



Octane

The Entrepreneurs' Organization Magazine

December 2012

WHEN PASSION
meets
PURPOSE



EOTHRIVE



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"I focused on the process of my business,
and didn't worry about the outcome."

Taking the Plunge

Tim Hamilton, EO Austin
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Entrepreneurs'
Organization



Mixed Sources
Product group from well-managed
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FEATURE STORY



WHEN PASSION
meets
PURPOSE

Zahra Al-harazi, EO Calgary

"I had finally found my calling, and I was ready to put everything I had into it." **Pg. 14**

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Istanbul
TRANSFORM. TRANSCEND. TOGETHER.

2012 EO Istanbul University

A look back at one of EO's most transformative events! **Pg. 22**





Growth through Transformation

As Global Chairman, I have the privilege of attending various EO functions around the world, where I often speak about the value and impact of the EO community. In October, I attended EO Alchemy, an annual learning event hosted by the US-West region. While there, I spoke about the “My Community” element of our EO360° theme;

specifically, how entrepreneurs contribute to the betterment of the global business community and how those contributions greatly benefit their own growth and development. It was an amazing experience, one that reminded me of EO’s far-reaching influence and the power of entrepreneurship.

In many ways, “alchemy” is the perfect allegory for entrepreneurship. It’s an innovative practice that truly symbolizes transformation. As history has proven, alchemy was a forerunner of chemistry as we know it. Hundreds of years ago, scientists would work tirelessly trying to turn base metals into gold. They believed that through hard work and the right recipe, they could turn something ordinary into something extraordinary. Every day, these dreamers would go to work and challenge convention; they would experiment with their strategies, fine-tune their crafts and innovate over and over again with the goal of achieving perfection ... sound familiar?

Like those forward-thinking scientists, we as entrepreneurs are constantly seeking new ways to transform our ideas into gold. We concoct business plans, mix methodologies and test our theories until we achieve our goal of creating positive and

long-lasting change. It’s this commitment to impact through action that drives us as business owners, and it’s what allows us to make a significant mark in our businesses, communities and beyond. Every day, we overcome obstacles, defy the odds and push the boundaries of convention because we know that with the correct ingredients, we can do something far more impactful than transform metals: We can transform the world.

In our roles, we know that entrepreneurship is not a destination, but a launching pad for change and greatness. We know that big things often have little beginnings ... an idea, an instinct, a decision. And we capitalize on those things to create a better business, a brighter future and a bigger world. That’s where EO360° comes in. Throughout the year, we will be giving you the tools you need to become a well-rounded entrepreneur, while offering enhanced support and personalized resources to help you transcend in all aspects of your life. Why? Because the more you grow as an entrepreneur, the bigger footprint you’ll leave in the lives of those you lead. And at the end of the day, that’s what this journey is all about.

EO360° – Live it. Share it.



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**Samer, talking
about EO360°.**

Want to learn more about EO’s organizational theme and how we’re supporting the totality of the entrepreneur?



Scan the QR code at left to watch a special mid-year message from Samer, and discover how you can go EO360° this year.

EO360° – Live it. Share it.

Every day, EO members around the world are making a mark beyond just their businesses—they’re transforming their families, they’re building their communities and they’re improving their personal lives.

It’s what we call **EO360°**.



Enhancing the EO Experience

You're an individual. Your entrepreneurial journey is unique, one benchmarked by success and sacrifice, freedom and failure. Equally unique are your needs as an EO member. Regardless of your age or stage, location or vocation, you require certain

motivators to help you accomplish your personal and professional goals. EO knows that, which is why we're introducing MyEO, an initiative that will put you in the driver's seat of your EO journey, helping you own and maximize your EO experience.

MyEO isn't a traditional EO program designated for certain members, chapters or regions. It's much more than that. It's an organizational mindset. A global shift in focus designed to equip nearly 9,000 members with the knowledge and resources they need to elevate their membership, enhance their entrepreneurial journey and explore new avenues of greatness. In many ways, MyEO is your passport to an individualized EO experience, one that stimulates growth through personalization and self-selection.

Imagine a platform where two members from across the globe can connect in seconds to celebrate their passion for photography, or where early stage and more experienced entrepreneurs can confer in real-time on the benefits of international business. Imagine still customized Forums created around your goals, as well as business networks and special interest groups geared toward your unique needs as an entrepreneur. Through MyEO, we will help you get the most out of your time with EO by offering more personalized resources, tools and benefits so that you can get the most out of your EO experience, and in turn, your entrepreneurial journey.

Why the strategic shift in focus? According to the most recent EO All Member Survey, enhanced access to your peers

and benefits built around self-selection are priorities. We know you need specific resources to help drive growth in all areas of entrepreneurship—a la EO360°—which is why we're introducing MyEO. This movement not only allows for greater personalization across the EO spectrum, but it celebrates our diverse membership and the opportunities that result from that membership. In the coming months, look for the MyEO platform to start facilitating more member-driven experiences in your chapter, region and the global EO community.

Speaking of member experiences, we have plenty of them in this issue of EO's award-winning magazine. Chief among them is an interview with EO Calgary's Zahra Al-harazi, whose personal and professional journey highlights the power of freedom through self-discovery. Read how she found her voice on page 14. And then there's Tim Hamilton, an EO Austin member who overcame a business challenge by taking one big step forward. Learn how he took a leap on page 4. These are just two examples of how our members are thriving, and you'll find plenty more in this latest edition of *Octane*.

I hope you draw valuable insights from your peers' stories, and that you apply what you learn to your business and life. Best of luck this quarter, and get ready to revolutionize your EO journey!

Regards,

Bob Strade, EO Executive Director
bstrade@eonetwork.org

One Year Later: Swimming toward Success



Chris (far left) and Todd (second from left) with their fellow swimmers.

