octane

The Entrepreneurs' Organization Magazine

YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR FUTURE

Entrepreneurs' Organization

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IN THIS ISSUE

06 Shifting Gears

08 From Startup to Sale

12 Exit Plans and Entrepreneurs

16 It's All in a Name

EO Entrepreneurs' Organization

fueling the entrepreneurial engine

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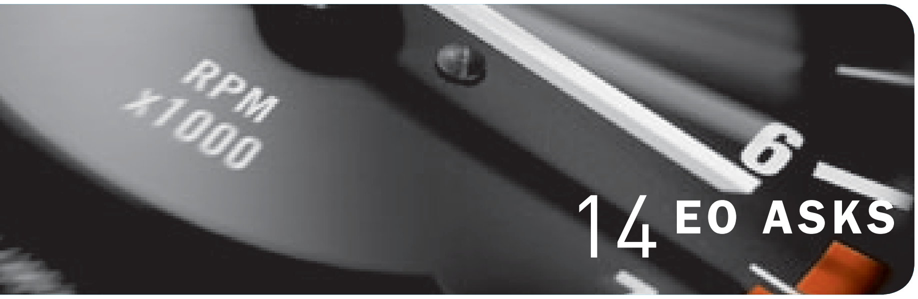


14 EO ASKS

15 EVENTS CALENDAR

20 QUOTED AND NOTED

4 **Business Practices That Breed Success**
JOHN STEPLETON, EO PORTLAND
"For 15 years, I have been interested in understanding which business practices are most important to maintain organizational health, and which practices result in a higher level of success. Two years ago, I conducted a study among businesses in all industries. Here is what I learned."

5 **Five Things to Consider When Expanding Your Company**
REID CARR, EO SAN DIEGO
"The biggest goal a company can achieve is consistent growth. To accomplish this, I acquired a company in a different geographic market. Here are five critical points I considered before acquiring my new business."

6 **Shifting Gears**
DOMINIC RUBINO, EO VANCOUVER
"When I sold my last business, I took a break. I decided I would build my perfect business 'on paper' before I started looking. That was three years ago, and I've learned a lot about being a global franchisor since then."

7 **Misinformation and Mergers**
KELLY BORTH, EO COLUMBUS
"A merger or acquisition is a sensitive process. To facilitate a smooth transition for employees and stakeholders alike, I've learned it's important to utilize every facet of your public relations capabilities. Here are some other lessons I learned."

FEATURE STORY
8 **From Startup to Sale**
STEPHEN GOLDBERG, EO NEW JERSEY
"Based on my 25 years of experience handling the sale of privately held companies, I've discovered numerous ways to maximize the valuation and marketability of a business. Here are 10 proactive steps to consider before beginning the business sale process."

10 **Keeping Up With the Cyber Current**
GREGG GORDON, EO WESTERN NEW YORK
"Social networking is the newest global phenomenon, and it's one of the best ways to ensure your company stays relevant in the evolving world of business. We found what worked best for our business and customers and pursued those avenues."

11 **The Cornerstone of a Long-Lasting Company**
KELLY CUTLER, EO CHICAGO
"Working with determined, creative and experienced people can increase the likelihood that my business will be around for decades. Here are some company culture principles I've learned to help keep my business on the right track."

SPECIAL FEATURE
12 **Exit Plans and Entrepreneurs**
In this special feature, we shine the spotlight on three members who have sold—or are planning to exit—their businesses. Learn about the highs and lows of selling and exiting, and why preparing today can help you tomorrow.

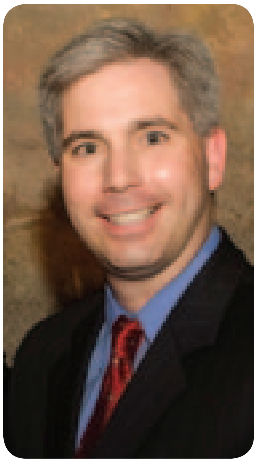
16 **It's All in a Name**
CHRISTOPHER RUGH, EO SEATTLE
"One of the most important challenges an entrepreneur faces is the naming or re-naming of a new business. Here are some of the lessons I learned when it comes to picking a name that will garner success now and in the future."

17 **An Online Portal to A-Players**
JOHN YOUNGER, EO SAN FRANCISCO
"Today, online recruiting forms one of the central pillars of a smart staffing strategy for firms in every economic sector across the globe. Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages I learned regarding online job recruitment."

18 **I Am Not an Island**
RAZOR SULEMAN, EO TORONTO
"Every entrepreneur reaches the point when they realize that no man (or woman) is truly an island. I have found that having the right people in the right place is essential to staying ahead of the business curve."

19 **Get Back to the Future**
TROY HAZARD, EO BRISBANE/EO SPEAKER
"Most people are looking for that 'one thing' to make life easy. They seek that magic bullet— the key to life, the universe and business success. Unfortunately, it doesn't exist."

A **MESSAGE** TO OUR **MEMBERS**



Time and again, I have heard entrepreneurs sum up their business woes in a single statement: There are never enough hours in the day. If we had more hours, we could better balance our budgets, attract more clients and pursue the ideas that are collecting dust on our mental shelves. When it comes down to it, our success is measured by what we do with the time that we have.

I am more confident than ever that EO and its members will be one of the key driving forces in moving the world toward a brighter future. We are proof that daring to dream can breed unheralded success. But with that dream comes responsibility; namely, the need to maximize our time. A good entrepreneur knows how to manage his or her time effectively and can get the most out of the present. But what about the future? How can we position our businesses—and ourselves—for continued prosperity? It all boils down to preparation.

In economies good and bad, entrepreneurs are a mainstay in the business world because of our commitment to no-excuses excellence. We achieve this by doing our homework and staying ahead of the curve. We keep our businesses viable by forecasting industry climates, engineering effective marketing plans and employing other valuable management methods. Ultimately, our success comes down to planning ahead. A book that helps me achieve this is David Allen's *Making It All Work*. It has given me what I need to organize my life for career, personal and professional development. Hopefully, you can gain as much inspiration from it as I have.

Speaking of planning for the future, the theme of this issue comes at the perfect time. EO has been busy establishing building blocks for the long haul. This preparation includes strengthening chapter support, leveraging the latest in technology and recruiting new member leaders. In fact, next month I will be handing the reins over to EO Orange County's Matt Stewart, a passionate steward of this organization. Matt's experience, energy and vision will help EO traverse its course from success to significance, and in the process, stay united as the world's most elite community of entrepreneurs.

It's been a pleasure bringing you these issues of *Octane*, and I wish you the best of luck in whatever tomorrow brings.

Respectfully,

David

DAVID GALBENSKI
EO CHAIRMAN

EO UPDATES

➜ 2009 EO Arizona University

More than 230 members experienced the blue skies of the Wild West during the 2009 EO Arizona University. Held in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, from 25-29 March, this University offered attendees a chance to drive racecars, witness the operations of elite businesses and participate in dynamic learning sessions with world-renowned business experts. One of the event highlights included an intimate learning session with Jim Collins, one of the world's most prestigious business gurus. A big thank you goes out to the EO Arizona Committee!

➜ EOaccess Rolls Out

EO has answered your needs for a more personalized EO experience by creating EOaccess, a new Web portal that provides you with "one-stop shopping" for everything EO. Through EOaccess, you can easily manage and personalize your EO experience from one place. EOaccess will transform your experience on both the chapter and Global levels, and it will ensure you stay connected to the network in a dynamic and accessible fashion. The systematic roll-out of EOaccess to all chapters began in April. For more information, please contact Jason Tate, Senior Vice President of Operations, at **jtate@eonetwork.org**.

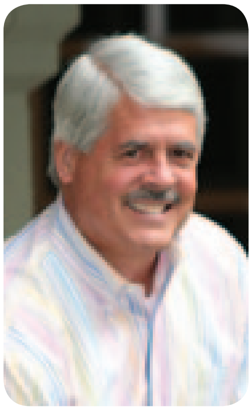
➜ 2009 Global Leadership Conferences

FY2009/2010 chapter leaders experienced vibrant cultures and peer-to-peer networking at this year's Global Leadership Conferences (GLCs). The events—held in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, from 7-9 May, and in Hong Kong, China, from 28-30 May—were a tremendous success. Incoming officers shared ideas and strategies on how to effectively lead their chapters in the upcoming fiscal year. The GLC: New Orleans was led by EO Houston's Robert Wagnon and EO New Orleans' Kevin Langley. The GLC: Hong Kong was led by EO New Zealand's Fletcher McKenzie and EO Hong Kong's Ivan Ting. Thanks for your support, GLC leaders!

➜ 2009 EO All-Member Survey

In March, EO distributed its fourth annual All-Member Survey to the entire membership. In all, 3,090 members responded—that's an incredible 45 percent of the membership! Respondents from around the world provided ample feedback on what EO is doing well and what needs to be improved. We will apply what we've learned to ensure this organization continues along its path from success to significance. Results of the survey can be viewed at **http://members.eonetwork.org/downloads/2009 Global Economic Forecast Survey Summary Report.pdf**.

