid holiday, you must give it to your summer help too!

What about health insurance? Tax-free parking or commutation? "The answer in each case is no," Sahlein says. "You don't have to give temporary or part-time summer help paid holidays or other benefits, but this should be stated in a written company policy, and that policy should include a definition of a full-time v. part-time v. temporary employee."

To help employers avoid costly fines and penalties, AIPB has put together a free report, "Rules for Hiring and Paying Summer Help," available by e-mailing info@aipb.org.
This May in the Inland Empire Business Journal!

News and Features

America's #1 RV Dealer Bob Barouti started doing business in Upland in the eighties and had about six RVs in the back lot. In 2005, over 380,000 RVs were sold—making Giant Inland Empire RV the leader in sales.

U.S. Senate to Vote on Most Important Small-Business Bill in 25 Years Bill S.1955 will affect many more Americans about the nation's borders will... 9

Influx of Relocating Companies Keeps Inland Empire Moving This May in the Inland Empire Business Journal! Columns place violence... 18 County of Riverside... of termination in order to maintain operational gives our readers... time, prevent any potential incidents of work... office-using employment gains culminated into record construction levels last year... 14 Restaurant Review... 36

Empire Office Bill in 25
Years

The Natural Meeting Choice

May 2006

Cal State San Bernardino Technology Office Funds Help for First Responders

GEM Power's "intelligent battery charger" passes test with Redlands PD

Using a novel technology that lets batteries "pull" a charge on an as-needed-only basis from another direct current power source, Redlands firm GEM Power LLC has passed a rigorous field trial with the city's police department. GEM Power provided three prototype charging units to Redlands PD and over a 30-day period, officers used the chargers in their squad cars and in the station to keep their portable radio batteries reliably charged all the time.

According to Redlands police Lieutenant Bill Cranfill, "This new charging system is reliable, fast and even looks like it will add to battery life, because it never over- or undercharges. Our officers now want units in all our squad cars."

This compact DC-DC unit can be mounted in police and fire vehicles and can charge a variety of electronic gear carried by the first responders, using the vehicle battery as the source. This technology has been developed with help from a grant made by the Office of Technology Transfer and Commercialization (OTTC) at Cal State San Bernardino. OTTC makes grants following competitive solicitations for proposals at various times during the year. The funds come from the Office of Naval Research's Center for Commercialization of Advanced Technology (CCAT). OTTC then manages the grant process which helps firms to get down what is usually called "the last mile" of the commercialization process.

GEM Power company president John James says, "Thanks to the CCAT funding we got through OTTC, we've been able to take a technology we originally developed for military use to charge aircraft batteries and adapt it for use by first responders, like police, fire and paramedics. OTTC funds paid for the prototype units used in the Redlands PD field trial along with input from other public agencies gave GEM Power the valuable feedback. GEM began the charger design utilizing first responders' inputs, and the field testing is a continuation of GEM's belief that users are part of the product development cycle."

The "Intelligent Battery Charger" works by adding a computer chip and a sophisticated software program that proactively checks the battery every two seconds to check on its condition and provide additional charging as needed. Rather than having the charger "force feed" the battery, the GEM Power system lets the battery itself control how it's charged. This typically results in several key benefits: (1) charging is faster, up to twice as fast as with so-called "rapid chargers"; (2) batteries never get either overcharged or underex- posed. Real change happens in an instant. It happens the moment you decide to change. If you truly want to be dif- ferent tomorrow than you are today, then continue on page 39

INLAND EMPIRE BUSINESS JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY

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CARLO PONTI JR.: A MAN AND HIS MUSIC

... The son of Oscar-winning actress Sophia Loren says "I Love... San Bernardino!"

Director and conductor of the San Bernardino Symphony tells the Business Journal, "I Love San Bernardino!" That might not seem like an odd statement, except that the maestro, Carlo Ponti Jr. is the son of a famous Italian film director and an Oscar-winning actress.

He could live anywhere. In fact, he has held the baton before some of the greatest orchestras in the world. He still speaks with pride of the performers of San Bernardino. Bringing talented people together to bring the music together is why he began conducting in the first place.

Carlo Ponti Jr. has rapidly established himself on the international scene as one of the most imaginative of his generation of conductors.

He speaks humbly, however, of his own time as a performer, specifically as a pianist. He claims that it just didn't give him the adrenaline rush that conducting does.

Perhaps it does not. Still we are told that he began studying piano in Paris and was a prize-winner in several competitions including the 'Claude Kahn,' Radio France and Paris 'Bache' International Piano Competitions.

Not a bad record. Maestro Ponti attended the Conductor's Institute in Hartford, CT under the direction of Harold Farberman, and subsequently received a master's degree in conducting from the University of California, Los Angeles. He has also privately studied with Maestros Zubin and Mehilli Mehta. Maestro Andrey Boreyko, and has worked at the Vienna Music Academy under Maestro Leopold Hager.

Maestro Ponti's debut with the Russian National Orchestra in Moscow met with critical praise and led to his appointment in 2000 as the Russian National Orchestra's associate conductor.

In January 2001, Ponti was named music director and principal conductor of the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra, a position recently extended through the 2009/2010 season. In this post, he has attracted much attention for raising the artistic level of the orchestra, broadening its audience base, and innovative programming.

Carlo Ponti, Jr. is in demand as guest conductor and has appeared with, among others, the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg in France, the Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Orquesta Sinfonica de Galicia and Orquesta de Valencia in Spain, the Simon Bolivar Symphony Orchestra in Venezuela, Vienna's Pro Arte Orchestra, the Ural Philharmonic Orchestra and Moscow Chamber Orchestra in Russia.

He has conducted at prestigious international music festivals as Festival Vancouver in Canada, the Festival d' Echternach in France, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Bratislava Spring Music Festival in Slovakia, the Festival Internacional de Musica de Vllena in Spain and at the Kohn Musik Triemlane in Germany.

Other performance invitations include the Nizhny-Novgorod Symphony Orchestra in Russia, the Orchester del Teatro La Fenice and the Orchestra di Bari in Italy, the Luxembourg Philharmonic, the Czech National Symphony, the Winnipeg Symphony, the North Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and the Jenser and Bremer Philharmonies in Germany.

Having just recently presented an afternoon performance of movie themes, he confesses a respect for such film music writers as John Williams and Danny Elfman.

Elfman, you may know came out of an eighties group called Oingo Boingo, but he is now in demand as a film scorer.

Ponti believes that Elfman is a great composer of "superhero" themes having given us both Batman and Spiderman.

Elfman also won an Oscar for his "Chicago" score.

Ponti believes that such film composers as Elfman, John Williams or Michael Massi may well become the revered composers whose music will be performed decades from now.

In discussing such a concept with the Journal he pointed out that what the composer scores for the soundtrack, is not what you find on the "soundtrack CD."

For marketing purposes, hit songs are put into the film to sell the recordings, but they are not really the soundtrack score.

Carlo Ponti Jr. is committed to encouraging and educating young talent and, in addition to regularly holding master classes in orchestral conducting for students of all ages, has been invited to work and perform with leading Youth Orchestras such as the American Youth Symphony Orchestras and the Young Musicians' Foundation Orchestras in the United States. In San Bernardino, he invites local school orchestras to perform as part of the program.

He pointed out to us some of the business aspects of the programs that he puts together for the symphonies. His programs can range from 40 performers up to nearly 60 depending on the demands of the music being performed. Then too, something demanding, like the 1812, which requires cannons and bells, can be a very costly staging. These things come into play when deciding what will be part of the program.

There is also the mix of music to consider.

Ponti has included in the current season music from everyone from Beethoven to Steve Wonders. This is designed to attract as broad a range of music lovers as possible. He adds, speaking of that range, that the music of any composer must be inviolate. It is possibly the arrangement that needs tweaking, but never the original score.

As for such things as the recent movie theme program, he does not like to call it a "Children's Concert," even though the music consists of G-rated movie music. It is a concert for the young and the young at heart.