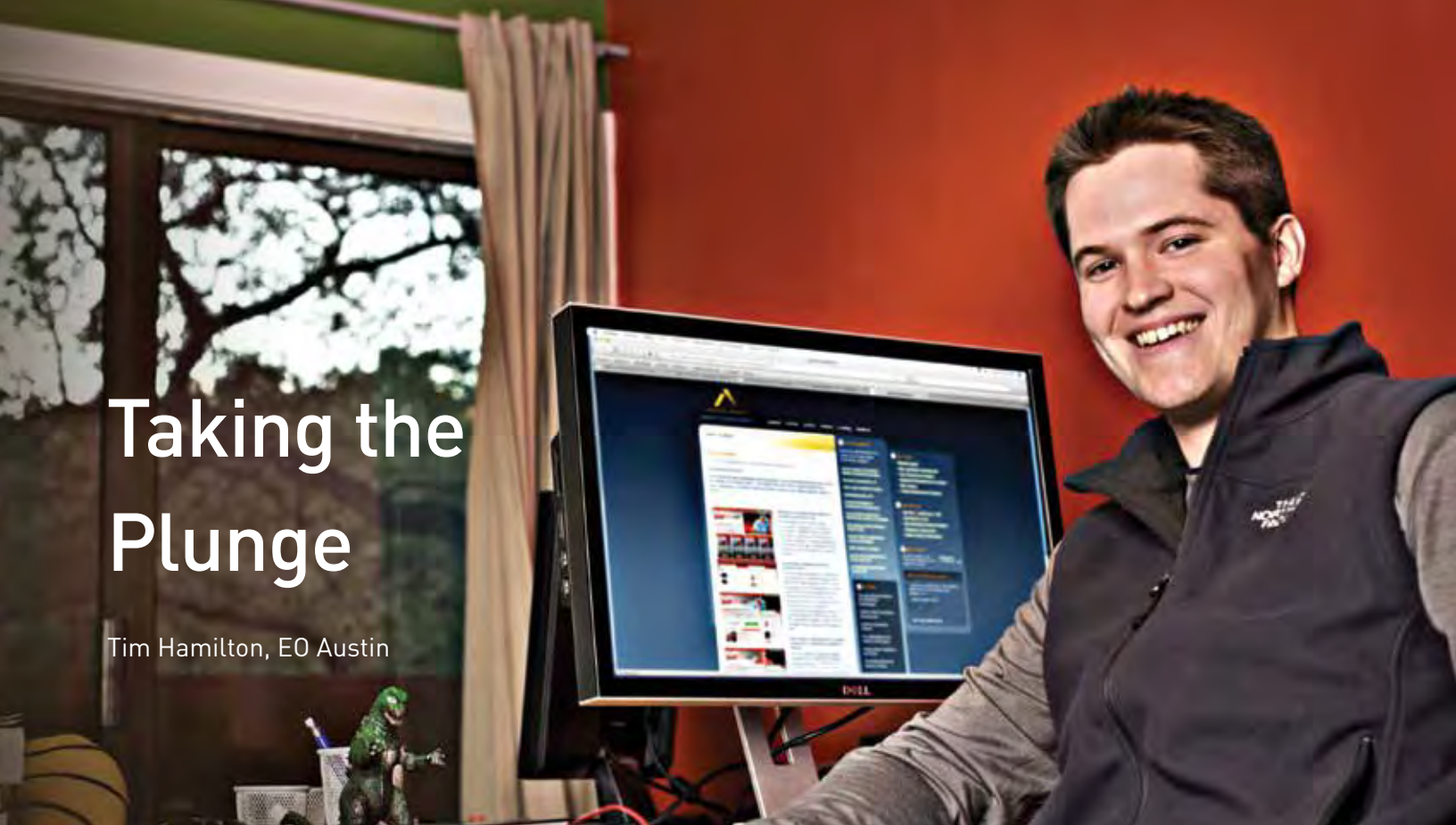
Photo: Darren Hubley

**December
issue of
Octane.**



In the December 2011 issue of *Octane*, our cover story —“Suiting Up for Jack”—highlighted EO Atlantic Canada member Todd McDonald's preparation to swim from **New Brunswick** to **Prince Edward Island** to raise funds for pediatric cancer charities. On 14 August, Todd, fellow EOer Chris Dobbin and several close friends successfully completed the swim.

“Swimming and watching nine others cross the 15-K Northumberland Strait was a lifetime memory!” said Todd. “I can’t think of a better way to spend a day than witnessing people achieve something truly great.”

A photograph of Tim Hamilton, a young man with short dark hair, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a dark blue zip-up jacket over a grey long-sleeved shirt. He is sitting at a desk in front of a large computer monitor. The monitor displays a web application with a dark blue header and several content sections. To the left of the monitor, there is a small green dinosaur figurine on the desk. In the background, there is a window with light-colored curtains and a red wall.

Taking the Plunge

Tim Hamilton, EO Austin

Tim, in his Austin, Texas, USA-based office.

As entrepreneurs, there's no shortage of motivational advice to help us overcome the fears and doubts that hamper the best of us. But to realize any benefit from it, we have to relate the advice to our own experiences. Early on in my business career, one helpful expression I kept hearing was: "Focus on the process, not on the outcome." What it meant, I hadn't a clue. It wasn't until I recalled a moment from my childhood that everything started to come together.

At the time, I had been in business for six years. I had two employees and my annual revenue was roughly US\$500,000—and that's where it stopped. For several years, that sum seemed to be my limit. When I finally became confident that my business was truly off the ground, I was ready to grow ... but I felt stuck. To grow, I would need to hire a third employee to handle the extra work. But for some reason, I couldn't take that next step. Fear held me back. I started to drag myself down with worry: What if I couldn't bring in the additional revenue to pay this new employee? What if I became overextended? What if my business suffered, or worse, failed?

Being stuck was frustrating, to say the least. It reminded me of a time in my childhood when I felt that same intense frustration. I was 11 years old and living in Houston, Texas, USA. One afternoon, I was at the neighborhood swimming pool, staring at the high-diving board. All of the other kids my age would line up and jump off it like it was no big deal. They seemed like they were having the time of their lives. Maybe I could do that, too, I thought. So I waited in line, and when it was my turn, I climbed the ladder and walked to the end of the board. But then I looked down. Total fear. I couldn't jump.

Humiliated, I climbed down the ladder and walked past all of the waiting kids. I was berating myself for my cowardice. My fear wouldn't let me jump off the high dive and be part of the fun crowd.

How did they do it? I wondered. How could they jump without fear? Then it hit me: All they were really doing was walking to the edge of the board and taking one more step. I could do that. Sure, I was afraid of what might happen, but the other kids showed me that it would probably be OK. So I convinced myself that if I just stuck to what I knew how to do—climbing a ladder and taking a few steps—I could handle what came next.

I climbed back up that ladder. And when I reached the end of the board, I focused on what I knew. I took the plunge, and it was fine. No, it was better than fine. The experience was thrilling in two ways: The physical thrill of the jump, and the thrill of using reason to get past my fear. When I recalled this childhood experience years later in business, I remembered how sticking with what I knew got me past my fear. And that's when it clicked: Focus on the process, not on the outcome. I finally knew what it meant!

Using this newfound knowledge, I decided to hire that third employee, and it was one of the best business decisions I've ever made. My company has grown steadily every year since I made the decision to "jump," and it's all because I took just one more step. Looking back at it all, this experience taught me that it's not enough to simply read or listen to time-honored advice or motivational messages. To really learn from it, we need to understand how it relates to us personally, to look to our own life experiences. Chances are the lessons are there.

Tim Hamilton is the founder and CEO of Astonish Design, a web development firm. Fun fact: Tim moved to the US from South Africa when he was 11 years old. While he has mastered his American accent, you'll occasionally catch his old accent if you get him talking about Johannesburg, where he was born.

Adopting a New Perspective

Sean Tonner, EO Colorado

Like most business owners, my entrepreneurial journey has been wrought with high-pressure meetings, major disappointments and nail-biting challenges. In spite of the high-octane stress, sudden setbacks and unexpected obstacles, I have rarely lost a night of sleep. What's my secret? Perspective. Everyone is given gifts in the form of experiences that help shape their approach to life. The three most impactful life events that serve as my guideposts are as follows:



Sean, right, in the Gulf War.

It Could Always Be Worse

When I was 19 years old, I was a Private First Class in the U.S. Army and on the front lines in the Gulf War. A month before the official start of the war, my unit finally received latrines. And as the lowest-ranking member of my unit, I was assigned to emptying those latrines. This involved pulling out the large metal pots of human waste, dragging them to a burn area, pouring helicopter jet fuel in the pots and then stirring the waste while it burned in insanely hot weather. Little did I know that I was being given a valuable life experience that would shape my perspective! I now go into every challenge with a sense of calm, because I know that I survived not only the war, but the worst job in history.

It's the Journey, Not the Destination

Five years ago, I received a call telling me that Greg, my best friend of 20 years, had been diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Greg was the epitome of a life fully lived. I will never forget when I learned Greg had cancer, nor my time watching him battle the disease with courage, dignity and humor. The day before Greg passed away, a small group of his close friends had one last beer with him. We thanked him for the gift he had given us—the realization that life is about the journey, not the destination. I use this knowledge as a guidepost every day. I now live with a sense of urgency, knowing that one day I, too, will pass. To keep this top of mind, I carry around my annual, quarterly and weekly goals as a reminder to not waste a single day.

You Get Back More than What You Give

My third guidepost is best summed up in a lyric from “The End,” the last song The Beatles ever recorded. It goes: “And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.” Four years ago, my family took a mission trip to El Crucero, a poor village in Nicaragua. We fell in love with the people and chose to plant our flag in the community. Since then, I have seen the good our medical clinic, soccer courses and feeding programs have done, but the greatest impact has been on me and my family. By giving back to those in need, we have been enriched beyond measure. I use this small oasis as a guidepost in my daily life. It shapes how my wife and I relate to our time and treasures, as we look for new ways to support others.

Everyone has those moments in life that define who they are and how they want to live. These are three of mine. I challenge you to search for your experiential gifts and use them to shape a perspective that will enable you to achieve the greatest version of yourself.

Sean Tonner is managing director of R&R Partners, a full-service marketing and public affairs company. Fun fact: If you contact Sean in the winter months, he will likely answer from his second office—the ski slopes of Colorado, USA.

Sean's best friend, Greg.



Sean, with a local child.