PLANNING FOR TOMORROW, TODAY



The most exciting—and frustrating—thing about business is that you never know entirely what the future holds. As entrepreneurs, you know that the business climate is unpredictable, and that each day has the potential to hurt, help or handicap your company. When it comes to planning for the future, you have to rely on your instincts, those gut feelings that long ago propelled you from a dreamer to a doer. Add education, experience and perspective to the mix, and you have a recipe for success.

I've always thought that trying to predict the future is a lot like sitting in a rocking chair— it'll keep you busy, but it won't take you anywhere. The real secret to engineering future business success is the application of lessons learned, the infusion of ambition and unrelenting preparation. In my experience, I've noticed that those who outlast the competition are those who train for the unexpected and embrace alternative methods. Sometimes it's not about staying inside the proverbial lines of business, but rather daring to color outside the lines and adjusting on the whim. It's one of the best ways to stay ahead of the curve.

Business has always been competitive— if you're not getting ahead, than you're being left behind. Staying flexible to unexpected changes and routinely revising strategic and operational plans are necessary when it comes to keeping your business afloat. Staying current and viable in today's environment is another must, especially if your business plan involves milestones that extend for decades. Also, your staff, clients and entire operational infrastructure have to be aligned to meet your goals. This will ensure you maintain a presence in your respective industry and, more importantly, relevance in the marketplace.

The focus of this issue is on the future of your business; specifically, positioning your company for continued growth and success. You will read member stories that are inspiring, honest and altogether practical. These authors highlight their many business lessons learned, including how to implement successful exit strategies, name a new business and recruit A-players online. I encourage you to apply these lessons to better plan for tomorrow…today.

After all, only entrepreneurs have the flexibility, freedom and risk-everything ambition to find the path back to prosperity in our increasingly difficult global economy. It's up to you to lead the world into a brighter future.

Regards,

BOB STRADE
EO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2009 EO BARCELONA UNIVERSITY

Did you miss your chance to get a US$500 voucher toward a future University?

Register for the **2009 EO Barcelona University** to find out! The first 50 members to register during the first 30 days of registration receive the voucher.

Fast Facts:
Dates: 30 September – 4 October 2009
Destination: Barcelona, Spain
Web site: http://events.eonetwork.org

BUSINESS PRACTICES THAT BREED SUCCESS

JOHN STEPLETON
EO PORTLAND

For 15 years, I have been interested in understanding which business practices are most important to maintain organizational health, and which practices result in a higher level of success. Two years ago, I conducted a study among businesses in all industries, one that identified seven key areas of business operations most closely tied to success. In this case, “success” refers to those organizations that experienced higher-than-normal growth and profitability rates. Here is what I learned:

Setting and Selling Your Vision
I found that organizations who have effectively developed a clear core vision or purpose—and who communicate it to their employees, customers and partners—are more likely to experience higher levels of success. These organizations tie their visions to tactical goals and include some component of employee compensation and reward to the achievement of those visions.

Establishing Organizational Rhythm
Those companies who have established a natural rhythm through concise meetings or huddles, and who include employees from all levels of the business, are more likely to succeed. These daily huddles include communicating key performance metrics and other data, as well as a discussion on what’s not working. This rhythm allows employees and management to react more quickly to issues and implement corrective measures.

Employee Empowerment
High-performing companies have created systems that allow them to gather and implement ideas that are generated across all levels of the organization. The entrepreneurs behind these businesses support their employee-improvement programs by integrating improvements into training and support systems, as well as rewarding and compensating their employees when they generate and implement improvements.

Process Orientation
Through my research, I discovered that alignment within the organization is better achieved when key processes and steps are well-defined and documented, and when there is a clear understanding of how value is delivered to the customer. This provides a collective knowledge across all levels of the business, and it helps everyone see where value is added and waste exists.

Use of Standards
I have found that the most successful companies use standards to control variability within the work place. By effectively documenting how the work is done and regularly auditing work to ensure standards are consistently used, business owners can confirm that the variability in output is minimized, allowing the organization to run more smoothly. This includes areas of the business focused on non-production items, such as finance and sales.

Adopting Visual Aids
Those organizations that use visual systems and signals are better able to control their businesses. They are also able to see quickly when something is not performing as expected. These visual systems allow for the collection of performance data on a real-time basis, and they provide an analytic perspective so that trends can easily be identified and improvements implemented.

Solving Problems
Finally, organizations that are more effective at designing systems and standards for solving problems perform better than those who use ad hoc methods for solving problems. By systematically identifying the root cause of and the probable solutions to the problem, employees report a higher level of job satisfaction, which results in lower turnover and higher employee morale.

Since conducting this research, I have used what I learned in my companies, resulting in a highly engaged, aligned and empowered workforce that produced improvements of 28 percent or more in just a few weeks. Ultimately, I have found that the survival of one’s business is directly related to the overall health of that business, and that the most important lesson is the journey, not the destination. Building a business is never easy, and building a world-class business is even harder. By applying what I’ve uncovered, I hope to build a successful future for my business, one lesson learned at a time.

John is the CEO and founder of Knowledge Fulcrum, a business that provides organizations with information, tools and resources that help them better inspire their people, align their efforts and empower their staff. You can reach him at **john.stepleton@knowledge-fulcrum.com**.

FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN EXPANDING YOUR COMPANY

REID CARR
EO SAN DIEGO

When it comes to building a company from scratch, most entrepreneurs create a list of goals they hope to accomplish within a certain time frame. One of the biggest and frequent goals is to achieve consistent growth. There are innumerable ways to do this—including organically—but in my company, we decided to take a different approach.

Last year, our Internet Presence Management (IPM) firm, Red Door Interactive, acquired a business in a wholly different geographic market. Our goal was to expand our company and provide essential Web services to a starved market. By acquiring Breckenridge Communications—a multimedia business in Denver, Colorado, USA—we were able to do just that. Here are five critical points we considered before acquiring this new business:

1. Determine your value proposition.

When deciding where to expand, we researched whether our services were unique and valuable within prospective markets. For us, Denver was an attractive prospect because no other IPM firm existed in the region. What's more, our online strategies served as a compelling and competitive advantage. Since our approach resonated in our home location of San Diego, California, USA, we felt the prospects of it appealing to Denver-based companies were significant. By doing our research and analyzing the pros and cons of locations, we found a hot spot for our business.

2. Learn to replicate the business model.

Attempting to take a formula and transfer it to a new city can be a daunting, but necessary, task to ensuring a successful acquisition. It's essential for an established business model to be secured early on and a new destination selected where the business has the ability to flourish. In our case, we spent seven years fine-tuning our business model with the intent of expanding it in a new market. Breckenridge Communications saw the benefits of increased efficiencies and profitability by adopting the processes for the Denver market; integration was not only possible, but welcomed by all parties.

3. Find a cultural fit.

When searching for a business to acquire, we closely examined the team, even more so than the company's client base. Finding people who could embrace and foster our company culture was necessary for the acquisition to succeed. To that end, we've learned it's important to focus on the experience of team members and ensure their skills are compatible with the company's stated mission and core values. Acquisitions tend to fail more often because of the incompatibility of both organizations' cultures. We had to make sure that was not the case with us.

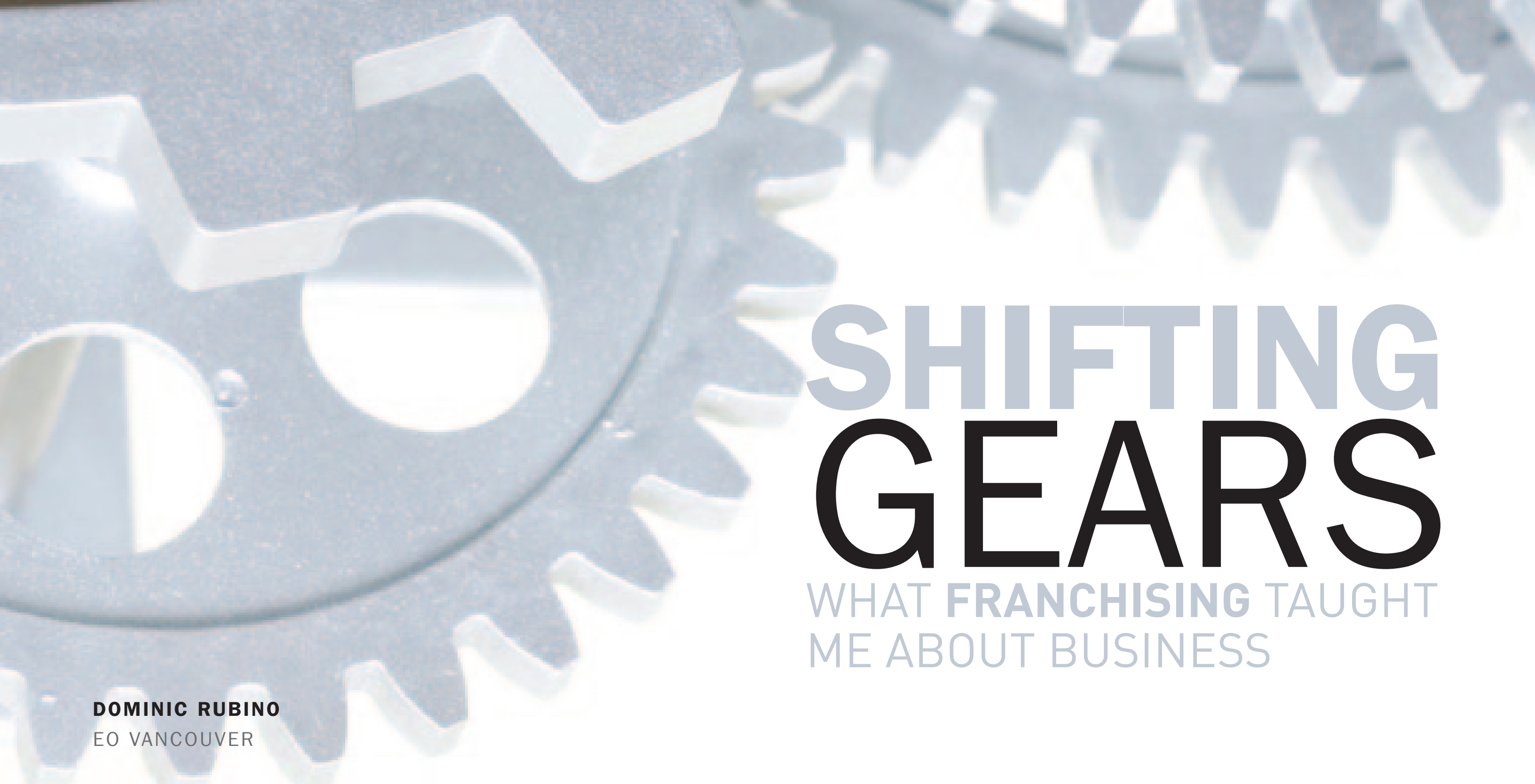
4. Decide whether to build or buy.