Wartching Ponti, as we did on that Saturday afternoon in April, we are walking back and forth in back of the California Theater, hum­ming the music to himself; we had to conclude that Ponti himself will be young at heart for a long time to come.

It would not be pretentious to say that the talent of Carlo Ponti Jr. is one of the treasures of the Inland Empire.
Bob Barouti was doing business in Upland in the early eighties. He had a car lot on Foothill Boulevard. Leasing was the name of the game at the time, until the laws changed. From that thought, he decided that they be the only businesses that could lease cars.

Barouti had about six RVs in the back of the lot, and, as he describes it, the RVs, “like Pacman,” began to take over. Six became 12 and the business evolved.

With growth came opportunity. As he bought properties and expansion, he began to look at other sites as well. The city of Colton invited him to be a part of their new American RV Expo, and the Giant Inland Empire RV site grew to be the biggest dealer in the area.

Soon he found a few acres just off of the freeway and moved out on his own. Land became available in Murrieta, and that financial institution. That’s worth mentioning because Barouti speaks very highly of his relationship with that particular bank.

Today Giant RV has dealerships in Colton, Corona, Irvine, Montclair, Murrieta and Palm Desert. Barouti tells us that the Inland Empire is his dream area and that all of the gas once family member will burn up in a year, the total RV fuel bill in that period of time will hardly make a difference. Gas costs more today than it did last year, but does jet fuel. We can expect the travel expenses to more than that you pay.

Bussing had the idea to advance over the last two plus years. The company has continued to grow, and it has been added to the adventure.

When asked about the most important factor of his current period of time, Barouti answers, “the slide-out.” Units that can add square footage to the floor plan by sliding out a family area have revolutionized the industry. They were seen as remarkable when they first came out. Now, says Barouti, they are virtually required.

There is one last point that Bob Barouti has mentioned. That would be the Giant RV family employee. Many members of the Barouti family work for the company, including Fred Barouti, Bob’s son, who is now the Montclair manager.

Beyond that, Bob Barouti is proud to point out that many of the original dozen or so employees have landed in the business world, back in the eighties, are still with the company. Today, more than half of the company’s employees are part of the Barouti family work for the company.

As Barouti got better, he found himself taking over other RV dealerships. Thus the original name of Giant Inland Empire RV had to be shortened. This was not unlike the former Chino Valley Bank, now Citizens Business Bank. That’s worth mentioning because Barouti speaks very highly of his relationship with that particular financial institution. Obviously, having a good banker is essential to any growing business.

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THE DEATH OF RETAIL CIGAR STORES IN CALIFORNIA?

New California initiative will raise state tax rate to 135 percent

By Rich Persman, Author: "Persman's Pocket Encyclopedia of Cigars"

A looming time bomb is ticking, which if it explodes in November, may close many of the retail tobacco stores in the state of California.

It goes by the name of "The Tobacco Tax Act of 2006." If California is to come from the anti-tobacco lobby, this bill seeks primarily to raise the tax on cigarettes by 13 cents a piece or $2.60 per pack. The state already has an 87 cents per pack tax and the resulting $3.47 per pack rate would be the highest in the nation.

The measure creates a "Tobacco Tax of 2006 Trust Fund" in the state treasury, which in turn will fund a variety of health programs such as research and a variety of anti-tobacco advertising and promotional ventures for state and local government use.

But the insidious nature of this proposition is that California is the only state which links its tax on cigarettes to what are known as "other tobacco products" (OTP). This includes cigs, pipe tobacco, smokeless, little cigs and roll-your-own cigarettes. It is this aspect of the proposition which will destroy California's smokeshops. While the tax rate is not specified in the proposition, the state's Board of Equalization would be required to impose a tax rate "equivalent" to the rate on cigs.

California cigar retailers already face a heavy tax burden of 46.76 percent of the wholesale price of cigars before they ever hit their burner. So, a box of 25 cigs which has a wholesale price of $100, costs the retailer $146.76 before it goes on the shelves. Instead of selling the box for the normal mark-up of 40-46 percent of the wholesale price of cigars before they ever hit the market, the tax will likely raise to 135 percent of the wholesale price. The bill seeks primarily to raise the tax on cigarettes by 13 cents a pack, which is 46.76 percent of the wholesale price of cigarettes before they ever hit the market.

"Most full-service tobacconists carry about $200,000 in [tobacco product] inventory," noted Janigan in an interview last week. That means most will face the following choices:

- Pay the state as much as $176,000 for the tax on their existing inventory. The highest tax will apply to the business which may do $1 million a year in gross revenues, or
- Sell the inventory to the walls, more or less at wholesale prices, by Dec. 31 of this year and lose about $75-100,000 in revenue, or
- Close the store and do something else.

Already, talk is circulating about a nationally respected California retailer who has given up and is actively working to sell his store. More will certainly follow.

It is no secret that while Californians may vote for this draconian tax measure, it will simply collect less and less money over time and lead to (1) an enormous increase in black-market activity in cigarettes and (2) for cigar smokers, more and more purchases in interstate commerce from merchants outside of California.

Janigan also notes that from the cigar point of view, the state is simply forfeiting money. "We have estimated that because of the current [46.76 percent] tax rate, the state is losing $35 million a year in excise and sales tax revenue," he said. "Over the seven-year history of the tax since 1999, the state has lost at least $210 million." And if this new tax measure passes, it will lose more. Not that the anti-tobacco crowd cares, as the funding from selling the box will be in the billions.

To get on the Nov. 7 ballot, initiative backers had to gather about 599,000 signatures and Janigan believes they have done so. "I know they have stopped gathering signatures," he said. Assuming that enough valid signatures have been collected and the measure passes on the ballot, the question is whether the state's smokers will once again punish smokers for consuming a perfectly legal product.

The number of smokers in California is one of the lowest in the nation at about 16.6 percent of the adult population, but even at that figure, is greater than the number of votes it took to elect current Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The current tax measure, Prop. 10, passed by an eyelash with just 50.1 percent of the vote in 1998. Smokers and those who recognize that in California, 1154.7x751.5 BUSINESS JOURNAL • PAGE 10 May 2006

IEHP Service Tops the I.E. and the State

State reports from 2004 indicate that IEHP, Inland Empire Health Plan, is a top performer in many preventative care services delivering to the Healthy Families Program Members in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

The preventative care services are measured through HEDIS (Health Employer Data and Information Set), a national standardized measurement for quality of care delivered by health plans.

A top ranked in California for the Well Child Visits (detection of health problems for children ages 0-15 years). IEHP also ranked first in the Inland Empire for childhood immunizations (preventing childhood vaccines and shots for children up to age 2), and Adolescent Well-Care Visits (detecting changes in physical, social, and emotional health for children ages 12-19 years). Out of seven measures, IEHP also scored well above average with a 99 percent rating for Children's Access to Primary Care Practitioners (ages 12-24 months).

Recently, IEHP also ranked first for quality care in 10 of 11 HEDIS measures in San Bernardino and Riverside County's Medi-Cal managed care.

"Our scores are a collective achievement of all the contracted IEHP physicians," IEHP CEO Richard Bruno tells the Journal. "This recognition must also reflect the work of IEHP's staff and all IEHP physicians who deliver quality health care. IEHP physicians have done a tremendous job in providing medical services to our Healthy Families Members."

The healthcare philosophers of excellence set by ACOs and IEHP are stringent, complex, and earning the higher levels of success verify an overall commitment to improve the quality of care delivery. "These results are proof of what a team effort can do, and the team at IEHP is second to none," said Dr. Bradley Gilbert, IEHP chief medical officer. "Everyone within the IEHP organization and our network of physicians take these scores very seriously, and we are always thinking of positive steps we can take to improve these scores.