Forget Your Fall-Back Position

Angela Petro, EO Columbus

A few years ago, I attended a women's ski clinic in Alta, Utah, USA. I came home a much better skier, but more importantly, I learned something valuable that I could apply to my professional life: When I'm out of my comfort zone, I immediately revert to my "fall-back position," or the bad habit I most need to overcome. When I was nervous on those 10,000-foot peaks, I would forget all of the good coaching I had just received. I would wind up contorting myself out of position, and then flail back down the mountain as if I had learned nothing. When I returned to my business, I realized what a perfect metaphor that was for my work life. When I feel overwhelmed, frustrated or out of my depth in real-life situations, I

have the same tendency to forget the great coaching and flail away.

How many of us find ourselves in our fall-back positions when things get steep? It is easy to do, and over time you wind up growing comfortable with the default mode. The fall-back position that I struggle with the most is something I call "Abdication vs. Delegation." The polar opposite of micro-management, abdication is the result of my belief that once I task someone in my organization with a job, it will get done to my specifications and propagate itself within the entire company. Magically, everyone will sing the praises of this new policy or procedure and teach it forward. You can see where this is headed....

Over the years, my company has

become a graveyard where good ideas go to die and better procedures become dormant. I'm learning that being a leader doesn't just mean empowering people and then never following up. It means providing the tools and guidance they need to succeed and stepping in to hold them accountable when they don't. Not only for the health of the company, but for the personal development of my team members. When I abdicate, I send the following messages:

- » I'm all talk, no walk, when it comes to instituting positive change in my organization.
- » My people don't have to do what I ask because I won't do anything about it.
- » I don't value their time because I'm wasting it in the first place.

Clearly, these aren't the messages that I want to send to my team. So when I'm on the verge of falling back into that bad habit of abdication, I pause to remember their negative effects, and I focus on the positive results that will come from well-executed delegation. By delegating, I'm learning just how far my staff can go and how much they're able to contribute to the development of both my business and the team.

I live in Columbus, Ohio, USA, which means I don't get to work on my skiing techniques as often as I would like. But as an entrepreneur, I do have countless opportunities to work on my leadership skills. I know I'll never be the world's most perfect business owner or a world-class skier, but being aware of what my fall-back positions are and what can trigger them is helping me get better at both. And as my ski instructor so kindly reminded me as she fished me out of a snow bank for the tenth time, "Hey, it didn't kill you, and there's nothing like the rush!"

Angela Petro (pictured) is the owner of Two Caterers, a fun company that is serious about food. Fun fact: Angela lived in Berchtesgaden, Germany, for 16 months when she was 20 years old, using her hotel job as a home base while she traveled throughout Europe and North Africa.



Philippe Willi
EO Switzerland - Zurich

Philippe, far right, with staff.

Launching a startup in one's home country is hard enough; executing a multinational marketing and sales strategy to support that startup is a major task. Two years ago, my company, TrekkSoft, began offering tour operator management software in our home market of Switzerland and Central Europe. Our goal was to get global operators on board to scale up the software solution. We discovered, however, that jumping straight into sales and marketing isn't the best course for launching a startup. Here are some other key things we learned when it comes to entering new markets:

Calculate a Customer's Lifetime Value

In the beginning, we acquired multiple tour operators in Central Europe by spending a lot of money and time on business pitches. One of the ways we evaluated whether or not our marketing strategies were working was by focusing on the acquisition cost versus the lifetime value of the client. By focusing on obtaining new clients that—calculating their net lifetime values—are truly profitable, we learned a valuable lesson: You can't spend hundreds of dollars on customers who only give you US\$10 in net a month, especially if you don't

expect to keep the client for longer than a year. Realizing this, we used smaller companies that didn't have established booking service providers as our core target group, and we established more of a business-to-consumer strategy than a business-to-business one. This proved to be much more effective, as it let us scale up our capabilities.

Customers Aren't the Same Everywhere

Our second mistake came in the form of an assumption: We assumed that our customers were the same around the world, and that we could appeal to them by using the same marketing strategy. Big mistake. We chose small- and mid-sized tour operators from the 250,000 companies in our target market and approached them from a single scale. From our European background, we expected that cold-calling would be a viable and profitable strategy to expand our client base. It quickly became clear that it was not. We failed to catch our potential customers and burned financial resources without any impact on the bottom line. For a small team, the effort outweighed the benefits and the sales results ended up being insignificant. Looking back, we should have adopted targeted strategies for our diverse demographics, instead of assuming one size fits all.

Take Your Time with Social Media

The final pitfall centers on online marketing. We launched a large Facebook campaign and purchased Google Adwords, both of which had mixed results. Because of the wrong advertisement settings, bidding on likes and a manipulation from one specific user, we wound up paying for clicks from fake accounts. As a result, our first social media campaign led to a large amount of low-quality likes coming from seemingly fraudulent accounts. Apart from the money loss, we had to turn down a popular approach to advertising our product, which eliminated a big chunk of our social media marketing.

Like with Facebook, our work with Google Adwords also presented challenges. Our approach led to high costs, as we eagerly bid on keywords like "tour booking" or "online payment" without taking the time to do more research. Those keywords were too unspecific and wound up being very expensive. Seeing the error of our ways, we shifted our position and became more of an Internet-booking management service provider. This simplified the client acquisition process, making it much easier to market the service to consumers and gain critical mass crucial for media coverage. We also refined our Adwords campaign, building landing pages that provide relevant content to the user and advertising them with specific ads and corresponding keywords.

Looking back at it all, we learned some valuable lessons about executing marketing and sales strategies abroad. Ultimately, we learned the value of testing your strategies early to determine what works and what doesn't, and how to cope with the backlashes that come with missed steps. At the end of the day, marketing is not about the big picture, but the details. It was an expensive lesson to learn, but it was well worth it for future business success.

Philippe Willi is a serial entrepreneur and the co-founder and CFO of TrekkSoft, a booking solution and payment gateway for travel companies. Fun fact: The first thing Philippe does when he wakes up in the morning is a 45-minute workout on his home trainer.

The Greatest Business Decisions of All Time

Verne Harnish, EO Spain - Barcelona



As business expert Jim Collins wrote in the forward of my new book, “We’re living in times of tremendous uncertainty. Many growth-company CEOs feel rudderless.” Jim goes on to ask: “What is the key thing you can do about that uncertainty? You can have the right people with you.” And once you do, he notes, you have to make the right decisions. Often that means asking those great people you brought on board to guide you in areas outside of your core expertise. Jim’s research shows unequivocally that those leaders who made a series of great decisions over time “were very comfortable saying, ‘I don’t know.’”

If there’s one thing that every growth company must do to build and maintain a competitive edge in today’s fast-paced global economy, it’s make great decisions. A truism of life is that success equals the sum total of every decision one makes. And as Jim suggests, it’s the combination of thousands of decisions that lead to greatness. And yet, there seem to be a handful of decisions that stand apart from the rest. They are often those fateful “bet the farm” moments, when a CEO can go left or right, or not go at all. In my experience, the choices great leaders end up making are often counterintuitive and move companies, industries and even nations in entirely new directions.

Who was Andy Grove to think he could make a commodity computer chip a household name? Now, we have “Intel Inside.” What executive in his right mind would give his employees time to daydream? But that’s exactly what 3M CEO William McKnight did in 1948. In the end, business decisions like these stood out because they went against the grain of popular practice and unleashed a storm of imitation. Great business decisions have stood the test of time because they create tremendous value, while offering lessons learned that other business leaders can adopt and apply.

Here are my top five favorite business decisions of all time, in reverse order:

5 General Electric: Jack Welch’s decision to go “all in” and fund

Crotonville, a first-class training center, set the tone for thousands of businesses to create corporate universities. That decision also helped develop a generation of leaders at GE who have gone on to run countless other companies.

4 Samsung: The decision by this South Korean electronics giant two decades ago to launch an unprecedented sabbatical program, placing star employees in far-flung places around the globe for a year, continues to drive Samsung’s prominence as a top 20 brand.

3 Wal-Mart: Sam Walton’s decision to launch a simple, Saturday morning meeting for all employees in his first store has led to 50 years of rapid decision-making, and helped create one of the largest companies in the world.

2 Apple: The decision to bring back Steve Jobs as CEO of the company he founded, after a decade-long absence, resulted in “the best work of his life,” and the most valuable public company in the world.