When considering an acquisition, both parties involved may wonder if it's better to grow organically or completely merge with another firm. We learned that it's important to weigh the options. Breckenridge Communications' experienced team of six had been working together for years, and possessed extensive and current market knowledge. It was easier for us to keep them in place and work with them than to uproot a team well-versed in the San Diego market and ship them to Colorado.

5. Believe it will happen.

Growing a company in a new market can be a terrifying, yet exciting, process with many lucrative benefits. When going through the acquisition process, it's important to believe it will work. We've realized that when you grow anxious over the minor details, you can lose sight of why you're making the deal in the first place. It's best to follow your gut and have faith.

Reid is the president of Red Door Interactive, an Internet Presence Management firm based in San Diego, California, USA, with additional offices in Denver, Colorado, USA. Reid has been an EO member since 2004. He can be reached at **rcarr@reddoor.biz**.



SHIFTING GEARS

WHAT FRANCHISING TAUGHT ME ABOUT BUSINESS

DOMINIC RUBINO
EO VANCOUVER

Life has a funny way of changing your long-standing plans. After I sold my last company, I made it a point to take a much-needed break. I just wanted to kick back, relax and enjoy my life. Before I knew it, the business bug bit me again. I could feel the entrepreneurial juices flowing, and I began to think about my next business venture.

I wanted to try something new, so I bought a business coaching franchisor. The decision to switch gears and take up franchising was an educational one, to say the least. Franchising is an extreme form of entrepreneurship. It is a high-touch, high-energy, high-return, high-stimulation and high-visibility approach to business. Here is what I learned about franchising and how it compares to the ground-up approach to business building:

I am no longer an individual business coach. My responsibility as a franchisor is to train and support business coaches using a perfected system. Being a franchisor means I am in the business of selling, training and supporting successful business owners. I get to see business from a completely different angle now, which is rewarding.

My passions are often tested. I really love the business I'm in. Still, my passions are tested when a franchise partner is unable—or unwilling—to follow our franchising system. Unlike running my own business, growth is contingent on the drive of the partner. I have to be patient and supportive so that they can find success.

It's OK for the system to change. Our franchise partners are very smart, and they make their opinions and ideas known. I often have to check my ego at the door and listen to their input (and then be willing to act on it.) It can be a hard pill to swallow, but in my experience, it often makes the best sense.

Many people get paid before I do. It appears that the money in franchising goes to lawyers, accountants, auditors and government agencies first. It may be different in other countries, but we have to re-file our entire legal and financial documentation every year, as if we were just starting up. My mom was right: I should have been a lawyer.

I have to keep learning. Every interaction with my franchise partners is a learning opportunity. One of my corporate goals is to drive massive value to our team at every interaction. This keeps me working hard for my team's business success, and it has paid dividends. My business has been recognized in industry magazines as a top franchise concept.

I love recurring revenues. It is very comforting to have stable revenue on a monthly basis. It takes the kinks out of my projections. However, it comes at the price of intimate contact and support with each and every franchise location. Communicating with my franchises can be time consuming, but it's worth it knowing I'm generating wealth in the process.

Structure is everything. There are two common franchise structures: The area-developer model—where you grant bulk rights to a top-level franchise partner who helps develop, train and support a smaller sub area—and the head-office model. I adopted a blended model, where we have some area developers and corporate locations. The decision to choose an appropriate model is a big one for a franchisor, as it directly relates to income, expenses, ongoing training and support.

I owe favors to other franchisors. I didn't realize how small and close the franchise world is. I've asked for guidance and advice at times and have always received it. I also make it a point to help others when I can. Knowing that I have people to rely on for assistance has helped me achieve my goals as a franchisor.

Dominic is the franchisor of FocalPoint Business Coaching, the world's premier business coaching and development franchise company, in partnership with Brian Tracy. Dominic has been an EO member since 2003. You can contact him at **drubino@focalpointcoaching.com**.

MISINFORMATION AND MERGERS

KELLY BORTH
EO COLUMBUS

KELLY IN HER COLUMBUS OFFICE.

When it comes to business growth, I have learned that communication is tantamount to internal and external success, especially when it comes to mergers and acquisitions. A merger or acquisition is a sensitive process for all parties involved. Misinformation can abound, egos can be bruised and business relationships can be damaged.

In my experience, implementing a transparent communications program ensures that employees and the marketplace understand exactly how the deal will affect them. Without transparency, employees and stakeholders can lose confidence in the company. A flawless response time and communication routes are just as crucial when it comes to easing the concerns of employees, investors, vendors, customers and even the media. Here are some other lessons I learned:

Quick, Precise Response

When it comes to mergers, I make it a point to anticipate and respond to rumors as soon as a deal seems imminent. I do this by immediately identifying "key messages" that contain useful and comprehensive information. Initiating a proactive strategy—which includes face-to-face meetings with those most affected by the deal—a schedule of updates and a plan for eleventh-hour changes is also essential when it comes to creating a smooth transition process.

To ensure the transition is unaffected by exigent circumstances, I identify communication vehicles that will effectively reach my target audiences. More importantly, I establish a plan for which communication routes should be employed first. Nothing is worse than having employees find out about a major change in the company from acquaintances. These concerns should be addressed long before the rumor mill kicks into action.

Internal Communications

When announcing a merger or acquisition, I try my best to provide accurate information and avoid making promises I can't keep. Falsely assuring employees that jobs will not be lost is detrimental to the mergers and acquisitions process, as well as overall operations, employee morale and business. If time is taken to discuss the deal's benefits and drawbacks, employees are more likely to respond positively instead of resisting change.

Over the years, I have found that employees expect straightforward and honest information; that's no different when it comes to mergers or acquisitions. I try to anticipate questions that may arise and have a solid answer prepared for each. What's more, I do my best to ensure that regular updates are communicated through management, Q&A sessions, staff meetings, company newsletters and e-mails.

External Communications

Alerting employees is not the end of my responsibilities. Stakeholders, customers, vendors, community members and other key audiences hold specific interests in a company. Utilizing media relations throughout the mergers and acquisition process can help me reach out to these groups. Furthermore, communicating with key media outlets offers a means for publicizing a name change, reducing customer loss and launching new market and/or services announcements. Fostering this relationship also allows me to better control the message that is being communicated about the company.

All in all, I've found that the perfect mix of internal and external communication plans involves implementing communications quickly, using all available communication routes and delivering clear and accurate messages. Companies that make communications plans a priority during a merger or acquisition will emerge from the process as an organization that stakeholders, employees and the media can trust. And trust is what good business is all about.

Kelly is the founder of GREENCREST, a fully integrated marketing agency built to propel small- to mid-size emerging businesses to the next level—guaranteed. GREENCREST is one of only 22 certified brand agencies in the US. To reach Kelly, contact her at **kborth@greencrest.com**.

FEATURE STORY

FROM STARTUP TO SALE

STEPHEN GOLDBERG
EO NEW JERSEY

When it comes to owning a business, nothing lasts forever. Regardless of industry, every business owner will inevitably face the possibility of selling his or her business. Based on my 25 years of experience handling the sale of privately held companies, I've discovered numerous ways to maximize the valuation and marketability of a business. Here are **10** proactive steps to consider before beginning the business sale process:

1 Recast the Financial Statements

A company's financial statements are typically prepared with a view toward minimizing burden. This tends to be at odds with what a business owner wants to show to a potential buyer in the context of a business sale. To enable a potential buyer to "read between the lines," the financial statements must be "adjusted" to reflect the true profitability and discretionary cash flow that would be available to a new owner. I encourage my clients to analyze the general ledger and identify all expense items that can be restated or adjusted, thereby maximizing the price a seller will receive for the company. In a recent client transaction, the business owner achieved an estimated US$3 million in additional valuation by identifying creative add-backs for buyer consideration.