IEHP Inland Empire Health Plan, a Knox-Keene licensed health plan, located in San Bernardino, is organized as a for-profit public agency. The IEHP service area includes San Bernardino and Riverside counties and surrounds 2.8 million residents. In the following programs: Medicaid (called Medi-Cal in California), the Healthy Families Program, Healthy Kids, and the Commercial Plan.

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) has recognized IEHP's commitment to improving health care quality, NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of health care organizations and manages the evaluation of HEDIS, the performance measurement tool used by more than 90 percent of the nation's health plans.

NCQA is committed to providing health care quality information through the Web and the media in order to help employers, employees and others make more informed health care choices.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Deborah Deras and
Adoley Odunton
Deborah Deras and Adoley Odunton are co-founders of Synergy Unlimited, a self-mastery company that uses the power of the need to get at the root cause of productivity challenges. They are sought-after speakers, trainers and life coaches known for their dynamic, energy-charging and interactive styles.

CARNIE WILSON
Daughter of legendary Beach Boys founder, Brian Wilson. Carnie has a varied career as a singer, songwriter, actress and TV talk show host.

Juliet Funt
Daughter of Allen Funt, creator of "Candid Camera." TV show, she won't hide a camera in your office but will shine a light on the blind spots holding you back from creating the life you dream of. Her show's guests are amplified by years of performing improvisational comedy on the professional stage and many, many hours on the platforms challenging her audience to think deeper, laugh harder and change their lives more profoundly.

Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski
Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski is the former military police commander at the Abu Ghraib Prison, where U.S. troops allegedly mistreated detainees being held there. She maintains that she had no knowledge of any such activities. Karpinski has much to say now—her presentation should be informative and interesting.

Dr. Betty C. Spence, Ph.D.
President, NAFE
Barbara Spence has served as president of The National Association for Female Executives (NAFE) since 2000. From 1994-1999 as a consultant, she was a key participant in the development of a national program to increase the number of female members in the association's chapters and publications. She was "The Real Deal: Women" (2001); a lead on propelling your own advancement. In addition, she co-chaired the program for the president and received the Aging of America Award 2000 and was honored by the U.S. Department of Labor. She co-founded and co-wrote two other books, "Advancing Women: Best Practices from the Corporate Leaders," (2001) and "Creating Women's Networks." (1999).

Rikki Klieman
TV anchor, legal analyst and attorney, actor and best-selling author, Rikki Klieman has earned a strong reputation as one of the nation's most influential women and legal authorities. Ms. Klieman is a recognized expert in the fields of legal, personal and professional development, including television on such topics as law, money, health, parenting, money and a variety of other personal topics. She is a frequent guest on Court TV, CNN, NBC, and Fox News Live. She appears frequently on New York City radio and television to discuss current legal and other topics. In 2005, she was honored by the ABA Women's Division with the Chancellor's Award for Women in the Legal Profession.

Sherry Halperin
Sherry Halperin runs the top production company, Tish Productions, and has produced music concert and holiday albums across the U.S. Prior to that, she had her hand in Hollywood for over 30 years, where she worked as an agent, film distributor, and on many TV shows as a writer, director, and producer. At age 31, she produced the dating scene after her bachelorette party ended. She learned the hard way, "Let Me Be Mean, It's Just for You," and went on to produce over 600 shows and stand up comics. She hosts a weekly web show "Your Dating Life," gates the patch and points out what's like to look for love after being single for a life time. Her dating advice is a healing adventure in dating after mid-life.

Colette Carlson
Colette Carlson, M.A., is a communication expert who engages individuals or groups in the power of the written word, acting as a confidant on where they want and how they go from point A to point B. She has had multiple appearances on national television and is the author of the book, "Communication: The Key." A former aircraft pilot in the U.S. Air Force, she is a frequent speaker at corporate events and conferences. Carlson has appeared on "Good Morning America," "Today," "The Early Show," "Access Hollywood," "The Late Show with David Letterman," and "The View." Carlson is a former classmate along with Stephen Colbert, Matt Drudge, Tim Russert and Dick Parsons in the book, "Generation X Factor.

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RESERVATIONS MANDATORY (909) 483-4700
Influx of Relocating Companies Keeps Inland Empire Office Market Tight

by Marcus & Millchap

The Riverside/San Bernardino office market will continue to thrive due to another year of healthy job growth. Strong office-using employment gains culminated into record construction activity in 2006. Developers, responding to robust demand, have filled the planning pipeline with more than 4 million square feet of office space. Despite the increase in the construction pipeline, heightened demand from companies expanding inland to serve the growing population, will keep vacancy rates low. Rancho Cucamonga, in particular, will remain popular with expanding businesses due to the growing list of high-end retail centers and restaurants as its proximity to the Ontario airport. As a result, vacancy in the submarket is expected to decline to 100 basis points to 7.3 percent by year end.

Strong market conditions will continue to pique the attention of investors in 2006. Velocity increased modestly in 2005, while aggressive investors pushed the median price up 25 percent to $152 per square foot and drove cap rates down 80 basis points to an average of 6.8 percent. While private buyers have accounted for most sales activity and the recent runup in prices, institutional investors are increasing their local presence, and there is a growing number of deals selling for more than $10 million. Demand for large, investment-grade buildings has increased, as evidenced by a jump in prices of 27 percent over last year to $183 per square foot. The Riverside/San Bernardino/San Gorgonio submarket is witnessing some of the highest levels of activity and the recent runup in prices, increasing their local presence, while aggressive investors pushed the median price up 25 percent to $152 per square foot. By year end, effective rents are forecast to rise 6 percent to $17.50 per square foot.

Forecasts:

- **Rent Forecast**: With market conditions becoming tighter, owners in the Inland Empire will be able to increase the median price per square foot and reduce concessions. Asking rents are expected to increase to 5 percent to $20.36 per square foot by year end. Effective rents are forecast to increase 4.6 percent, adding more than $8,600 per job.
- **Construction Forecast**: While completions will slow in the Inland Empire office market this year, the combination of tight inventory and pipelines remains full. Builders are expected to deliver $800,000 square feet of office space in 2006 after completing 1.3 million square feet last year.
- **Vacancy Forecast**: Employment growth will generate sufficient office demand to keep pace with this year's new supply. As a result, vacancy is expected to end 2006 at 9.1 percent, equivalent to the year-end 2005 figure.
- **2006 NOI Rank Forecast**: Strong gains in nonfarm employment are expected this year, with employers poised to add 40,000 workers, an increase of 3.4 percent. Office-using firms will expand payrolls 4.6 percent, adding more than 8,600 jobs.

The Dreaded Letter From the IRS

Have you ever gotten a letter regarding your tax return from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)? It doesn't exactly create a warm, fuzzy feeling. In fact, IRS mail often conjures up a feeling of dread, some of which is not warranted. The first actions to take when receiving such a letter are to remain calm and read the correspondence. Ignoring it is usually the least common way taxpayers increase any problems. Letters from the IRS generally fall into the following categories:

- **They ask minor questions or seek additional information.**
- **They send a refund.**
- **They notify you of an adjustment on your return.**
- **They confirm an address change.**

In our experience, less than one percent of the correspondence our clients receive ever end up with an audit and over 90 percent can be handled with no money ever being paid to the IRS,” relates Dawn J. Renner, CPA, MBA of Marathon, MN about her tax and business clientele.

Keep in mind that the IRS never initiates correspondence with taxpayers via e-mail. There have been fraudulent attempts to extract personal information under the guise of collecting information “from the IRS.” Any IRS e-mail notices should be suspect, so do not respond to any e-mail:

- **mail before calling the IRS at 800.829.1040 to verify validity.**
- **This year has been an especially bad year with doomsday e-mail notices soliciting information by promising tax refunds.**

When you receive the IRS mail correspondence, look at both sides of any pages carefully to determine any action needed. “Look for the back of the letter/explanation. One taxpayer called and said he received a letter stating he had $3,750 additional income and he owed $5,000 in tax. The back of the letter contained the explanation of a $700 of unreported income that he completely missed,” alerts Marilyn Meredith, an NATP tax professional in Portland, OR.