1 Ford: Henry Ford’s decision to double the wages of his employees meant that workers were no longer viewed as drones to be paid as cheaply as possible, but as valuable assets. As a result, workers could afford the very products they were producing. That triggered a consumer revolution that would eventually help create the wealthiest nation on earth.

These are just a few of the decisions that have helped shape the global business landscape as we know it. At the end of the day, it’s the decisions we make as entrepreneurs that help us reach new levels of success and significance. How will your decisions define your business?

Verne Harnish (pictured) is the founding partner of Gazelles, Inc., a leadership- and business-building firm. Fun fact: Verne is the author of numerous business books, including his latest, The Greatest Business Decisions of All Time.

Education through EO Events

EO
Q&A



An inside look at what it takes to host a regional event

Every year, chapters around the world unite to host regional events that inspire and educate countless members. One of those events, EO NERVE, is a testament to the value these programs provide on a local and regional level. In this special interview, EO Charlotte member and EO NERVE Committee Chair John Bly talks with *Octane* about what it takes to host a regional event and the impact it has on the EO community.

You're currently planning the 2013 EO NERVE. What do you want this event to accomplish?

JB: EO NERVE is a US-East regional event with a focus on bringing members value. The goal is to bring 500-700 members together to grow, learn and build relationships with other members.

You've attended previous EO NERVE events. Why did you decide to chair the event in 2013?

JB: I started planning for the event with a few EO Charlotte members last September. It takes a lot of work, but it's worth it from an economical and member value standpoint. The benefits of hosting a large regional event are significant for the city

and the local EO chapter. For example, Charlotte—the location of EO NERVE—is getting behind the event because it's bringing in more than US\$10 million in economic impact. Additionally, EO Charlotte has gained considerable PR and marketing traction. This will help the chapter grow in membership and add strategic alliance partners over the next few years.

What have past EO NERVE events taught you about the planning process?

JB: I learned that the core of EO goes back to one of its values— 'Thirst for Learning.' We are trying to make this year's NERVE a conference laser-focused on the learning element of the entrepreneurial journey. To do this, we doubled the learning budget from the year before. Another big lesson learned was that EO members really want to interact with each other as much as possible. So for our socials, we have cut back on loud music and other distractions, choosing instead to emphasize the need for social interactions and experience-sharing opportunities.

What were some of your big wins in preparing for this event?

JB: Looking back, I'd say the biggest suc-

cess we have had is in announcing all of the speakers before registration began—this was a first for EO. Additionally, we were blessed with a new funding model that had each US-East member contribute US\$100 out of local dues. These funds were then sent directly from EO Global to our NERVE funds, allowing us to commit dollars to speakers earlier and help minimize the loss risk to EO Charlotte.

Do you have any tips for those chapters interested in starting a similar event in their region?

JB: For starters, leadership support is critical to putting together a successful event. Our Regional Council is 100-percent supportive of the event, and when leadership starts at the top it makes the entire model better. Also, it's important to get strong leaders on the event committee. Without a great committee of dedicated and proven EO leaders, the event would not be strong. There are 17 chapters in our region, and we have eight chapters represented on the committee; having these folks involved brings hype to their local chapters, which means more of their members will attend. Finally, if there's a way to get the regional funding model set up front, it will provide a backstop for the hosting chapter and allow the committee to focus on producing a high-quality learning event and not a fundraising campaign.

What kind of mark do you want EO NERVE to make in the EO community?

JB: We hope that NERVE provides a significant impact on the 360° of the entrepreneur— My Business, My Family, My Community and Myself. We have built the learning and social events around these elements, and believe that each member will walk away with at least one thing from each category that will impact their life.

Want to learn more about EO's regional events? Visit <http://events.eonetwork.org/blog/category/multi-chapter>.

EO Atlanta's Greg Crabtree (far left) with GSEA candidates from the 2012 EO NERVE.



Keeping Your Employees Engaged

Dan Clifford, EO San Francisco

Seven years ago, when I took the leap to leave behind a steady paycheck and start my own company, creating a strong, long-lasting culture was one of my biggest motivators. Every day my staff serves as ambassadors of my business, so keeping them happy, challenged and engaged is a high priority. Having experienced the trial and error involved with establishing a workplace culture, here are three low-cost, high-impact initiatives that my co-founder and I found to be the most successful:

Reinforce Your Core Values

Establishing and integrating our core values into our business processes has turned out to be our strongest recruiting and retention tool. We won't make a hire unless we see examples of the candidate consistently exhibiting all six of our core values. What's more, we won't retain an employee—even a high performer—if they disregard just one of the values, such as "Jump in to help others." To reiterate the importance of our values, we share employee core values stories in every company meeting, and we post them prominently in our offices. We've discovered that our employees are most engaged when they work with people who have diverse backgrounds and talents, but who share the same values such as "Build trust" and "Figure it out and get it done."

Leverage What Makes You Unique

We try to create benefits and systems that are unique to us. Our firm helps companies understand what users like and don't like about their digital products, such as mobile

and tablet applications. As such, we aim to attract and retain employees who "Embrace new technology" (another one of our core values). To reinforce this value, we established a tech benefit, where every year each employee can purchase up to US\$400 in technology so that they can keep up to date with the latest gadgets, phones, tablets and apps. Our employees are researchers who love to learn, so we also established monthly learning lunches, where internal and external speakers share their knowledge. Finally, our office location is unique—it's a block from the San Francisco Bay—so why stay locked up in the office? We established "walk and talks" to replace many of our one-on-one meetings.

Look for the Triple Impact

We found that our most successful programs had a triple impact—they benefited the company, employees and clients. For example, we started scheduling internal, quarterly "premier client meetings" to discuss how we can better serve our key clients and expand our business with them. Everyone who touches the client attends, from the hires right out of school to an executive sponsor. Employees like the chance to get to know each other in a different setting and enjoy taking part in the strategic-planning process. Conversely, clients appreciate the extra thought we put into how to serve them, and the end result is expanded revenues from repeat business. This creates a cycle of more employee engagement—happy clients equal happy employees, and vice versa.

People generally spend the majority of their waking hours at work. I've found that creating an engaging workplace is highly satisfying, it doesn't necessarily require huge financial investments and it can have a profound impact on people's lives.

Dan Clifford (pictured) is the co-founder of AnswerLab, a leading experience research firm. Fun fact: Dan likes to spend his free time hiking, biking and keeping up with his young son and daughter.

Dan, after surprising his business partner, Amy, with a celebration.

Connections to Experts: Secrets to Bold Branding

When it comes to branding, no one understands the magic of marketing quite like **Ido Leffler**, co-founder and “chief carrot lover” of Yes To, Inc., a health and beauty company. In just four years, Ido and his team built their business into one of the leading natural beauty brands in the world, securing their foothold in the competitive industry. *Octane* sat down with Ido to talk about tenacious marketing, how to build your brand and the secret to great customer service.



You went from having your healthcare products in 16 stores to 28,000 stores in just four years. How did you achieve this tremendous product placement in such a short amount of time?

IL: It boils down to four things: tenacity, chutzpah, relationships and quality products. At the start, we had a very clear vision that we wanted to become a big player in the industry, and we were not going to stop for a single second until we achieved that vision. We knew that we couldn't win strictly by the numbers—some of our competitors are large multi-nationals—so we used some cheeky techniques to get our foot in the door. Also, we understood the importance of relationships. We would fly around the world for a coffee meeting with an important retailer, just so they knew how serious we were about a partnership. Finally, it came down to the quality of our products. We realized that while selling a product people like is one thing, developing a product people LOVE is very different. If we think our product is something people would just like, we would scrap it and try again!

You proudly wear orange every day to make a connection with your products. What other “outside the box” approaches do you take to build your brand’s cult-like following?

IL: Our brand's success all starts with our staff. We throw impromptu cocktail parties, an occasional secret trip somewhere, one-on-one lunches with the founder, etc. Sometimes these simple things drive the team to be as obsessed about the success of the venture as you are, and in turn helps keep the brand strong and effective. Also, you don't necessarily need Sir Richard Branson-like stunts to succeed—finding something that makes you stand out of the crowd can work perfectly.

What are some unique ways entrepreneurs can promote their brand and create a niche in their industry?