2 Get an Independent Valuation

An independent valuation enables a business owner to get a sense of a realistically achievable value and confirm in advance whether or not it makes financial sense to sell the business. If the lowest price that a business owner would be willing to accept for the company is well above what a potential acquirer would realistically pay, it is essential to be aware of that information before trying to sell the company. This step can eliminate time wasted on the business sale process. What's more, properly understanding valuation at the outset will also prevent "leaving money on the table" by undervaluing the company or losing qualified acquirers by seeking an unrealistic price.

3 Consider the Tax Implications

It is crucial to understand the tax implications of a sale in advance. This will provide a realistic picture of the net-after-tax yield and help determine the most advantageous way to structure the sale for tax purposes. For example, advance recognition of the tax implications of a "C" corporation requires that negotiations be positioned toward a deal structure that would minimize a seller's tax exposure. Many of our clients whose companies were "C" corporations were able to achieve an additional 25 percent after-tax yield because we informed acquirers in advance that a stock-sale structure was a requirement.

4 Develop a Growth Plan

A well-thought-out and realistic plan for growth can greatly enhance the value of a company. It serves as a roadmap to expansion opportunities that a new owner could exploit with additional capital or other resources. Based on my research, the plan should assume that significant capital resources will be available after the sale and identify areas where historic sales were constrained due to capital limitations. It is likely that the acquirer will be better capitalized than the current owner and have enhanced capabilities to act on these opportunities.

5 Address Key Dependencies

In my experience, reducing key dependencies in a business will serve to increase the marketability and value of a company. Three key areas include customers, vendors and employees. Customer dependency exists when a high percentage of the company's revenue is derived from a few large customers; vendor dependency results from difficulty finding comparable vendor replacements; and employee dependency exists when the business is highly dependent or held hostage by key employees or the existing owner. These dependencies create significant risks for an acquirer and can have a negative impact on valuation.

6 Look at Third-Party Financing

I have found it important to ascertain in advance the likely level of financing available to an acquirer. This will help qualify potential buyers as serious prospects and determine if the necessary capital will be available to consummate a transaction. Not being armed with this knowledge in advance leads to wasted time and jeopardizes confidentiality with unqualified acquirers.

7 Carve Out Excess Assets

One method to increase a seller's total financial yield from a transaction is to identify excess assets that can be converted into cash prior to a transaction without adversely impacting the business. One of my clients was able to reduce excess inventory by approximately US$750,000 without impacting the ability to service their clients. Converting the "excess" inventory to cash prior to the closing enabled him to significantly increase his total financial yield from the transaction.

8 Research Likely Acquirers

Advance research within an industry can determine if it makes sense to approach companies in a related business seeking additional sales or territories. These "strategic buyers" may have a strong desire to acquire a related business as a means of growing through acquisition, or because they may recognize the synergies that will result from the combination of the two companies. By identifying likely prospects, the search for an acquirer can be more tightly focused in a direction that can maximize the overall deal value.

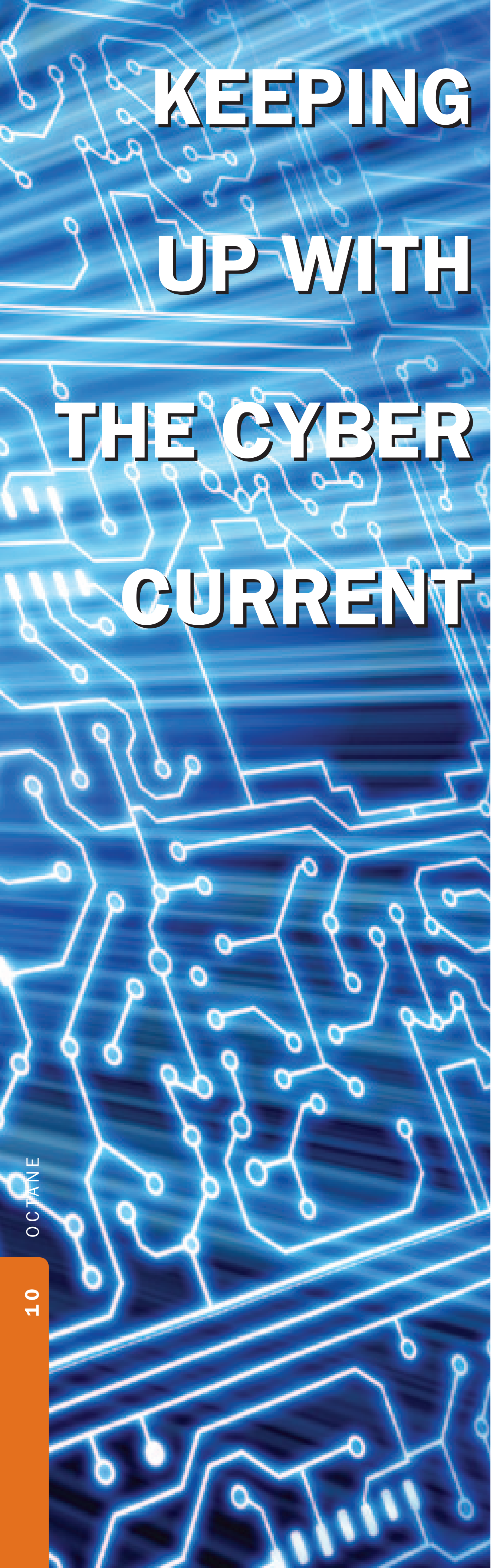
9 Recruit a Team of Professionals

Before entering the uncharted waters of selling a business, selecting the right team is imperative. This includes a qualified CPA, an attorney with a background in corporate transactional work and an experienced mergers and acquisitions intermediary. All parties should meet in advance, since their efforts will need to be coordinated later in the process. This will ensure that all team members are on the same page and have a clear understanding of the goals and expectations of their mutual client.

10 Check the Current Sales Performance

An often overlooked area that has a major impact on the marketability of a business is the company's current financial performance. The 12-month period during which the sales process takes place is a decisive one. If sales performance deteriorates during this period, marketability and value will be negatively impacted. I've learned that it's important to focus my efforts on whatever can be done to maintain consistent (or improved) sales, margins and profits during this period.

Stephen brings more than 20 years of merger and acquisition experience to the helm of Sun Mergers & Acquisitions. In addition to his work as a certified business intermediary, frequent lecturer and writer on merger and acquisition issues, Stephen has personally helped 200+ business owners of entrepreneurial mid-market companies implement successful business sale transactions. You can reach Stephen at **sg@sunmerger.com.**



KEEPING UP WITH THE CYBER CURRENT

GREGG GORDON

EO WESTERN NEW YORK

Do you Tweet? Have you Friended anyone recently? Can you Digg It?

In case you haven't heard, social networking is the newest global phenomenon, and it's one of the best ways to ensure your company stays relevant in the evolving world of business. Social networking refers to the trend of online community involvement; specifically, interactive Web sites that provide information-sharing capabilities for viewers to stay connected on a real-time basis.

It's an entirely new way to communicate. Millions of entrepreneurs are leveraging social-networking sites (like Twitter and Facebook) to gain an online foothold in their industry. When my company, Social Sciences Research Network (SSRN), started its first wave of social-media integration, I learned just how important technology can be to a business. In order to join the ranks of social-media experts and expand our online presence, we adopted a three-step approach:

1. Know your users

We have a loyal user base that shares a zest for research. They are extremely busy and are looking for the most efficient ways to stay current in their field. Before redesigning our Web site, we focused on current trends in the industry and looked at sites that our users visited on a regular basis. The goal was to find common features and functionalities. As a result, we offered the ability to share papers on popular sites, such as Digg and Del.icio.us, as well as a recommendation feature. By knowing exactly who we were trying to reach, we were able to better decide what fit our users' needs.

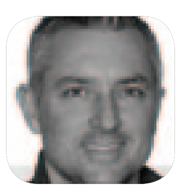
2. Create the conversation

Many of our users are active online, and they often publish their own blogs or Web pages. Instead of sitting back as a passive observer, we jumped right in. We started out doing interviews and guest blogging. Today, we're developing our own corporate blog so we can talk directly to our readers. It will be open, honest and extremely current. We realized that blogs shouldn't be created to talk at someone, rather they should create an ongoing conversation.

3. Adapt to meet your needs

In our experience, social networking shouldn't be approached as a "one-size-fits-all" option. Not everything will work for every company, so we focused on what worked best for our ultimate goal. At SSRN, we really liked the different approaches and audiences of Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. They have allowed us to have two-way conversations with our users and create granular communities. With employees spread across the country, these sites have helped us stay in constant communication— a perk that helps us remain relevant online.

Social networking isn't going away any time soon. Instead of embracing everything all at once, we found what worked best for our business and customers and pursued those avenues. By taking advantage of these social-networking opportunities, we have been able to communicate with our clients on a platform unheard of five years ago. As a result, we have created a niche and established ourselves as a business in the know. Now that we're networking online, there's no limit to how far we can extend our services.



Gregg is the president and CEO of Social Sciences Research Network, the leading multi-disciplinary online repository in social sciences and humanities, devoted to the rapid and electronic delivery of scholarly research at the lowest possible cost. He can be reached at **gregg_gordon@ssrn.com**.