Find the tax year to which the correspondence refers—frequently it is for a past year, not current. Read the test to see what is at issue, and compare it to your tax return for the year in question. Sometimes you may agree with the information and no further action is necessary. However, if you do not agree, you may need to take the necessary steps to resolve the issue, which may include writing to the IRS with specific documentation to support your claim. If you need to respond, ALWAYS keep copies of all correspondence.

Instructions should be clearly spelled out within the correspondence, including phone numbers to call and often includes a response form to complete and mail back to the IRS.

The value of this service cannot be overstated. It is estimated that 70% of IRS mail is not related to an audit, but to the promotions of individual tax return preparers. In order to combat the issue of IRS misuse, a new, simple, and low-cost solution is available. The IRS has been required to give the taxpayer specific documentation to support their case. In the past this was difficult and time consuming. This new service is a time saver and a stress reliever. This new IRS correspondence response service is not intended to replace professional advice on specific tax situations. The value is an overview of the correspondence and a problem solving approach can be offered. You may still require the services of a professional tax preparer to resolve the IRS issue.

The IRS can be intimidating. When you receive a letter from the IRS, don’t panic. Take a few minutes to read the letter carefully. If you are uncertain of what you are looking at, call the IRS directly (1-800-829-1040) and ask for an explanation. It is always better to be over-prepared and have too much information than not enough.
Shifting focus, we see a need for increasing housing in parts of Southern California. However, this need is further complicated by higher affordability concerns compared to other parts of the region. The cost of living, as well as the overall affordability of housing, is a significant challenge.

The Realty Advisors, a private equity fund, has acquired a large parcel of land in Murrieta, a growing area just south of Highway 71. This parcel, located at 3811 Schaefer Ave., is next to Route 71 and just south of Highway 60. The property, which currently houses 110 tenants, sold for $32 million ($150/sf). It is zoned for mixed-use development and is being marketed by Hanover Financial Company.

The Realty Advisors, a 43-year-old multi-fund management firm headquartered in Costa Mesa, has purchased Spectrum Business Center, a 214,000 sf industrial park located at 3811 Schaefer Ave., along State Route 71 and just south of Highway 60. The complex, which currently houses 110 tenants, is zoned for mixed-use development.

The Realty Advisors' investor, a private equity fund, has acquired this property, which was previously owned by HB Chino Realty LLC, a venture between Birtcher Development & Investments and LA-based Hanover Financial Company.

The Realty Advisors owns and manages over $2.5 billion in real estate in Southern California and is currently expanding its footprint in the region. The company has a track record of acquiring and developing mixed-use properties with a focus on providing affordable housing options for the growing population.

In conclusion, the Realty Advisors' acquisition of the Spectrum Business Center in Murrieta is a significant step towards increasing housing affordability in Southern California. The company's continued focus on mixed-use development and affordable housing options will play a crucial role in meeting the growing demand for affordable housing in the region.
Help is Needed in the Desert

The Unforgettables Foundation, which supplies burial money to financially struggling families when a child dies, has a desire to begin a chapter in the Coachella Valley area. The six-year-old, non-profit, recently named San Bernardino County Service Agency of the Year for 2005/2006, and the LA Times Foundation of the Year in its first full year 2000/2001, has assisted over 900 families from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Unforgettables is looking to begin a board of representatives from desert communities such as Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs to Palm Desert and Rancho Mirage and down valley to Indio, Coachella, and Thermal—all towns where residents have received funeral support since 1996.

Dr. Sherwin, MD—a pediatric ER physician serving at Loma Linda Children’s Hospital and at VIP Urgent Care in Rancho Mirage (and was the first board chair of The Unforgettables Foundation in 2000-2002) will be heading up the development of the new desert branch. To date, the foundation has assisted around 200 Coachella Valley families, with at least one case helped in all area cities. The foundation is looking for representatives from communities who are passionate about confronting the causes and consequences of childhood death—ages birth to 18, for any cause of death—from cancer, heart disease and AIDS, to SIDS and congenital anomalies, to sickle cell, CF, and accidents, like drownings. Contact 909-855-3130 or Dr. Sherwin at 909-797-1054 if you are interested.

Congratulations! You're Fired!

by Dr. Andy Edelman
Web Site: www.drandyedelman.com

Whether letting someone go for poor performance or downsizing an entire division because of declining company profits, the stress of firing for all concerns can be enormous. In fact, failing to plan and execute a sound procedure for firing can result in needless stress and anxiety, as well as potentially costly instances of litigation or retaliation. Although every layout process, protective managers must master the art of termination in order to maintain operational performance, ethical standards and, at the same time, prevent any potential incidents of workplace violence.

1. Hire tough, manage easy

Steps 2 through 10 would probably not be necessary if recruitment, selection, training and retention efforts helped to match the best people with your organizational values and mission. It is far more advisable to spend the time, money and energy on hiring the right people than it is to deal with the challenges of managing and ultimately firing the wrong ones. This should be a partnership effort between human resources and executive leadership to ensure that the organization brings on board the "best and the brightest who are willing and able.

2. Spread the word

Let each new hire know the organization's expectations, standard operating procedures, and consequences for any breach of conduct or performance. It is far more difficult for a terminated employee to escape to violence if the end-game outcomes are shared from the very first day of orientation training.

3. Plan with precision

Managers should put a systematic plan in place for the inevitable firing process and headed by those with the best people skills. Every step in this process must be planned for and should include "What if...?" contingency plans. For example, it is ill-advised to terminate an employee on a Friday afternoon or right before a holiday. Develop a keen understanding of the dynamics of dealing with an individual whose source of livelihood and personal and professional self-esteem have just been jeopardized. Reactions by terminated employees can range from calm, resigned acceptance and compliance to more volatile defense mechanisms such as total denial, emotional outbursts, and in some instances physical violence. Managers that plan for each potential scenario are far more likely to achieve a peaceful exit interview.

4. Set the stage

Termination proceedings should be held in a location free from prying eyes or a potential audience. The room should be neutral and without distractions (and company banners and logos which could inflame already sensitive emotions) and should be free of any objects that could be damaged or used as weapons. In addition, at least sev­eral persons should be present including a designated security re­presentative during the exit interview to ensure accurate documentation while maintaining a safe environment in cases of verbal or physical escalation.

California Joins the Phish Fight

by J. Allen Leinberger

Here at the Business Journal we must understand that we cannot say enough about Internet fraud. In this column, and in other feature reports, we continue to warn our readers to be ever vigilant. Still the best of people, including many close to us, have fallen victim to one scam or another. And so we con­tinue to report on the battle to bring down this 21st century form of deceit.

Now comes word from Sacramento of efforts by the state of California to help combat these electronic abuses.

Attorney General Bill Lockyer is now cautioning California consumers to avoid recent and ongoing identity theft schemes that target customers of banks, online auction sites and other businesses with phony e-mails designed to steal victims’ account numbers, other personal information and money.

"Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes of our times, and the perpetrators many of them on these high-tech phishing expeditions," said Lockyer. "Consumers should be on the lookout for, and studiously delete, unsolicited e-mails that are dressed up to look legitimate and play on the fear of ID theft to steal victims’ identities and their money. I know Californians right now are being flooded with this particularly harmful form of spam because many of them have computers." A Pew Research Center study found that 146 of these phishing messages per day were delivered to consumers during the first six months of 2005.

Some 2.2 million people every year have their IDs stolen through phishing schemes, according to some published reports. The Gartner Group con­sists of nearly 1.4 million IDs that, in 2005, phishing cost consumers nationwide roughly $1 billion.

One of the latest, ongoing phishing scams targets Chase Bank customers. The phony e-mails, many of which list their address as reward@chase.net, tempt recipients with the promise of a $20 or $100 credit on their accounts if they simply complete an online survey. The survey requires recipients to provide such ID theft material as PIN number, Social Security number, credit card number and mother’s maiden name. According to Department of Justice (DOJ) e­mail boxes have received at least 146 of these phishing messages in the past five weeks.