IL: Per my first answer, create a product that rocks. Also, make sure your offering has a significant value. We always made sure

we offered a better value than our competitors. It's important to truly live the brand, too. Show your team, consumers and customers that you live, breath and sleep the ethos! Finally, even if you're a small player in your industry, fight above your weight class. Always go to industry events and become friendly with the 'who's who' of the industry. If you feel embarrassed, kick yourself in the butt and do it anyway!

One of your secrets to success is having great customer service. What are a few of your best practices?

IL: Know your consumer intimately, and treat them as you would a friend or close family member. I am still excited to hear when a person has used their hard-earned money to buy our product, as I want them to feel special. We also hold regular video chats with our customers, letting them know what's new and asking them what product they would like us to launch. And everyone loves a deal, so we regularly send out coupons and samples to our loyal fans and encourage them to share them with their friends and family.

How do you keep your brand ahead of the marketing curve in such a competitive industry?

IL: The bottom line is that we do the simple things very well! You don't need to be a marketing guru to succeed; what you need is your finger on the pulse of your industry at all times, making sure you're ahead of the game and quickly adjusting if you're not. In our case, we want to make sure that we see international trends ahead of time. We do this by taking trend trips to different parts of the world in order to catch the latest trends and styles. It's simple and effective.

Ido Leffler (pictured) is the co-founder of Yes To, Inc., and a frequent speaker at EO events. Email Ido at ido@yestocarrots.com.

Learning to Let Go

Jeremy Levitt
EO Sydney

Have you ever launched a business with the expectation that it would run itself? It sounds pretty foolish when you see that sentence in print, but a few years ago I believed it. When I launched my online business, ServiceSeeking.com.au, I thought I could take a hands-off approach. No staff, just a website where customers can list their jobs and compare quotes from interested businesses. It seemed so simple—just build the site, sit back and wait for the business to take off!

It all looked so easy. There were no pesky products that needed to be produced, packaged or shipped. Everything was virtual. Sure, it would take some maintenance to get everything off the ground, but after that I thought a healthy server would suffice as fuel and word of mouth would take care of the rest. How wrong I was! As it turns out, the website required a whole lot of love and attention, and the more I gave it, the more it demanded.

In the beginning, I started off as CEO and co-founder, and thought my days would be filled with making important corporate decisions. My role, however, quickly expanded to marketing and SEO manager, SEM analyst, bookkeeper, publicist and everything in between. As a former lawyer, I was used to working hard, but this was something else. What was supposed to be a relatively simple startup venture was taking over my life. Before long, “founder’s syndrome” had me in its grips, and I was working 16-hour days, seven days a week. Ugh.

The funny thing is that when other entrepreneurs asked me about my work philosophy, I’d find myself masking the truth to save face. I would quote Tim Ferriss’ *4-Hour Work Week*, but the reality of my life was much different. Every waking hour was spent on keeping the website running, and I found myself on the verge of burning out. The proverbial “a-ha” moment came one day when I was elbow deep in Google Analytics. I had built a whole system

around helping our customers save time, yet I couldn’t apply those principles to my own working life!

The business and my personal life were suffering—something had to give. The solution? A hands-off approach. I decided to invest time in developing processes that would take me out of the business rather than actually doing the work myself. I started by implementing statistical dashboards to stay on top of every aspect of the business without being so personally involved. In order to feel comfortable “letting go,” I needed information from all facets of my business laid out on one screen. I wanted instant access to all data related to membership sales and cancellations, site traffic, goal conversions, etc.

How did we do this? We leveraged a third-party solution—Geckoboard.com. It provided us with a user-friendly dashboard that reported on important business information in real-time. But you can’t rely on systems for everything. I also needed to hire more staff to manage and report on these processes; this presented a whole new challenge. I needed to know what was going on in my business without micromanaging, so I scheduled weekly meetings with my staff, where they would report on their previous week’s work. After these meetings, I check their numbers against my own stats to make sure I have a true picture of my business at any point in time.

It’s important for the health of a company to ensure you know what’s going on, but it’s impossible to do everything. I needed to find a way to delegate but still remain on top of things. Without the right processes in place, this can be daunting and exhausting. I discovered that I could still feel connected to every facet of the business so long as I had the data at my fingertips and the right people to power it. My staff is aware of the metrics against which their responsibilities are assessed, and this gives me the peace of mind to sleep soundly. Well, most nights anyway!

Today, my business is growing rapidly and is set to reach 700,000 users by the end of the year, yet I have the same hours each day to manage it all. With these new processes in place, I’m confident that as my company continues to thrive, I’ll be able to stay in control.

Jeremy Levitt (pictured, far left) is joint CEO of ServiceSeeking.com.au, a website where customers compare quotes and prices for services like plumbing, house painting, cleaning and more. Fun fact: Jeremy likes Australian art and enjoys frequent travels to Colombia, his second home.



KEYS TO AVOIDING POOR PARTNERSHIPS

Kurt Olender
EO New Jersey

So, you and your partners just started a business. The future looks bright, everyone expects the company to grow quickly and you're even fantasizing about your successful exit strategy ... sound familiar? While some business partnerships end on a positive note, others often don't. I know from experience. For 20 years, I have been representing owners of closely held businesses, and I also own several businesses with partners. In my time, I have seen some poor partnerships and watched as they negatively impacted healthy businesses. Here are a few examples of partnerships gone bad, as well as some tips that could help you avoid a similar fate:

Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail

Six family members own an equal interest in a company that owns a lot of real estate, and nobody can agree on anything pertaining to the operation of the company. They have deadlock on virtually every significant company decision, and the assets of the company are wasting away. Litigation for eight years follows. All of this could have been avoided with a partnership agreement. The purpose of a partnership agreement is to plan for events that are likely to arise, and then provide direction as to what happens when they do. Your partnership agreement is one of the most important documents you will ever sign. Whether your partners are family members or not, eventually issues will arise that will be very difficult to resolve without one.

Money is Everything

Three partners—equal owners—start a company with each contributing equal capital. In the following year, with the company growing better than expected, more money is needed. One of the three partners is wealthier than the other two, and the other two cannot afford to put in their equal share

of capital. The wealthy partner makes a loan to the company at 18-percent interest, and then leaves the loan unpaid for an extended period of time, collecting interest to the detriment of his partners and to his sole benefit. This could have been avoided if the partnership had a capital call provision that specifies under what terms money can be provided to the company by the partners, and how that money is to be treated. Not having one can put your business and finances in harm's way.

I Want that Equity Back

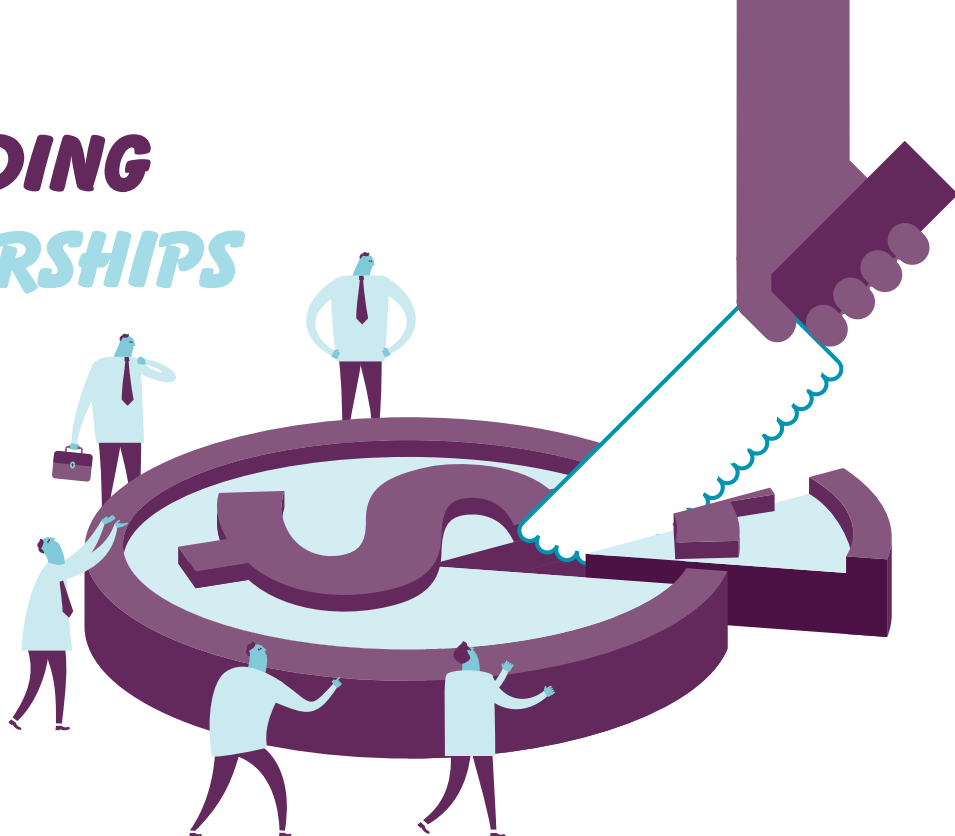
Your equal partner dies and his widow becomes your new partner. You have no buy-out provision in the event of the death of a partner, with the outcome being that you are stuck with her or you end up in court litigating a buy-out. Now the widow gets 50 percent of the profit, and never contributes even a day of work. How could this have been avoided? Every partnership needs provisions to deal with the departure of a partner: by death, disability, the desire of a partner to sell their equity to a third party, or termination. Failing to have them can create unpleasant consequences; at best, the inability to recapture equity from a departing partner who continues to receive distributions of profit from the company without contributing work, and at worst, becoming stuck with a new partner that you don't want.