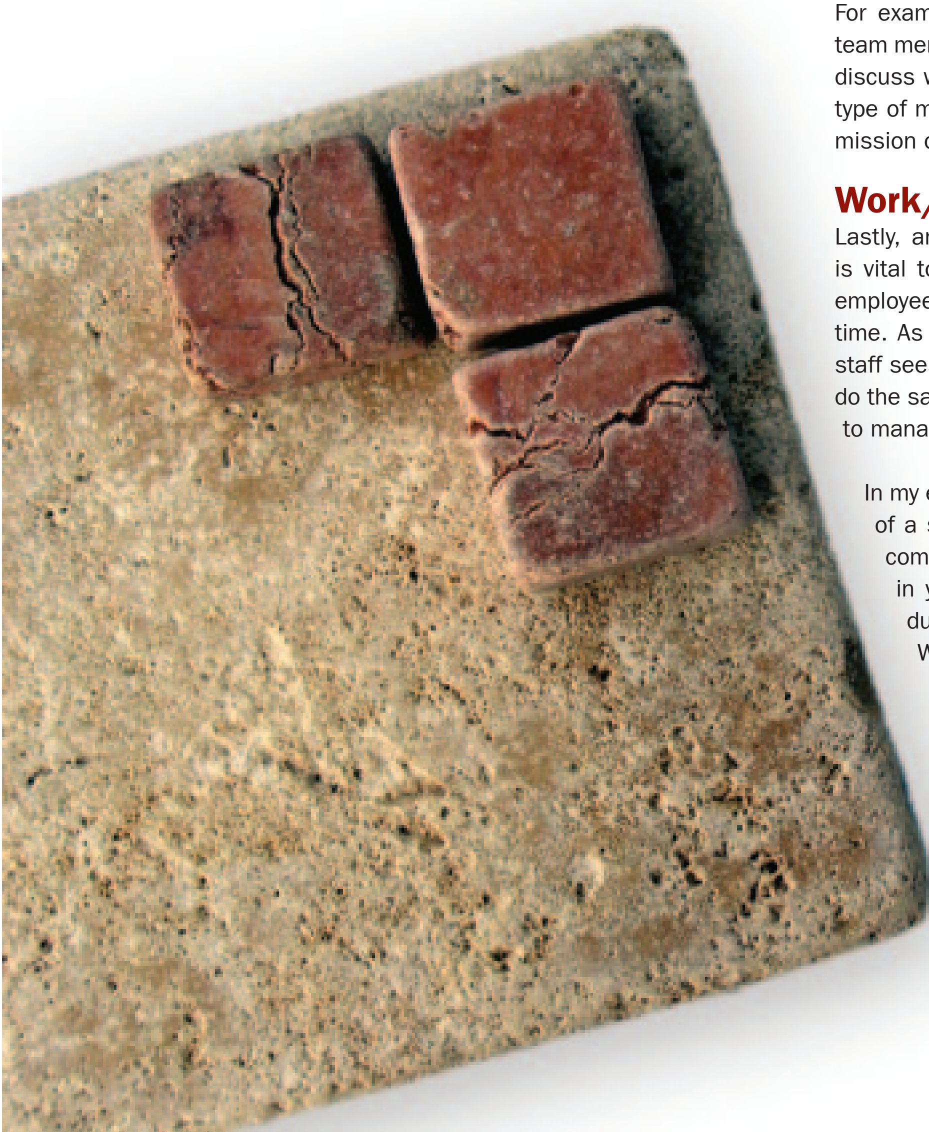
THE **CORNERSTONE** OF A LONG-LASTING COMPANY

KELLY CUTLER
EO CHICAGO

There's no secret recipe for guaranteed longevity in the business world. It takes a ton of hard work, a commitment to a strategic plan and a team of hard-working employees to make your dream a reality. But perhaps the biggest ingredient for future relevancy is the design and institution of a progressive company culture.

My interactive advisory firm, Marcel Media, focuses on an open-minded company culture. We set ourselves apart by encouraging the sharing of ideas, valuing dedication and creating an enjoyable environment. By providing my staff with a comfortable place to grow and learn, I am encouraging them to maximize their potential, leverage their experiences and engage in the growth of the business.

Here are three principles I employ to foster a progressive corporate culture:



The Power of Trust

Typically, my management style revolves around a "hands-off" approach, where I set the goals and guidelines while giving plenty of freedom for my staff to produce results. I've found that this empowers my staff to have a level of ownership they normally would not have. It also gives them a chance to make a bigger impact on all of the projects that they execute. What's more, this kind of trust reinforces an employee's self-confidence and encourages him or her to take on a higher level of responsibility.

Collecting Input

In addition to a unique level of trust with my staff, I consistently encourage them to share any ideas and concerns with me, no matter how large or small they might be. I feel it's important to create an atmosphere where all members of the company have the ability to express themselves creatively and with an open mind. For example, we have a company meeting each week where all team members participate, including interns. We sit down to openly discuss what is going on and mull over creative suggestions. This type of meeting helps my employees feel connected to the overall mission of the company.

Work/Life Balance

Lastly, an environment that promotes a great work/life balance is vital to a progressive and successful company culture. Happy employees need a healthy equilibrium of personal time and work time. As the leader of the company, I have to set the tone. If my staff sees me "work hard and no play," they would feel pressure to do the same; this could lead to burn out and fatigue when it comes to managing tasks and realizing projects.

In my experience, a powerful company culture is the cornerstone of a successful business. It not only sets you apart from the competition, it fosters growth and ensures a long-lasting place in your respective industry. I know much of my success is due to the dedication and passion of the people I employ. Working with determined, creative and experienced people is an advantage in itself, and allowing them to flourish in a free-thinking corporate culture can generate remarkable results.

Kelly is the CEO of Marcel Media, a strategic interactive advisory firm that specializes in search-engine marketing, Web development and custom application integration. Marcel helps clients increase visibility, gain qualified leads and drive quality traffic to their Web sites. You can e-mail Kelly at **kelly@marcelmedia.com**.

EXIT PLANS AND ENTREPRENEURS

In this special feature, we shine the spotlight on three entrepreneurs who have sold—or are planning to exit—their businesses. Learn about the highs and lows of selling and exiting, and why preparing today can help you out tomorrow.

HOW I NEARLY BLEW THE BIGGEST DEAL OF MY LIFE

DR. BASIL PETERS
EO SPEAKER

As an entrepreneur, fund manager and veteran of business sales, there is one thing I know to be infallible: Exits are the least understood part of being an entrepreneur. I know this because I almost blew it when I sold the first company I co-founded. It wasn't until I had completed another five or 10 business exits that I understood all of the things I did wrong.

Here are some mistakes I made and the lessons I learned in the process:

1. Every Company Needs an Exit Strategy

The biggest mistake of my career was not having an exit strategy in my first company. We were growth junkies. It didn't even occur to us that we would inevitably sell— until it was almost too late. Every company needs a written exit strategy. It affects important decisions on a daily basis, and it ensures that things go smoothly when it's time to leave.

2. Check the Alignment on the Exit Strategy

It never ceases to amaze me how often the founders, management and investors in a company can have very different beliefs about their exit strategies. Even after we developed an exit strategy in that first company, I still didn't check to confirm that everyone was aligned. If I had checked, it would have been easy to see that one of our investors was completely incompatible with our exit strategy.

3. Consider a Secondary Sale

When I was a young CEO, I thought it was impossible to find investors who would buy private company shares from founders and early investors. If I had organized a secondary sale for some of my angel investors and co-founders, it might have relieved some of the pressure that forced us to sell at the bottom of a recession. Now that I've completed several secondary sales, I know they can usually be done if the price is right and a good exit plan is in place.

4. Always Clean up the Corporate Structure

Even after I had been a CEO for a decade, I really didn't understand the articles of our company. They had never been very important to me. That was, until the shareholders meeting to approve the sale of the company occurred. That oversight, and my failure to appreciate that 10 percent of a company's shareholders can often block an exit, almost cost me everything. Now I always clean up the corporate structure before I sell.

5. The CEO Should Never Lead the Exit

I learned everything about management on the job. When it was time to execute our exit, I was confident I could learn that, too. While I did succeed, the results were far from optimum. It's clear to me now that, with almost no exceptions, the CEO is never the best person to lead a merger and acquisition exit. Good advisors will almost always make the shareholders more money than the fees they charge.

6. Don't Ride it Over the Top

I've learned that the very best time to sell your company is when everything is going well. A business owner will get the best price when the company is on an upswing. Unfortunately, most people wait until the company's best days are behind it before they start the exit process. By the time the buyers get around to negotiating the price, the value has likely declined.

7. Exits are Just Another Business Process

What's the biggest lesson I learned from my experience in business sales? That an exit is just another business process. Like sales, branding and marketing, entrepreneurs will have a much better chance of success if they design a good exit strategy before they start.

Basil is a veteran serial entrepreneur and angel investor who recently lectured at an EO Vancouver event. He has been a co-founder, CEO or chairman of more than a dozen technology companies. Basil is also the CEO of Fundamental Technologies II Corp. You can e-mail him at **replies@peters.ca**.