Another Chase Bank-related phishing spam has come into DOJ e-mail boxes, with all such messages now totaling at least 236 and climbing. The other Chase phishing scammers try to steal personal information by telling recipients false­hoods as: unauthorized third par­ties have accessed their accounts; Chase needs to con­firm personal data because the bank is implementing a software upgrade; services will be terminated unless renewed immedi­ately; and Chase is launching a new security system.

This Holiday Season, Give The Gift Of A Smile

by Andy Leinberger

Nor will it this season. The Smile Train makes us feel like children. No, this is not a review of the holiday movie, it is the mission of The Smile Train. We empower local surgeons to provide this life changing free cleft surgery which takes as little as 45 minutes and costs as little as $50. It gives desperate children not just a new smile—but a new life.

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IS WORKPLACE HAPPINESS A BUSINESS DECISION?

Want a more positive workplace where you and your coworkers feel happy and motivated? Want to make customers happier so that their loyalty - and your profits - grow? Want to work more efficiently and effectively and improve your health? Authentic Happiness Coach and Customer Loyalty expert JoAnna Brandt shares tips for transforming these wants into "haves." Her overall message: Happiness creates resilient employees who, in turn, create resilient, thriving companies.

As an Authentic Happiness Coach, my goal is "to raise the tonnage of happiness on the planet" - especially in the workplace. I spoke about the benefits of "workplace happiness" recently at the annual Customer Care Institute Forum in Atlanta, Georgia.

What's happiness got to do with customer care and loyalty? Everything. The level of happiness you feel is largely in your control. When you're happy it's much easier to create happiness for the customer. According to Martin Seligman, the founder of "positive psychology" with whom I studied to become an Authentic Happiness Coach, there's plenty of evidence being happy has far reaching business benefits.

Research proves that positive feelings reduce stress, build up the immune system and even enable people to think more holistically - to be open to new ideas and solve problems more quickly, efficiently and intelligently. Happy employees have a broader range of options to draw from; they are more creative and helpful. They are better equipped emotionally to create happy, loyal, referral generating customers. Ultimately, happy employees are more resilient.

They help create resilient companies - ones that can withstand the challenges of an ever changing, increasingly competitive marketplace.

To get started at adding happiness to your customer care tool kit, it helps to practice eight happiness factors that are in your control. No matter what personality you were born with, no matter what your circumstances are, you can boost your feelings of happiness by taking charge of these eight factors:

1) OPTIMISM. Despite what people say, optimism can be learned. It's about perspective, how a person chooses to interpret and explain what he experiences during the day. We're continuously making choices about how we explain the world to ourselves. If something challenging occurs and you think, "Just my luck. Bad things always happen to me," you are reducing your happiness. You can change your

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QUALITY, DURABILITY & RELIABILITY — Inside and out, quality has never been more evident in the 2007 Camry. Fit and finish, a Toyota trademark, along with the use of quality materials and textures distinguishes Camry’s fresh, new interior design. While on the exterior, tight-fitting body panels and special sound-dampening materials further reduce road noise and offer an exceptionally quiet, comfortable ride.

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Life at the Top of the (Double) Tree

Bassam Shahin has been promoted to general manager of the DoubleTree Hotel on Vineyard in Ontario. That is only slightly different from his old title as hotel manager.

The difference includes the fact that he had an area director general manager over him before. Now he's in charge. Not that it makes much difference.

Shahin slyly tells the Business Journal that he has always done things his way, only now he has the title to back him up. He's always done things his way, only now he has the title to back him up.

The DoubleTree's remodelled coffee shop now features breakfast and a gift shop, and Porter's Prime Steak House lives up to its name with prime cuts of meat.

Misty's Lounge is one of the five nightclubs left in the area. Shahin is looking forward to the attraction of its live music, presenting seven nights a week, featuring Vegas acts among others.

Shahin began at the DoubleTree as its food and beverage director. Today, he is responsible for all of the DoubleTree's jobs as he has hired and proudly considers his new position to be his best job he has ever held--in a hotel that he is happy to declare as the best in the area.

As with many of the new breed of innkeepers, Shahin recognizes the need to make sure the facility is very much a part of the city that it serves. For example, although the DoubleTree Hotel is technically in competition with the Ontario Convention Center, right next door, for convention and meeting business, it is not uncommon for Shahin to work hand in hand with Bob Brown and his staff at OCC on special projects and events.

The DoubleTree's remodelled also presents cases nationally and internationally and has most recently won an award at the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery annual meeting in San Francisco. He is also a principal investigator for the NIDEK Exper- t Hyperopic Study, a national research study examining the effects of LASIK on far-sighted vision.

Why trust your vision to anyone else? Loma Linda University Health Care Ophthalmology has remained among the leading vision care providers in the Inland Empire. Make an appointment for a free LASIK consultation by calling 909.558.2020.

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tophthalmology journals, and reviews research papers for many eye care organizations including Ophthalmology and the Journal of Cataract and Refractive Surgery. Dr. Navarez

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happily by choosing to think, "Hmmm. There must be something good about this situation - what could it be?" The power of optimism is not to be minimized - evidence shows that optimism lives nine to 10 years longer than people who are not optimistic.

2) GRATITUDE. Conscious ly and deliberately take moments throughout the day to feel grateful, and to express it to others. To get businesses on board with this idea, I've advised them to start an "employee gratitude journal" in which everyone is encouraged to write down something for which they're grateful every day. They're always amazed at how powerful this inexpensive, quick and easy exercise is in creating a positive work environment and helping to transform the culture.

3) FORGIVENESS. Letting go of it will toward others and oneself, surrendering resentment and regret, and making peace with the past clears the way for happiness to be felt more often and more deeply.

4) IMPROVE YOUR SELF-TALK. It's important to transform your self-talk from negative and punishing to positive and energizing. When things don't take and find yourself thinking, "You idiot," you know it's time to take a deep breath, and ask yourself, "How can I use my smarts to make this better?" Positive self-talk diffuses stressful situations, and when the brain relaxes, it is more creative and better at problem solving.

5) FLOW. "Is there any interest, activity or hobby you enjoy so much that you lose track of time when you're engaged in it? That state of being is often described by choosing to think, "Hmmm. There must be something good about this situation - what could it be?" The power of optimism is not to be minimized - evidence shows that optimism lives nine to 10 years longer than people who are not optimistic.

6) SAVOR. Savoring is about being in the moment. The great thing about savoring is that you can do it before an activity by happily anticipating what's to come, you can do it while you're enjoying the activity, and you can savor your memories afterward.

Savoring is a powerful tool!

7) REFRAME. This tool, for shifting your perspective. Look at a stressful situation as if it were an actual photograph, and think about the dozens of ways you could reframe it. You can crop it, enlarge it, make it smaller. Whatever you do, you're creating a different view and perspective of the same picture, which can help you to transform negative feelings and responses to a situation into positive, happier ones.

8) BUILD on STRENGTHS. Research shows that enduring happiness comes from spending time on one's strengths - having the opportunity to do the things one does well even better. Identify your strengths, then deliberately and creatively build on them. Evidence shows that over time, this skill works best at creating lasting happiness than antidepressants.

When you choose to be happy, you're choosing to create and work with a powerful business tool. Happiness restores humanity to the workplace so that everyone thrives in every way. The emotional well being of employees and customers is directly linked to a company's profitability and resilience. Be happy and enjoy the rewards!

For more information, visit www.customercoaching.com

INLAND EMPIRE HOUSING MARKET IS "NORMALIZING" by Les Whitley

The is definitely a wind of change in the Southern California housing market. Not necessarily a bad change, but a change nevertheless. As someone who's been involved in the real estate industry for 15 plus years, I believe a more normal market is a good one for everyone involved -- builders, buyers, landowners -- especially in light of the rapidly increasing land and home prices that have characterized the Inland Empire housing market, as well as Southern California.