Arm Wrestling Doesn't Work in Business

Two equal partners cannot agree on anything. The company is deadlocked and the inability of the partners to find resolution threatens the ability of the company to continue in business. One partner sues the other, and during the lengthy litigation process, the company falters and ultimately fails. A provision providing for the use of a third-party mediator or advisor to help resolve the deadlock could have meant the difference between continuing in business or liquidation. If the deadlock cannot be resolved, then a secondary provision should provide for the right of the partners to buy each other out, or require the company to be sold.

These examples touch on only a small sampling of the issues that can arise between business partners. Effective planning, a properly drafted partnership agreement and instituting the right provisions in advance enables a company to survive even the worst of circumstances, while treating the partners equitably in the process.

Kurt Olender is the founding partner of Olender-Feldman LLP, a full-service corporate law firm. Fun fact: Kurt is an avid motorcyclist who, when not working around the clock, rides thousands of miles a year.





WHEN PASSION *meets* PURPOSE

To be successful in business, you need to stand out. That best practice is especially true when it comes to entrepreneurship. No one understands the power of uniqueness more than Zahra Alharazi, an EO Calgary member who's making her voice heard in business and beyond.

In many ways, Zahra's entrepreneurial journey is like most others— it's filled with a thousand and one stories, memories and lessons learned that have helped shape her into one of today's most innovative entrepreneurs. And yet it's remarkably different, a journey colored by challenges and cultural experiences: She's a Yemeni woman born in Uganda. She was raised in places that tourists rarely visit. She grew up during two civil wars. She married at age 17. She had three children by age 25, and later immigrated to Canada, a land as foreign as she was. From being a stay-at-home mom with no degree or career to finding an entrepreneurial spirit she never knew she had, Zahra is a perfect example of what can be achieved when passion meets purpose.

In this special interview, *Octane* sat down with Zahra to talk about finding her entrepreneurial voice, the magic of marketing and defining her future.

What was your childhood like, and how do you think it helped define you later in life?

ZA: I grew up in a country where women don't have a voice, and finding mine was a long, drawn-out process full of self-doubt and inner struggle. I went to an international school as a child. I was the only Yemeni and scholarship student in a school filled with the local ambassadors' and expats' children. I tried so hard to fit in, but my new western behavior was quickly met with disapproval. Soon after, I found myself in an all-girls Arabic school, where I didn't speak Arabic, I didn't know anyone, and yet again, I was the 'outsider' looking in.

It was tough being different at such a young age. During my childhood, I spent every minute of every day trying to blend in and not stand out. I wanted to be just like everyone else— to change my behavior, my accent, my thoughts. I wound up squeezing myself into a tiny box, and was ecstatic when I finally fit. I didn't realize at the time that my individuality would later serve an important role in business and life, that it would drive me as an entrepreneur.





Family time: Zahra at home with her daughter, Amani, and son, Ahmed.

You immigrated to Canada in 1996, where your search for self-discovery began. What was life like for you back then?

ZA: Life was so drastically different then. I was 27 years old. I had no degree, no career and had just moved to a country where I didn't know anyone. Like my childhood days, I was a stranger in a new place; worst of all, I had no idea what my purpose was in life. I had no ambition beyond the four walls of my house. I was my father's daughter, my husband's wife and my children's mother, and I was bored out of my mind. I wanted something to do. I wanted to make a difference. So one day, I went to the local mall for an afternoon of retail therapy, and I came home with my first job— part-time work at Danier Leather. That job was where I found my first inkling of what was to become a career that I just couldn't resist. I had finally found my calling, and I was ready to put everything I had into it.

How did this job serve as a catalyst for your personal and professional growth?

ZA: In many ways, this job opened my eyes to the bigger and better things that awaited me. Working in retail taught me that reading people was an art, and that you could motivate and change their behavior depending on your design or message. I outgrew Danier pretty quickly, and decided to enroll in the Alberta College of Art + Design. It was a bold move, but I wanted to do more, to be more. At age 32, while raising a family, I received a bachelor's degree in visual communications. I was ready to make a mark in the business world. I had finally found what I loved— that hunger that I could not shake. It gets me out of bed in the morning and it keeps me up at night.

How did you make your foray into entrepreneurship?

ZA: After graduating, I went on to work for two design firms, both of which taught me valuable lessons about what to do and not do in business. I also realized that I was far too stubborn to work for anyone else! You could say I had found my entrepreneurial spirit ... that unwavering drive to be my own boss, that commitment to control my own fate. So, four years later, I started Foundry Communications, a marketing and communications studio. In six years, we went from five employees to 20, won numerous awards and became an internationally recognized firm.

How have you used your voice to excel as an entrepreneur?

ZA: I learned a long time ago that what makes me stand out is what makes me interesting. Standing out is a marketable skill, coveted by individuals and businesses alike. There's no such thing as blending into success. As an immigrant, I had the advantage of an international perspective. From Bangladesh to St. Louis, I knew what set me apart, so I knew what made me valuable on a world stage. I took those insights and applied them to my business.

In many ways, marketing and communications allows companies to find their own unique voice. Through Foundry, we help clients along that journey of self-discovery. From account services to design and production, we find what the client never knew they were missing. Design work is all about the story. When we sit down with clients, we want to learn where they're coming from and use elements of their experiences to create

the best products possible. Whether the road is smooth or rough, we come up with an idea that can be universally understood. Ironically, after fighting the concept of individuality for many years, I now make a living helping companies stand out and get noticed.

What keeps you motivated in your industry?

ZA: I heard the CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Kevin Roberts once respond to a reporter who asked if he sees the glass half-full or half-empty: 'Who the #\$%! cares? Drink it and fill it up again!' That pretty much sums up my approach to life. As far as business goes, about 80 percent of my job is to get into the target audience's head—how can we change and modify their behavior? I question and challenge everything, and sometimes it's so easy to get caught up in your own ideas and convictions that you market your way into a circle. Legendary ad man, Bill Bernbach, carried a piece of paper in his pocket everywhere he went. He had the same piece of paper for more than 20 years, and when he found himself fighting for a campaign, he would excuse himself, walk outside and pull it out. Written on the paper was the question: 'What if they are right?' He would then put it back in his pocket and return to the room with a new attitude and perspective. I think of that story often when I am getting ready to dig in. I work in the service business, and it serves me well to remember that little piece of paper.

Philanthropy is a big part of your life. Why is it important to you to give back?