STARTING MY EXIT PLANNING EARLY

CYNTHIA UMPHREY
EO DETROIT

At some point, all owners leave their businesses. I have found that the best results are consistently achieved by those who work with an exit plan, especially since those plans also help us achieve our business goals of working on, and not in, our businesses. I am currently working on a plan to help me leave or scale back from my two businesses, even though I don't plan to exit either for decades. Here are the steps I plan on taking:

Step 1: First, I will seek the help of a CPA, lawyer and financial planner with whom I feel compatible and whose specialty is exit-planning. These professionals will help me establish what I want from my future, and they will tell me how to get there.

Step 2: An advisory team will test my goals by matching them up to hard numbers. I have seen "excellent" exit plans fail because the owner sold his company for the purchase price he wanted, but the net proceeds weren't enough to maintain the lifestyle he had in mind. A hard-numbers test would have caught this flaw.

Step 3: Once my goals are set and tested, it is time to write out a plan. Certain parts of it will involve legally binding documents that must be signed immediately. Not having these documents in place can and will destroy my entire plan. My exit plan should also be flexible for business, life or goal changes.

Step 4: I've learned that it's important to have meetings annually (at a minimum) to ensure that the exit plan is on track. As a business owner, I work on my company to identify changes, remove roadblocks to success, identify opportunities, etc. The same applies to my exit plan.

Step 5: Many owners leave their businesses unexpectedly because of illness or death. With this in mind, an estate plan should coordinate with the exit plan. I will ensure I have one created before I officially exit my businesses.

I am happy to say that exit planning helps me maintain discipline in running my businesses, and it will help me leave in my own time and on my own terms. Furthermore, it will protect my family if the worst-case scenario should occur. As an entrepreneur, that's the kind of freedom and flexibility I need.

Cynthia is the director and vice president of Kemp Klein Umphrey Endelman and May, P.C., a law firm that has counseled businesses, families and individuals for more than 37 years. Cynthia has been an EO member since 2005. She can be contacted at **cynthia.umphrey@kkue.com**.

I SOLD MY BUSINESS… NOW WHAT?

DAYNE FALKENBERG
EO SOUTH AFRICA

It was just after our tenth year in business that my partner and I decided to sell the business we founded. The decision to sell and exit the business was not taken lightly, and I learned a lot about what it takes to transition from business owner to business seller in the process.

We had been in the same business for a long while. We wanted to do something different, either together or on our own. Also, we had continually upped the bet on ourselves and our business from day one, and it was the key asset on which our families relied. The sale enabled us to take some cash off the table and pause before moving on to other ventures.

I learned a lot about the ins and outs of selling a business and exit planning. One of the main lessons I learned was to always trust my instincts, especially regarding the market. When it came to our company, I knew that we needed to sell and sell quickly. There was a clear window of opportunity in which buyers interested in our type of business had cash and were looking to buy.

Another lesson learned was the importance of gathering solid advice. I employed the services of a commercial lawyer and business broker, both of whom I knew and trusted. I also received fantastic insights from my Forum and EO mentor at the time. I felt I had a formidable team behind me, and I was able to confidently negotiate more favorable terms. By having a think tank of peers by my side, I got the most out of the opportunity.

I also learned how important it is to hold the keys to the bank account until the last payment has been made. In my opinion, until the deal was paid for in its entirety, it was not complete; therefore, I would remain in the driver's seat as the operational managing director. By staying on, I believe we kept a healthy tension between the parties, ensuring that the terms of the deal were kept on both sides and that there was minimal chance of losing my business assets without a full payment.

As it stands today, I still don't know whether I am going to build or buy my next company, but that's what makes entrepreneurialism so exciting.

Dayne is the managing director of Hi-Performance Learning, a customized learning firm that offers solutions that measurably enhance individual and organizational performance. Dayne has been an EO member since 2005. You can reach him at **dayne@hpl.co.za**.

EO ASKS: HOW ARE YOU POSITIONING YOUR BUSINESS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS?

"We are getting back to the basics and focusing on our core business. We are also analyzing the internal processes of the company and cutting all of the 'fat' we can find."

ADRIAN GOLDGEWICHT
EO COSTA RICA

"I created an advisory board that is comprised of high achievers from diverse industries. Since the board members come from different walks of life, we are able to bring more objectivity into the process of strategic planning."

MANJEET SINGH CHHABRA
EO UAE

"In short, we are working on new technology, ensuring the quality of our products and services, and creating new business models that will make us more efficient in the long run."

ANA KARINA KOPER
EO GUATEMALA

"We will be maintaining and creating a good culture inside the company."

CHUL WHAN INN
EO SOUTH KOREA

"For my business to be successful in the future, it is necessary for me to learn about new business models, place myself under scrutiny, review and assess scenarios that may cause problems to my firm and then address these scenarios."

ALAN CHEUNG
EO HONG KONG

"Maximizing efficiency, focusing on superb service and enforcing microscopic scrutiny of expenses."

RONALD LACHNER
EO COSTA RICA

"We are investing in good employees. This is expensive and counter-cyclical, but it gives us the best thinkable position to grab extra market share as soon as the economy catches up."

MAARTEN WOLLESWINKEL
EO NETHERLANDS

"To stay ahead, I am concentrating on consolidation, working on results-oriented marketing, cost-cutting where it can be done and marching ahead in new and existing territories to achieve our set goals."

GAURAV GHAI
EO NEW DELHI

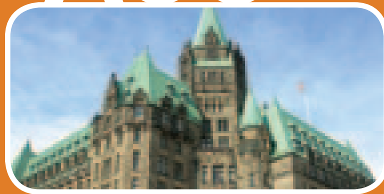
JUN

EO/MIT ENTREPRENEURIAL MASTERS PROGRAM
Class of 2010, Year 2 | 24-28 June 2009
Class of 2011, Year 1 | 17-21 June 2009
Dedham, Massachusetts, USA

JUN

2009 EO FAMILY ADVENTURE
REGISTER NOW!
30 June - 3 July 2009
San Diego, California, USA

AUG

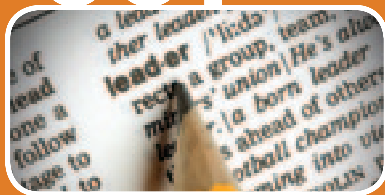


2009 EO CANADIAN CONFERENCE
REGISTER NOW!
12-15 August 2009
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

SEPT

2009 EO BARCELONA UNIVERSITY
REGISTER NOW!
30 September - 4 October 2009
Barcelona, Spain

OCT

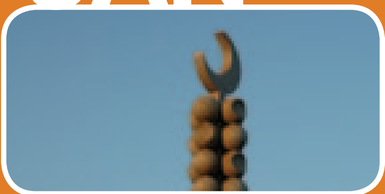


EO/BELL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM
REGISTER NOW!
11-13 October 2009
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

NOV

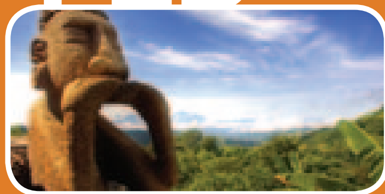
EO/BABSON EXECUTIVE EDUCATION SEMINAR
REGISTER NOW!
8-14 November 2009
Babson Park, Massachusetts, USA

JAN



2010 EO SAUDI ARABIA COLLEGE
18-22 January 2010
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

FEB



2010 EO LATIN AMERICAN/ CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE
February 2010
San Jose, Costa Rica

APR

2010 EO ORANGE COUNTY UNIVERSITY
7-11 April 2010
Dana Point, California, USA

NOV

2010 EO CAPE TOWN UNIVERSITY
10-14 November 2010
Cape Town, South Africa

GLOBAL LEARNING CALENDAR

For more information or to register, please visit **http://events.eonetwork.org** or contact **events@eonetwork.org**.

IT'S ALL IN A NAME

CHRISTOPHER RUGH
EO SEATTLE

Running a business comes with its share of problems, in terms of both mechanics and aesthetics. In my experience, one of the most important challenges every entrepreneur faces is the naming or re-naming of a company. I've been involved in the creation of more than a dozen companies, and I have had the privilege of advising on the development of hundreds of others. Here are some of the lessons I learned when it comes to picking a name that will garner success, now and in the future:

Easy-to-Remember Names

Names that are easy to remember are a sure-fire way to increase advertising effectiveness. These kinds of names are easy to pronounce and often have a visual component (think Target and Duracell). The difficulty, though, is that they can be tough to trademark. Also, the specificity of easy-to-remember names can limit a business to a particular region or industry. The perk of these names, however, is their high spend-to-result ratio. If an entrepreneur picks a highly memorable name, he or she can spend relatively little and still net huge results.

Trademarking That Works

By choosing a name that is easy to trademark, entrepreneurs can ensure that they will have a strong legal claim to their business identity. These kinds of names are often "made-up" words like Novartis, Accenture or ZymoGenetics. Other protectable names are based on unique proper nouns, such as Phillip Morris or Martha Stewart. One drawback of easy-to-trademark names is that they can be confusing. Also, entrepreneurs who choose these names can expect to spend more money on advertising to help customers recognize the name and understand the business behind it. This leaves entrepreneurs with a lower spend-to-result ratio.