As housing prices stabilize, so do mortgage rates, and as prices stabilize, more potential buyers will return to the market, fueling greater demand for homes and land. Besides, the Inland Empire will continue to be Southern California's affordable housing alternative, even with record prices. Another factor that bodes well for the Inland Empire housing market is the future population growth that is expected for southern California, and which is fueled by both affordable housing prices and jobs. According to Inland Empire Economist Dr. Peter Lefcourt, the next decade will be the fastest growing urban area of California.
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because of fraudulent activity on members' accounts.

Chase, which does not send customers e-mails that require the recipients to provide confidential personal information in a response, is investigating the account-crash scam.

Additionally, the bank provides customers' information about phishing schemes and how to avoid them on its Web site at www.chase.com. DOJ e-mail boxes over the past five weeks have received other phishing spam targeting customers of Pay Pal, eBay and several banks, including Bank of America, Citibank and Barclays.' All told, the phishing e-mails numbered at least 343 as of today. Locke was urged to discourage such businesses and others to visit the companies' legitimate Web sites to learn about e-mail scams and how to avoid becoming a victim of ID theft. Locke said he would not contact businesses that seem to be the biggest targets of phishing e-mails to explore the possibility of launching a cooperative effort to investigate the scams. Potentially, an investigation could lead to filing enforcement actions against perpetrators for violations of federal and state anti-spam laws, consumer protection laws and ID theft-related statutes.

 Locke noted, however, that tracking down the senders of illegal spam, including phishing e-mails, is a tough task. Many such communications originate outside the county in such locations as Eastern Europe and Asia. One online security firm traced the Chase account-crash phishing e-mail scam to China. In fact, despite the best efforts of law enforcement, regulators and ISPs, spam remains growing, persistent and costly problem. The spam portion of all e-mail has risen steadily, increasing from eight percent in 2001, to 62 percent in March 2004, to nearly 70 percent by March of this year. In 2005, experts estimated spam cost U.S. businesses about $17 billion in lost productivity, customer screening and other expenses. Locke said the difficulties faced by law enforcement and the private sector in stopping spam increase the importance of consumer education efforts, as well as the alert he issued today.

"By providing anti-fraud information on their Web sites, businesses are doing their part to provide customers the information they need to identify scams and protect themselves," said Locke. "I urge consumers to use these tools — and their delete buttons."

Californians who receive phishing and other spam at their e-mail addresses should send examples to the Attorney General's Office at caspam@doj.ca.gov.

Even as we write this report, spams continue to come in from Nigeria offering great wealth to the gullible. The latest involves a rich Nigerian widow who will marry you in order to get her riches out to an American bank.

While companies like AOL are doing what they can to protect us, it appears that such messages sent from other countries cannot be stopped.
It's Not All About Me: Seven Key Strategies for Thriving in the Corporate World

By Allison Lewis

The world is upside down. The 1980's and 1990's began with a sense that self-growth and self-acknowledgement would bring people happiness and allow corporate executives to achieve their personal goals. The world has changed. It is not what you do for yourself that will make the greatest impact on your career future, rather it is how you focus your ability to achieve those dreams.

3. Allow Yourself and Those Around You to Align Their Purpose With Their Purpose In Life

Purpose is what we do for others. Are you a leader, encourager, team member, comforter, team member, visionaire? What is your purpose? And how can sharing your purpose with your company make an impact on your company's future?

Executives need to know and understand the purpose of those around them. A person's purpose is their heartbeat. Their purpose drives them and when you allow them to align their purpose with their daily activities at work, their potential grows exponentially. Their contributions to your success will grow exponentially as well.

Employees often wait for a supervisor to ask what their driving purpose in life is. But this might never happen. Instead, employees need to take the initiative to hold this crucial conversation and allow their boss the right to utilize the knowledge and talents that revolve around their purpose.

4. Acknowledge Your Goals

Your goals tell you what to do with your life and how to serve others. Your goals closely link to your purpose in life because they show what you want to accomplish in the pursuit of that purpose. When you have a clear vision of how you want to live your life, you are one step closer to fully understanding and fulfilling your purpose. Goals can be personal or professional, tiny or grand, achieved tomorrow or aimed at achievements extend years down the road.

Encourage those around you to create positive written goals. Encourage them to vividly express where they want to be five years from now.
In the 35 tax seasons I have been preparing 1040s, I have found that more than half of the IRS notices that assess additional federal tax are incorrect," says NATP member Robert D. Flach of Jersey City, N.J. author of The Wardy Tax Pro web log. "I advise my clients to never ignore an IRS notice, but also to not immediately assume that the IRS notice is correct. I have my clients send me any correspondence they receive from the IRS immediately."

Members of the National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP) assist over seven million taxpayers with tax preparation and planning. NATP is a non-profit professional association founded in 1979 and provides professional education, tax research, and products to its members. The national headquarters, located in Appleton, WI, employs 41 professionals and 25 instructors.

SALES

Uncover More Opportunity—Ask Great Questions
by Suzanne Bates

A salesperson is a professional. The secret to success in business is not the words "I" or the words "you." It's not you, it's "me," is a classic, cliché breakup line and a bad one, at that. "Me, me, me" is what most business people talk about during an ownership meeting. My company, my product, my service is the leading, the best, the only, the blah, blah, blah. It's interesting that the secret to success in business is not the word "me," but the word "you." Count the words in the average conversation or sales letter, chances are the words "I" and "my" are used far more than the words "you" and "your." Yet all people want to talk about is them!

Salespeople can set themselves apart and uncover far more opportunity if they begin every conversation by focusing on the "you" point of view. "How do you see it?" "What's your take on this?" "How would you like to see this resolved?" Try asking a question without using the word you! It isn't easy. Switching into "question mode" forces a salesperson to use the word "you," which leads to opportunities.

A lot of people believe they are asking good questions—but if they were to videotape mock sales or business conversations, they can see their questions are not productive. The mistake they make is not going deep enough to uncover real issues, challenges, and needs.

Consider this:

If an office was in need of a new copier, they would shop around and look at a few different models, at a few different stores. Which one would they end up buying? The model from the sales representative who asked the right questions to that. Many people prepare for an important meeting by buffing up on their specialties, by practicing their routine speech about what they're good at. A salesperson will stand out from the rest if they go into the meeting or presentation with a list of questions that delve into what the other needs or thinks.

Good questions encourage people to open up. This is one of the most powerful assets in selling ideas, products or services. Open questions work best in this phase of conversation.

Here are a few examples of great questions:

1. What could we do to make this a good meeting, well worth your time?
2. What are your goals?
3. What is the biggest challenge you're facing right now?
4. What is it costing you in time/money/resources?
5. What would be an ideal outcome?
6. Is there anything else we need to talk about today?

For more information, please visit www.bates-communications or call 800-903-8239.

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ộied Citizens Business Bank as its new assistant vice president and business development officer for the Riverside business financial center. Gould's professional career incorporates over 12 years of experience in the marketing and sales arena. Prior to joining Citizens Business Bank, Gould was a marketing manager for Ingram Micro in Santa Ana, CA where he was responsible for business development, strategic marketing plans and sales.

1ST Centennial Bancorp parent holding company announced first quarter operating results. They reported earnings of $1.7 million, compared to earnings of $1.0 million for the first quarter 2005. This represents a 70%, or $706,000 increase. Basic earnings per share were 54 cents for the current quarter compared to 32 cents for the same period last year. Diluted earnings per share were 50 cents for the current quarter compared to 30 cents for the same period last year.
Union Dues Spent on Golf, Cadillac, Resorts, and Even Wal-Mart
New Union V4 Financial Information Available and Searchable on UnionFacts.com

Revised financial reporting requirements by the Department of Labor (DOL) are exposing union leaders spending with unprecedented clarity. On March 31, most major unions filled their LM-2 financial disclosure forms with the government, and jaw-dropping expenditures are already easy to find.