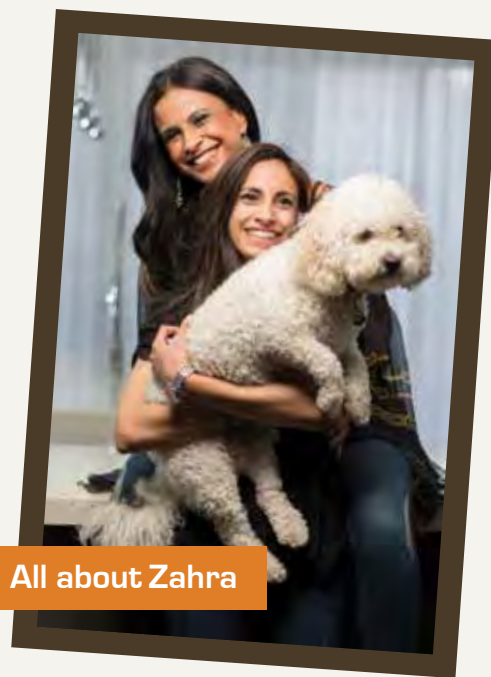
ZA: When I'm not working or with my kids, I'm serving on local boards, supporting other immigrants in the community and hosting charity design drives. Also, my company donates CAD\$100,000 worth of its time helping not-for-profits with their marketing needs. I know how much luckier I am than most who've immigrated here, so I want to give back as much as I can. I know what it was like being lost in a new place, so helping others is important to me.

You've come a long way as an entrepreneur. What advice do you have for other women in entrepreneurship?

ZA: I have done my fair share of interviews over the years, and some of the questions I always get asked include: 'Is there a glass ceiling for women in the corporate world?' or 'Is it harder for women to succeed?' I find myself getting more and more annoyed with these questions. Pick up any magazine and it will tell you that only tall, beautiful people with an Ivy League education will succeed. And I will say no ... you are only as successful as you want to be. Leave everything else behind. Don't use the crutches of someone else's judgment. There are people of all shapes, sizes and colors who have been, and will be, extremely successful. You can stay in the cage or you can fly, it's your choice.

Capturing Zahra's Story

Want to learn more about Zahra's journey, her company and how she's using her voice to make a mark in business and beyond? Watch a special *Octane* interview with the inspirational entrepreneur by scanning the QR code at right.



All about Zahra

From being a stay-at-home mom to starting a renowned business, Zahra has had a remarkable journey ... and it's only just beginning. Here is some more information about the award-winning entrepreneur:

What was the last book you read?

"The World is Flat, by Thomas Friedman. It's a brief history of the 21st Century."

What's your favorite guilty pleasure?

"A bag of chips, or anything salty!"

What has been your favorite award that you've received so far?

"The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee medal from the Governor General of Canada, which was awarded for my contributions to the country. That recognition from my adopted country was an especially proud moment for me."

What's your favorite thing about entrepreneurship?

"The ability to do it my way."

What word best describes your entrepreneurial journey so far?

"Exhilarating."

When did you know that you had "made it" as an entrepreneur?

"When we won a massive client a month after opening our doors ... we sat back and thought, 'Oh, crap!'"

The Power of Pete



Tom Salonek, EO Minnesota

Whenver I start to lose perspective over a business frustration, I immediately think of my best friend, Pete (pictured), and my thinking straightens out immediately. Pete is an extremely talented sales guy. He's fun, humorous and makes others feel instantly at ease. Despite all of the challenges he faces, he never quits striving, believing and being thankful. I've been lucky to be Pete's best friend since we met 25 years ago in college. Believe me when I tell you, Pete makes the world a better place by being part of it.

Pete is paralyzed from the waist down. He was the victim of a tragic accident involving an irresponsible driver a year ago. An avid runner, Pete was struck by a car while training for a marathon near his home in suburban Illinois, USA. The driver ran a red light, hit Pete and sent him flying 30 feet before he crashed into concrete pavement. The impact was devastating, leaving Pete with a broken leg and ribs, a partially severed spinal cord and badly damaged internal organs.

Pete was between jobs when this happened. He had just accepted a new job and was enjoying one week at home with his wife and kids before starting the new position. Pete's youngest son, Andy, is our Godchild. He is a beautiful child with autism. Prior to Pete's injury, the family was focused on Andy's improvement with twice-per-day therapy. The tragic accident meant the family's sole breadwinner was no longer able to work and, most significantly, they were without health or disability insurance while their medical costs skyrocketed.

My wife and I decided that we would do everything we could to help. We are lucky to have our health, ample financial resources

and the blessing of Pete and his family in our lives. Our commitment, along with that of others, is allowing Pete to focus on what's most important: recovering and realizing his dream to walk again. While the doctors have counseled modest expectations, Pete simply won't accept it. He has endured nearly a dozen surgeries, months away from his family at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and many more months of hard work. I watched him during weekly visits for the first 12 weeks of his rehabilitation. His ability to make the therapy team cheer, laugh and cry with his progress, gratitude and good humor was (and is) beyond inspiring. To me, Pete is a hero.

We're told in business that commitment, persistence, self-confidence and having a positive mental attitude make all the difference. Pete proved to me that not only do these things matter ... they're all that really count. His journey has also shown me how quickly things can change, and how your personal life comes first. I used to run my life around my business. Now I run my business around my life. Because I made the decision to let my business "give life" versus "take it," I have more sanity in my day-to-day routine and I can spend more time with my family. I'm also learning what the word "daddy" means in highly personal ways (nothing beats a peanut-butter-and-jelly kiss from a happy toddler!). I have Pete to thank for that.

Tom Salonek is the founder and CEO of Intertech, a software development training and consulting firm, and author of Building a Winning Business.

Fun fact: Tom starts off every day by running with his Doberman, Alexander the Great.

EO Global Board Spotlight

A Special Look at EO's Influential Leaders



Gus Valen, EO Cincinnati
EO Global Chairman-Elect-Elect
EO leader since 2007

If you had to pick one band or musician to create the soundtrack to your life, who would it be and why?

GV: It would have to be Led Zeppelin, but with John Bonham, who is my all-time favorite drummer. He's since passed, but they could let me sit in on a track!

What has been one of your most inspiring moments as an EO member?

GV: The presentation John O'Leary gave at a recent EO event. John is a burn victim, author and celebrated speaker, and his presentation focuses on the power of love and overcoming adversities. He spoke at GLC: Vancouver, and his speech almost made me cry.

Who do you look up to in business or life?

GV: My dad, who always went against the grain as an appellate court judge. He's always been a man who makes what he feels is the right decision, whether or not it is popular.

What's something you wish more people knew about you?

GV: I wish more people knew my better half, my wife, Kelly, who is the smart one in the family and sets me straight. I've been madly in love with her since we met at the age of 18. She is so supportive of my time in EO.

How do you spend your time when you're not leading EO?

GV: I drive my daughter to school on days I'm in town, coach my kids in sports and play in a rock band with my best friend from high school (when I can fit in the shows!). Sometimes to make it all work, I've flown back in from an EO event to play a show that same night or make my daughter's birthday party that morning. Oh, and of course, I have a couple of businesses to lead.



Blair Assaly, EO Edmonton
EO Director
EO leader since 2004

What's one of your favorite things about being an EO leader?

BA: I'd have to say relationship building. I have made and fostered amazing relationships over the years. When you start to meet members from around the world, you really begin to understand the similarities and challenges we all face. Being an EO leader affords me this great opportunity.

What is one unique thing people don't know about you?

BA: I enjoy collecting artwork.

What value has EO brought to your life beyond just business?

BA: EO has an incredible impact on my family. It is a pleasure to have both my wife and boys accompany me on various EO trips. My wife, Tara, has also participated in a Spousal Forum for two years, and is seeing the benefit of that experience.

If you weren't an entrepreneur, what would you be doing right now?

BA: The only way I would not be running a business is if I had sold it or retired. If that is the case, I would be working in my community, supporting special projects and golfing.

Who do you idolize in business or life?

BA: In general, the people I respect and admire are the people who, with their actions, always put family first.

In the next few issues of Octane, we will be highlighting members of EO's Global Board of Directors, all of whom play an integral role in EO's success. For more information, visit www.eonetwork.org.



10 QUESTIONS



John Martin St. Valery | EO U.A.E., EO member since 2007 Founding partner and CEO of The Links Group

What's something people would be surprised to learn about you?

JS: Despite having quite a posh name and speaking the Queen's English, people may be surprised to learn that I grew up in a family with very little money. Both of my parents described themselves as fallen aristocrats, but with no money! This was the root of my determination to succeed and restore the family name and fortune.