Nonsense Names

Some companies have reaped great benefits from names that are both familiar enough to be memorable, but distinctive enough that they're relatively easy to trademark. These are often called nonsense names. Some nonsense names—Apple, Amazon and Yahoo—combine a known word with an unexpected industry. Other nonsense names combine two familiar words people find easy to pronounce and envision, but meet the uniqueness criterion for trade-marking because you wouldn't expect to see the two words used together. An example of this is Yogabutter (a local yoga studio) and Talking Rain (a soft drinks pioneer). I experimented with this nonsense approach by creating Purespace, a business that did short-term space rental for holistic practitioners. The name provided customers with a sense of our business, and it bred inquiry.

Testing the Name

I've learned that the worth of a business name is in the reaction of the customer or trademark attorney. To determine if their name has long-lasting appeal, entrepreneurs should find out if it allows them to access the tools they need for business. One way to do that is to Google the name. Business owners should ensure that someone isn't already using the name—or something similar—in a way they wouldn't want associated with their own business. This could cause confusion and lead to potential legal problems. When in doubt, it's best to consult with an intellectual property attorney.

A carefully selected business name can save thousands of dollars a year in advertising costs, and it can keep the company on an extended path of greatness. The wrong name can sink a business by making marketing expensive and frustrating, or making it difficult to protect your business identity. When it comes to naming a business, you can never be too careful. After all, your success and future are on the line.

A serial entrepreneur, Christopher is the founder and CEO of several companies, including 1-800-Good Credit, Worldwide Telegraph and CustomTollfree.com. He has been an EO member since 2001. You can reach Christopher at **cmb@customtollfree.com**.

An Online Portal to A-Players

JOHN YOUNGER
EO SAN FRANCISCO

A little more than a decade ago, online job searches were primarily the province of hardcore techies. Today, online recruiting forms one of the central pillars of smart staffing. Thanks to sophisticated online tools, entrepreneurs can automatically weed out unsuitable applicants and cast the broadest net possible in the search for qualified staff. Here are some advantages that are associated with online recruitment:

Precision and Broad Outreach

The most apparent benefit of online recruitment is the vastly improved reach into potential candidate pools. With job boards and social-networking tools like LinkedIn and Twitter, a well-crafted job description can get into the hands of far more people who will likely be, or know, the right person.

Improved Processes

An online system facilitates a much more streamlined, standardized approach than traditional, paper-based recruitment. Many manual tasks, such as sorting and routing application materials, can now be performed automatically. This enhanced process contributes significantly to another major benefit of online recruitment— its cost-effectiveness.

Sifting Through the Volume

Some leading-edge tools can extend the efficiency of this online approach even further. Asking the right questions makes all the difference, and often great candidates are knocked out because of a mediocre resume. Online screening quizzes, instant "fit" assessments, skill-based evaluations and other metrics can be administered instantly to candidates over the Internet, further reducing the time needed to make an A-player hire.

Proper Management

Experts have noted that when properly managed, online recruitment's positive effect can transcend the realm of HR and enhance the firm in core ways. In an era where image is everything, online recruitment can form an important component of an overarching brand-management strategy. The marketing collateral that's packed into an online job posting can help enhance brand awareness, a vital variable in today's competitive landscape.

Despite the promise inherent in the practice of online recruitment, there are potential drawbacks, as well. The disadvantages of online recruitment include:

The Business Blind Spot

In the early days, many people expressed concern that qualified applicants may be overlooked by recruiters focusing primarily on candidates who submitted online applications. However, now that virtually anyone can submit an application online, the traditional barriers that worked to keep out wholly unsuitable candidates have now been largely eliminated.

No IT in HR

A somewhat more thorny issue is the complaint that online recruitment erases the "human" aspect of HR management. This concern has validity when intangible factors, such as a candidate's organizational "fit" and the sense of "clicking" with a team, are not incorporated into the online process.

Basic Respect

The ease of applying for dozens of jobs per hour, coupled with the rarity of meaningful, online interview questions, is creating a perfect storm of disrespect and lack of follow-through. Our research shows that 94 percent of the people who apply online never hear back about the status of their application. This does not speak well of the employer's brand.

How has online recruitment helped my business? It has dramatically expanded our reach to the A-players that we need. For example, we recently launched a search for a vice president of sales and marketing. Normally, this would have required an executive-search firm. By using LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and online job boards, however, we have begun to see impressive candidates.

As an entrepreneur, my objective remains unchanged: I am responsible for finding and keeping the best candidates to ensure my business stays successful. Online recruitment helps me do that.

John Younger is the president and CEO of Accolo, a recruitment process outsourcing company. Accolo offers a turn-key and scalable internal recruiting department that includes professional services and a proprietary SaaS Platform. Contact John at **jyounger@accolo.com**.

I AM NOT AN ISLAND

HOW MANAGING KEY STAFF KEPT MY BUSINESS GOING

RAZOR SULEMAN
EO TORONTO

Every entrepreneur reaches the point when they realize that no man (or woman) is truly an island. I have found that having the right people in the right place is essential to staying ahead of the business curve. My employees drive the growth and innovation of my company, so it's up to me to attract and retain top talent to ensure that my business moves in the right direction.

As the founder and CEO of I Love Rewards, a Web-based employee rewards and recognition program provider, I have experienced the ups and downs of running a high-growth company. Four years ago, I hit a low point as an entrepreneur. Turnover was high and morale was exceptionally low— it wasn't a great place to work. I decided I needed to step up and take responsibility. I wanted to build a great company with great people. To do this, I needed to find a way to channel my employees' energy and talent.

My first move was to prioritize employees and commit to creating a workplace that attracted and kept "A-players." I began by developing a vision document and outlining ways in which we would live it. This particular vision spurred spirited debate among employees regarding the direction of the company and their role in it. As months passed, I felt as if we had sown the seeds that would create a unique and long-lasting culture of excellence.

Our ability to align employees with the company's goals and future came from trial and error, as well as the best practices we've learned from the clients, partners and companies we admire. Here is how we live our top priority of recruiting, retaining and inspiring great people:

Recruiting A-Players

It's no secret that the best way to find A-players is through your staff. Driven, successful people surround themselves with other driven, successful people. To ensure we're getting the best and brightest, we run a rock star recruiting program that rewards employees for bringing in potential candidates. This program has provided a return on investment four times greater than our previous recruiting efforts, which included cash incentives and recruiting firms.

Holding On to Our People

I've learned that retention is all about creating an infectious, distinctive workplace that offers meaningful work and growth opportunities. My employees are allowed to spend 20 percent of their time per week working in cross-departmental teams on initiatives outside of their job scope. This gives employees the ability to explore their interests, develop new skills and contribute to different areas of the business. Some of these initiatives have translated into new job roles and departments, because they produced such excellent results.

Inspiring Future Leaders

To inspire our employees, we need to continually engage them. We do this by recognizing those employees who go above and beyond and involving them in decisions that determine the company's direction. For example, every year I present my master plan for the upcoming year. Employees are asked to provide their feedback on what goals and milestones they believe are most important to the company. Comments and ideas are collected through a survey, and changes are made to the master plan to reflect everyone's feedback. I have found this to be the most constructive way to align our people and inspire them to invest their time and talent in the company.

The future of my business relies heavily on the satisfaction and success of my employees. When it comes down to it, building a great company takes more than the drive and dedication of one person— it takes a collective effort. By recruiting top candidates, retaining existing A-players and inspiring my staff to become leaders, I can ensure that their growth, and that of my business, continues.

Razor is founder and CEO of I Love Rewards, a Web-based employee rewards and recognition program provider and one of Canada's fastest-growing companies. In 2007, Razor was named the BDC Young Entrepreneur of the Year for his innovative vision and business acumen. You can reach him at **razor.suleman@iloverewards.com**.

GET **BACK** TO THE **FUTURE**

TROY HAZARD
EO BRISBANE/EO SPEAKER

As a long-time speaker, I have lectured at hundreds of conferences around the world. I've talked to every type of business person imaginable, and the one common denominator among them all is this: Most people are looking for that "one thing" to make life easy. They seek that magic bullet— the key to life, the universe and business success.

Unfortunately, it doesn't exist.

What I tell my audience is that the secret they seek is not external. It's not something you can touch, hold or own. It's something you feel, something you believe. In my years of speaking, I have found that many entrepreneurs are trapped in four core beliefs; beliefs that stop them from really learning:

» They believe they don't have enough time to implement what they learn.
» They believe the information they gathered doesn't apply to their business or industry.
» They make most of their business decisions out of fear and are too afraid to ask questions.
» They lack vision and purpose.

These beliefs are rampant in the business world. I know, because for almost a decade, I lived, worked and breathed them. It nearly made me bankrupt…twice.

It was in the mid-1990s, and I had been in business for almost a decade. At the time, I owned and operated a number of non-related companies. I was making tons of money, driving fast cars and living in a nice house. I was living the dream— until there was an interest rate spike in the market. As a result, the economy went flat and many of my clients went broke, all within 90 days. I was left with roughly US$500,000 in bad debt, along with an astronomical tax bill I couldn't pay.

One morning, I stood in my dining room and stared at the pile of bills, cash-flow projections, debtor and creditor print-outs, and asset and liability assessments on my dinner table. I had nothing left in the tank…or in the bank. For the first time in my life, I didn't know what to do. I leaned on my Forum, and through their support hired an administrator to get me back on my feet. Days turned into weeks, and months into years. Eventually, I got over the hump, but not without a little bruising.