The search function on www.unionfacts.com, making sense of the mountains of union financial data is simple. A preliminary look revealed the following:

• Nearly $1.5 million in union members’ dues money was spent on golf.
• The Ironworkers AFL-CIO Local Union 40 spent $52,879 on a new Cadillac for a retiring president.
• $7.9 million of employee dues money went to resort expenditures.
• The Boilermakers AFL-CIO Local 374 spent $8,800 of employee dues money on Christmas gifts at Wal-Mart, despite the labor movement’s smear campaign against the retailer.
• Between six AFL-CIO locals, over $50,000 of employee dues money was spent at a single D.C. steakhouse.

The AFL-CIO alone spent over $49 million on political activities and lobbying expenses, nearly all of which is spent quarterly on in-kind political expenditures like pro-Kerry brochures and Websites. That’s almost 20 million more than it spent on representation activities.

“The increased transparency of union spending will be especially meaningful to union members who are getting their first candid look at how their mandatory union dues are spent by labor officials,” said Richard Berman executive director of the Center for Union Facts. “The 40 percent of union members who voted for George W. Bush might be interested to know just how much of their dues money went to support John Kerry.”

To learn more visit www.UnionFacts.com.
The Great Dave & Buster Cheeseburger

by Joe Lyons

OK, so what is your favorite hamburger? Around the office we argue the merits of that topic. The Popularity of the Big Mac. The Southern Californian icon that is the Double Double. However, Dave & Buster's Cheeseburger is now available near the Mills Mall. I can now toss into the mix, the Dave and Buster's Jim Beam burger. No, it does not contain bourbon. It does, however, feature a Jim Beam BBQ sauce.

I really did not play to enjoy it so much. I was already in a bad mood when I got there. Then I had to wait for an hour to be seated. They really need to do something about that.

Then I found out that the Dave & Buster gift card that I had won at a local chamber of commerce event was only worth $25. Not the $50 I had been promised.

To add to my disappointment, my waiter informed me that, had I been there an hour earlier, I could have gotten a free $10 playing card for the arcade section of the facility. I told him that, in fact, I actually had been there an hour earlier so I just couldn't be served. Sorry "bout that.

Next the drinks got screwed up. My wife, who only drinks diet, got afully loaded soda. One up just sent her up to the roof. Sorry "bout that, also. I expected that would have been the last straw. Remember, we were only having half of the meal we had counted on.

The wife's Caesar salad turned out to be outstanding. She loved it. How was my Dave & Buster's Jim Beam burger in the Island Empire? I know how I cast my vote. I just hope the next time the chamber holds a drawing, I win the $50 gift card. I was saving room for dessert.

The sauce actually was different. I say that because there are a lot of BBQ sauces out there and most of them are alike. Don't say that to the people who created them because everyone loves to think that their own special recipe can't be beat. Usually politely nod and congratulate the sauce creator and wonder what the color of the sky is in the world. The Jim Beam burger is different. It is delicious. It is special. Just sitting there, several days later, writing about it.

A year ago, my sister-in-law and husband were at a diner, eating a apple pie, a small room, a stage room, golf course, baseball, an entire festival, a dining room, a private dining room, a bar and other sites that are not sure of their purpose. Finding the restrooms is always an adventure. Kids line up to win tickets to exchange for prizes. Kids know I can be found having drinks with women who are not their wives. There is usually a birthday party or a bridal shower going on somewhere.

Dave and Buster's is practically a mall within the mall. It is a virtual event center. But the one hour wait for dinner is quite unnecessary. All of this not withstanding, the next time the conversation comes around to Dave & Buster's, I'll have to say that the burger in the Island Empire, I know how I cast my vote. I just hope the next time the chamber holds a drawing, I win the $50 gift card. I was saving room for dessert.
Business Planning: Charting Your Success to a Business Outcome by Bob Garrow

Successful pirates, such as Sir Francis Drake, generated phenomenal wealth while unsuccessful pirates faced a long swim home. What made the difference? The answer was simple: the planning process, which they had committed to. Follow the existence of a plan did not guarantee success, but pirates who had not committed whole-heartedly to a plan had little chance of succeeding.

The same is true today. We have chart, then stick to, a course that will build our success. The unexpected happens. We may be deviated off our planned course by storms, but the stronger our commitment to our plan, the quicker we get back on course and continue our journey to success.

It is the planning process, rather than the plan itself that is most important. The pirate planning process involved three steps:

Step #1: Build Commitment

Everything else being equal, commitment wins every time. The business planning process creates a genuine opportunity to build commitment. Early pirates were an unruly, quarrelsome lot. They quickly learned that they got nowhere, until they had generated a solid commitment to work together to steal and share treasures!

Pirate captains were the first to discover that people best implement a plan when they are committed, responsible for following their plan, and held them accountable for following their plan. As a result, pirate practices were built into the plan:

• They would vote on the plan, and everyone would be held accountable for following the plan.
• They would use rules of conduct that would make any deviation from the plan very costly.
• How they would divide any and all treasures to be found.

With agreement on these points, pirates elected their captain and held them accountable for following their plan. The pirate practice of "getting everyone on board" before sailing is still a great idea. People today, like the pirates of yesteryear, best implement decisions that they helped to make.

In larger organizations, senior management will usually develop its purpose, objectives and corporate strategies. The next step, but one that is often overlooked, is to then assign responsibilities and accountabilities throughout the organization. Each team at every level is asked to develop its own game plan for achieving its goals, which in turn dovetail into the corporate goals. Properly done, this process will help to strengthen the sense of ownership of, and commitment to, decisions made.

Step #2: Discover Your Best Opportunities

Pirates found that the world's oceans were huge, that they would rapidly wear out their sails and rigging, and go a long time between captured treasures, if they chose to chase ships all over the world. To overcome this, they had to develop a sense for where the world's oceans covered in their pursuit of treasures.

It was true of pirates and it's still true today. You cannot be all things to all people. Some areas are served better by us than by any other organization. As you compete with and without competitors, you must understand the possibilities behind each suggestion before ever doing so.

Step #3: Innovate to Success

Only a very small percentage of businesses make a lot of money. Most businesses fall into the trap of matching competitive pricing that squeezes profit margins. Faced with such intense competition, pirates would innovate sufficiently to outsmart their opponents or sail away to find another situation where they could be successful. What they would never do is stay in a situation where they could not thrive.

Today's leaders have similar choices. They can craft innovative strategies to serve current customers so well that they leave their competitors behind, or find new and more profitable markets to serve.

While competition is not a big factor for pirates, battles at sea were part of their daily lives. They quickly learned that they got nowhere, until they had generated a solid commitment, and everyone was held accountable for following their plan. As a result, pirate practices were built into the plan:

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To maximize your crew's innovative thinking capacity do the following:

1. Move your business planning session off site. Rent a meeting room, or someone else's boardroom.
2. Allow time for people to shift their way of thinking away from their own position in the company to look at issues from a purely corporate perspective.
3. Provide adequate time for discussions to take place.
4. Have each person energize their sessions, stimulate innovative ideas and manage discussions.
5. Listen proactively to each and every suggestion. Strive to truly understand the possibilities behind each suggestion before ever rejecting any idea.
6. Generate humor and comic relief to keep the energy level high.

The key is to draw out the very best in those around you. Providing a forum where people are allowed to think and act outside their current job description will allow them to be more productive. Reward success and create a strong feeling of a job well done. Long-term profits will follow.

About the Office of Technology Transfer and Commercialization (OTT)

OTT (http://www.ottc.ccrd.dla.mil) is a privately-held small business. In Southern California, OTTC provides the intent to develop intelligent battery charging technology that could charge batteries faster and more efficiently, while at the same time adding to usable battery life. Receiving its first contract from Naval Air Systems Command in 2002, their initial research focused on Department of Defense directed research and development projects to DC to DC charging systems. This intelligent charging technology development continues with additional research and development contracts from Naval Air Systems Command, Office of Naval Research and U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command.