When I was finally stable, I took a look at my businesses and searched for the clue that determined their success or failure. Turns out, it was me. Everything led back to me. That was a tough pill to swallow. I remember thinking: It must be someone else's issue! Surely, it wasn't my fault that things got so off track. And yet, it was. It all came down to my belief system and how I approached business. I thought I was infallible, living fast and furious in the present.

It dawned on me that I was like most of the members in my audience. I was too afraid to implement change for fear of "getting it wrong." I thought I was smart, but I was just arrogant. I thought I was lateral-minded, but I was running in circles. I thought I was innovative, but I was simply repackaging the same bad business concepts. I was erratic and unfocused; a clueless entrepreneur looking for his magic bullet.

In order for me to grow as an entrepreneur and not get stuck in the present, I had to constantly evaluate the present to help me assess my future. More importantly, I had to look internally for the solution to my problems and manage my belief systems, not look externally for an excuse to the problem. To protect my future I had to always bring it back to me.

It was then that I realised how simple it was for a business mind to get trapped in the wrong belief system. I vowed to change the way I thought about business and share my experiences with my peers.

Throughout it all, I learned that the key to a better, brighter future in business is to face reality and take responsibility for your actions. The success of your business lies on your shoulders, and once you face the real issues at hand, only then can you make things easier for you and the people you lead.

Troy is an international speaker and managing director of The Edge Corporate Strategies, as well as an EO Global Past President. He has spoken at several EO events. In the span of 20 years, Troy has founded and nurtured 10 different businesses. Troy is also a best-selling author. His newest book is *The Naked Entrepreneur*. You can contact him at **troy@troyhazard.com**.

QUOTED & NOTED

Members Make Their Mark

Several former and current EO members were recently listed in the 2009 "230 Young Global Leaders" list by the World Economic Forum. The entrepreneurs include Salvador Paiz, an EO Guatemala member; Matías de Tezanos, an EO Guatemala Elumni; Pooja Jain, an EO New Delhi Elumni; and Sminu Jindal, an EO New Delhi member. The select few who received this designation are considered to be the most prominent leaders shaping global influence and the future of the world.

Calgary Member Named Humanitarian of the Year

Nick Thompson, an EO Calgary member and president of Metromedia Marketing, was recently recognized by the Promotional Product Professionals of Canada (PPPC) for his social responsibility efforts at the Image Awards Show in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The PPPC awarded Nick its first-ever "Humanitarian of the Year" award for his philanthropic efforts in and around his community.

EO Chicago Member in *USA Today*

EO Chicago member Julie Northcutt was recently interviewed in an issue of *USA Today*. She discussed the perks of starting a business during an economic downturn and the importance of timing. The article's focus was on turning a negative into a positive after being laid off and how some of the best businesses have been started in a dismal economy.

IT Expert in Military Magazine

EO Kansas City member Bill Burnkhardt was recently featured in the military magazine, *Business Executives for National Security*. In an article titled "Cyber-Hackers Attack Military," Burkhardt provided a private-sector perspective on how to prevent future cyber attacks. Burnkhardt is the chairman and chief technology strategist of Global Messaging Solutions, Inc.

EO Bahrain Holds Educational Seminar

The EO Bahrain chapter recently held an event on "Memory Power," bringing renowned guest speaker Scott Bornstein in from Los Angeles, California, USA. The event focused on how to improve and develop memory capabilities in business and social settings. Scott addressed various issues in his speech, including the five laws of memory power and remembering names and faces.

Environment and the Entrepreneur

Todd Bone, an EO Atlanta member and CEO of XSi International, Inc., was recently interviewed on SkyRadio's Environmental Watch Program. Todd discussed the partnerships and policies of his business, why the best use is reuse and how companies can benefit from an I.T. Asset Disposition program. The segment is being featured on Northwest Airlines and American Airlines flights.

Member Companies Named Fastest-Growing in Saudi Arabia

Nine EO Saudi Arabia members and one EO Bahrain member recently secured spots on Saudi Arabia's list of 95 fastest-growing companies. The recognition was a part of the Saudi Fast Growth (SFG-100) awards. The following members received this prestigious award: Faisal Elsamannoudi, Fehr Nazer, Khaled Alfadl, Ibrahim Bushnak, Abdulhakk Assami, Aiman Said, Rashad Kanbar Sonia Ashour, Eyad Mashat and Reda Islam.

Former EO Leader Talks Small Business

Former EO Global President and current EO DC member Shelby Scarbrough was highlighted in a recent issue of the *Wall Street Journal*. In an article titled, "Opportunity Knocks, and Uncle Sam is at the Door," Shelby discussed how small businesses are facing declining revenue and tight credit, and how they have set their sights on a possible new customer: the government.

EO Member Wins Company of the Year Award

EO New Orleans member Dwayne Honoré's company, D. Honoré Construction Inc., was recently named "Company of the Year" by the *Baton Rouge Business Report* and Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge, Inc. The award is given to those companies who have made a significant impact in the local free-enterprise system.

Share your news with your EO peers by sending a detailed e-mail to **octane@eonetwork.org**.
Please include a 300 dpi headshot with your submission.

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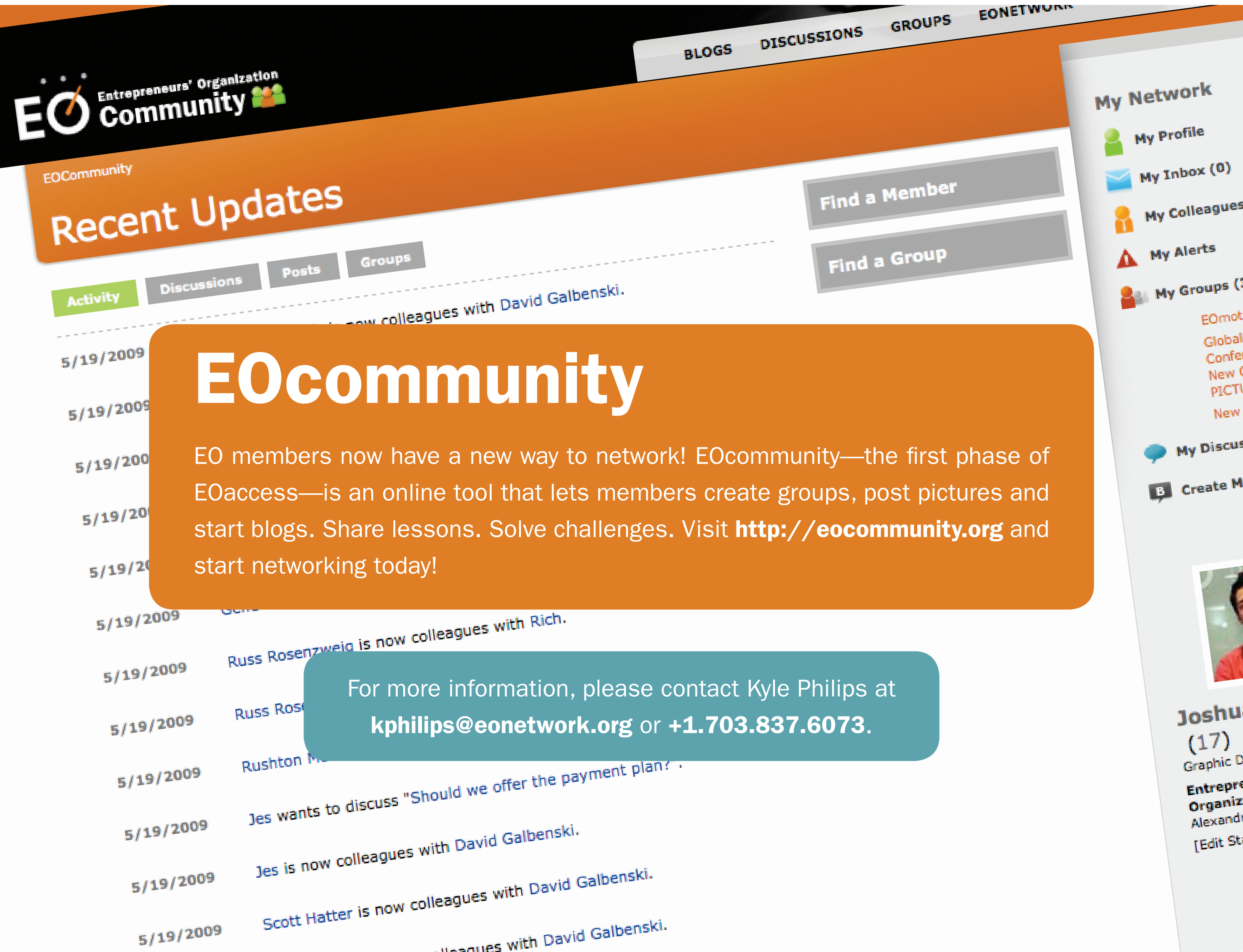

EOcommunity

EO members now have a new way to network! EOcommunity—the first phase of EOaccess—is an online tool that lets members create groups, post pictures and start blogs. Share lessons. Solve challenges. Visit **http://eocommunity.org** and start networking today!

For more information, please contact Kyle Philips at **kphilips@eonetwork.org** or **+1.703.837.6073**.

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