The Office of Technology Commercialization (OTTC) is now transferring and applying its proven charging technology to the Department of Energy and other Federal agencies.

About GEM Power

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The Office of Technology Commercialization (OTTC) is now transferring and applying its proven charging technology to the Department of Energy and other Federal agencies.

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Sam Crowe, chairman of the board of the Inland Empire Small Business Financial Development Corporation (IESBFDC), announced the appointment of two new members to its board of directors. Sam Crowe, (IESBFDC-FC) chairman of the board, welcomed Jerry NanteU, regional vice president senior commercial lender of Canyon National Bank, located in Palm Desert. IESBFDC would also like to welcome Gene Valdez, senior vice president, sales and marketing manager of Inland Empire National Bank located in Riverside. Valdez has over 30 years of experience in commercial lending. Gene, a veteran Paul Ryan, has been named general manager of Fantasy Springs Resort Casino & Special Events Center by East Valley Tourist Development Authority, a subsidiary of the resort's owners, the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians. Ryan brings with him more than 25 years of casino and hotel management experience from Atlantic City, NJ. Since 2003, the 49-year-old Ryan has served as executive vice president of hotel and food and beverage operations for Trump Entertainment Resorts Inc. which included the 1,250-room Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort, the 728-room Trump Hotel Casino and the 903-room Trump Plaza Hotel & Casino. His involvement over the course of 3,000, including six upper-level vice presidents... Shelley L. Flener, has joined Temecula Valley Bank, as its executive vice president. With over 35 years in banking, Flener has real estate finance management experience and leadership wisdom. Prior to joining the bank, Flener served as key senior management figure for 20 years with Citizens Business Bank...
Vibrant Sydney - A Touch of Down Under

by Camille Bounds Travel Editor

Climb a bridge, cruise a harbor, visit a unique world famous opera house and see one of the largest fish markets on this planet. Dance with the divas, relax at some of the finest spas and the most luxurious service-oriented hotels anywhere in the world. Dine at the finest restaurants with gourmet menus that make Zagat and Michelin drool. Fly with an airline that makes it comfortable and easy to get there. This is all there for your enjoyment and pleasure in Sydney, Australia.

Sydney is to Australia as San Francisco is to the United States, or Paris is to France. It is completely unique from the rest of this “down under” island. You can never say you have seen Australia if you have only been to Sydney. Yet it is a welcome contrast to a continent that seems incredibly remote and isolated to the average urbanized traveler.

There is a relaxed extra-friendly atmosphere just about everywhere you go, with a glorious mix of humanity from around the globe. Neighborhoods with the foods and cultures of Indonesians, East Indians, Vietnamese, South Pacific Islanders and, of course, the original Aboriginal people, make up only a small part of this grand mix of modern-day Sydney. “Sydneysiders” are as happy, congenial and laid back as one can get. You might say Sydney is not only a place to visit but also gives the feeling of a great place to live.

Sydney has a rich, gutsy history that reads like a fictional novel. In 1787, the area was populated by about 3000 Aborigines; in 1788, the first fleet arrived from England. Convicts, sailors and soldiers were to be the settlers of the area. Governed at one time by the infamous Captain Bligh (before his well-documented sea voyage) and a series of governors after him, Sydney evolved in a little over 200 years into an industrial giant and tourist haven.

The weather is almost always warm and balmy and the glistening Sydney Harbor makes it one of the world’s most beautiful cities offering some of the best in dining, sports, culture, and nightlife. The stunning Sydney Opera House is one of the outstanding attractions of Sydney. It hosts performances by top international talents in addition to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Ballet and the Sydney Theatre Company. There are tours of this interesting architectural marvel as well as backstage tours of the theatres. Family-owned Captain Cook’s Cruise gives the opportunity to mentally organize the harbor with cruises about Sydney’s landmarks and history of the area.

Climbing to the top of the Sydney Harbor Bridge is a once in a lifetime exhilarating experience. Professional climb leaders prep and dress the guests for the climb. Safety is the first consideration of the climb leaders. Throughout the climb, through the earphones that are supplied, they will explain the fascinating history of the building of the bridge. A photo of the arrival at the top is included in the ticket.

For some offbeat evening fun, take a Sydney by Diva tour. Here a guide takes the tour bus on a boisterously interactive, entertaining tour explaining the culture and history of the city with a professional very entertaining drag queen. Absolutely non-offensive and a ton of fun. This is all only a slight brush of what is available in this lively pulsating city.

Where to stay in Sydney: Near the waterfront and alongside the famous Rocks area is the exquisite Observatory Hotel, a part of the prestigious Orient-Express Hotels. Distinctive and with understated elegance, guests are a stroll away from the main harbor and ferry wharves. Noted for excellent service and serene atmosphere, this is a place to relax and enjoy the ambiance of an intimate, first-class hotel with a view of the Sydney Harbor Bridge and the famous Sydney Opera House. The rooms are luxurious with every amenity available, including state-of-the-art, high-speed broadband Internet access, for the astute business traveler. CD, VCR and DVD players are available in rooms.

The Galileo Restaurant offers fine 5-star Franco-Japanese cuisine with unmatched service. An impressive wine list is available. Stocked with choice liquors, liqueurs and wines, the Globe Bar can supply the finest pre- and after-dinner drinks to the complete satisfaction of the guest.

A beautiful, romantic 20-meter subterranean indoor pool, with a star-studded ceiling, generates a relaxed setting to unwind from a long trip. The Observatory is the home of The “Rejuvenate” the most exclusive day spa in Sydney. It offers a comprehensive menu of services with an experienced staff.

The Observatory has garnered just about every distinguished award internationally and domestically for impeccable service, cuisine and hotel property. This superb place, that is more than a fine hotel, is a little bit of Eden in the middle of a vibrant bustling city.

For information and reservations visit www.observatoryhotel.com.au

The Sheraton on the Park boasts 24 luxurious floors of beauty and convenience. This lovely hotel rises majestically over Hyde Park with stunning views of Sydney and the harbor. Located in the center of Sydney’s shopping and business district, and minutes from all transportation, makes it an ideal choice for business meetings and visitors. A complete business center with executive secretarial services is available seven days a week. Rooms are spacious, comfortable and tastefully furnished. The bathrooms are beautifully designed with black marble with lovely paintings in the rooms and refreshingly found over the commode and bathtub. Fine dining can be found throughout the hotel. The outstanding Botanica Brasserie on level one offers one of the most spectacular buffets ever to grace our planet. It is a true “dining experience” with station after station of food prepared and presented in the finest manner. The Executive Club Lounge on the 21st floor offers quiet elegance for breakfast or snacking or just a cup of tea or coffee during the day, and pre-dinner drinks are served in the evening. The panoramic view will take your breath away. A health club features a complete gymnasium and an indoor heated pool and spa. A fully-equipped business center completes this fine property. For reservations and rates visit www.sheraton.com/sydney

How to get there:

Qantas airlines offer non-stop flights to Sydney from Los Angeles and San Francisco. Service and food is above average.

Business and first-class offer a seat that turns into a comfortable bed, (that even accommodates six-foot plus passengers), and completes at least 10 other positions to make the passenger comfortable. First-class will even supply a set of high-quality pajamas with their generous overnight kit. Personal TV screens with current movies on demand, games, music and entertainment can make the time whisk away are available at the press of a button.

Personal services including gourmet cuisine timed to your discretion, an open bar with fine liquors and wine, including sandwiches and sweets. Breakfast is cooked to order. If you are going to make this long flight to Sydney, Qantas is the way to go. For reservations and information call: 1-800-227-4500 or visit www.qantas.com

Part II of this article (which will appear in the June issue) will cover shopping, dining, (take a seaplane to lunch), the magical Blue Mountain World Heritage area and the glorious Lillinfels Blue Mountain Resort and Spa.

Camille Bounds is the travel editor for Sunrise Publications and Inland Empire Business Journal.