In your opinion, what are some key characteristics every entrepreneur should have?

JS: They've got to have absolute belief or conviction. It is no good just to hope to succeed. You must truly believe that you will. A few knocks and failures along the way are pretty essential, too. And energy—a lazy entrepreneur is not an entrepreneur!

What three adjectives would your friends use to describe you?

JS: Well, after 'modest(!),' I would hope 'amusing,' 'generous' and 'enigmatic.'

What gets you up and going in the morning?

JS: My wife, Carolyn, inspires me every day to follow my dream. The dream changes from time to time, but my 24-year marriage and two wonderful kids are my reason.

Where do you see yourself 20 years from now?

JS: Probably being a nagging influence on my grandchildren to do something 'different,' I expect, whilst growing old disgracefully myself. Seriously, I hope to be able to mentor and support fledgling businesses of interest in the future.

When you were 15 years old, you enrolled at the Metropolitan Police Cadet College in London. What were you hoping to get out of this experience?

JS: At that age, the majority of my school pals were looking forward to the summer break before heading back to school. I didn't have such

academic aspirations at the time. I wanted to explore, to fly from the nest and make my own way in life. During a school trip to London, I walked past New Scotland Yard in Victoria and saw an advertisement luring young men and women to the police service. This was an opportunity to finish my secondary education in a vocational environment, and I was immediately hooked.

What life lessons did you take away from your years as a "copper"?

JS: Never read a book by its cover. What you think you've just seen or heard may not be what you've actually seen or heard. This has been a great business and personal tool in learning to be responsive, but not too reactive, in one's haste to get something done.

Did any of your police experiences help you become a better entrepreneur?

JS: In my view, being an entrepreneur is about developing opportunities that others may not go for—some call it calculated risk taking. The best detectives that I worked with had an 'instinct.' You cannot learn instinct; it's either part of your DNA or it's not. Whilst being involved in covert surveillance work, I was able to sharpen my instincts for noticing people, things or opportunities, which has helped me greatly in my entrepreneurial life.

What is the best life or business decision you've ever made?

JS: I honestly believed that I had a job for life in the police service, and I still think I would have done well in that role. Had I stayed in, I would be retiring from the service next year on full pension. My best decision was to take that plunge from the 'known' to the 'unknown,' when I left public service for the world of commerce. I have no regrets at all, and I respect those who continue to serve.

If you were to write a book about your life, what would the title be?

JS: It'd be about a British entrepreneur in the Middle East titled, 'The Persian Version.'

Managing in a Down Economy

Kim Harrison, EO Philadelphia

Everyone knows that times have been tough. That sentiment is not news to any entrepreneur looking to grow a company. The economy has been used as a reason to explain away a whole host of failures, but the truth is, as long as there is volatility and movement, the opportunity to make a profit exists. As firms go under and competition thins, smart leaders grab market share. The question every entrepreneur should ask themselves is, “How do I use this economy to my advantage?” Here are some fundamental principles of success I follow in my businesses:

You Only Make One First Impression

Research has shown that many people draw conclusions in less than four seconds. When it comes to your business and how others perceive it, clothes count. Marketing materials count. Spelling counts. In fact, everything counts as you're out there trying to win and keep business. In my experience, it's the tiny mistakes and misunderstandings early on in a client relationship that set the tone forever. Where is your client's first impression coming from? Is it the receptionist who takes the calls, your website or—gasp—new hires? I make it a point to assess my team every week and ensure that everyone has the tools they need to serve as ambassadors of my business. In a down economy, every interaction is gold and first impressions are priceless.

Great Service Trumps Everything

One of the best ways you can stand out from your competitors is to elevate your customer service. When I want to make the most memorable impact with my clients, I ask myself: Where was the last place that I went to shop that I couldn't wait to return? What made that experience so great? I then dig through the answers and pull out any knowledge that I could readily apply to my own company. They say mimicry is flattery, and when it comes to business, that's

true if you can take what already works and adapt it to your business model. Ultimately, people work with people they like, and they like companies that they can trust. A business that can accomplish these things will succeed no matter the economy.

Innovate with New Offerings

To increase revenues, we create new product lines. It may sound ridiculous in a down economy, but I've learned that the more options clients have, the more chances for success. I make it a point to figure out what similar products my clients need to buy that are natural extensions of our core business, and start providing them. We keep adding to our product lines at an increasing rate, because we know that if we're not one step ahead of the competition, we'll be one step behind. When it comes to excelling despite the economy, innovation is king.

Culture is Everything

Having a great team goes a long way to ensuring that whatever door a client enters, your staff is doing their part to secure a future relationship. To create a culture of success in our organization, we make it a point to celebrate every success, no matter how big or small. We created a “good news” board and placed it in the employee kitchen for all to see, we praise those who praise clients and we instituted monetary awards for team members whom clients call out as impressive. Also, we make all goals public and firm wide, so that every team member is aware of how their role matters.

Kim Harrison is the founder and CEO of Focus Forward, LLC, and Panel Direct. Focus Forward specializes in focus group recruitment, while Panel Direct provides US-based survey panels for research that requires a quantitative approach. Fun fact: Kim is an avid traveler, seriously dedicated shopper and plays a mean game of Texas Hold 'Em.



EO ASKS

If you could change one thing about your leadership style, what would it be and why?

“I would ask for more feedback. I have such a clear vision of where I'm headed that I feel like I sometimes know it all. Everyone has nuggets of knowledge, so asking for input will open the range of possibilities for my business!”

– Renee Rouleau, EO Dallas

“I jump into ‘solution mode’ too quickly. I need to listen more to what other people are saying, rather than trying to solve things as quickly as possible. I am finding that my Forum is helping me get better at this.”

– Justinus Adriaanse,
EO South Africa –
Johannesburg

“It would be to spend the first and last five minutes of each meeting with my team members talking about something other than business. Getting to know each person and understanding what motivates them in their daily lives would give me a greater perspective into how they work, think and lead inside my company.”

– Laura Love, EO Colorado

“I would like to be a more collaborative decision maker. I tend to make decisions really fast, and I don't always take the time to get input from my team beforehand.”

– Mary Abbajay, EO DC

Istanbul

TRANSFORM. TRANSCEND. TOGETHER.

EO Members Transform in Istanbul, Turkey

Inspired by the energy, persistence and transformational power of its membership, and in association with EO's 25th Anniversary celebration, EO hosted the **2012 EO Istanbul University** from 19-23 October in Istanbul, Turkey. The theme of the event—"Transform. Transcend. Together."—captured the impact of entrepreneurship as 550+ members from around the world discovered how to transform not just their businesses, but their lives.

Throughout the event, members heard moving EO360° testimonials, engaged 11 speakers and explored historic landmarks like a 1,600-year-old cistern and a 500-year-old Grand Bazaar with 60 streets and 50,000 shops. The event, which helped usher in EO Turkey, one of EO's newest chapters, was a tremendous success, setting new benchmarks for learning, socials and off-site activities.

A big thank you goes out to the Istanbul University committee, design teams, EO Turkey and other EO leadership for their amazing support!





David Niu, EO Seattle

They say entrepreneurship is all about taking risk. In February, I took a big one: I sold everything, stuffed the rest into storage and bought one-way tickets to New Zealand for my wife, my then 10-month-old daughter and myself. After starting and managing two companies in the past 13 years, I decided to take a much-needed “career-cation” and travel around the world for six months. My goal: To create lifelong experiences with my family, while soul searching about the next chapter of my life and entrepreneurial journey. Here are some lessons I learned during my travels:

Give Yourself Room to Breathe

I always think that I’m going to be refreshed after a week or two on a sandy beach, but I learned that’s so far from the truth. My preconceived notions, judgments and biases did not fade from black to grey to white until I was about six months on the road. My mind became more open and receptive to angles, especially when it came to business. For example, when I left home, I was obsessing over how I could simplify the annual performance review process in business. If I hadn’t shaken up my surroundings and preconceived biases with my career-cation, I don’t think I would have been open-minded enough to take a new approach with my company’s first offering. By giving myself room to breathe, I was able to gain enough escape velocity for my mind to open up after years of the same societal, familial and personal expectations.

Connect. Connect. Connect.

While traveling to seven countries, I leveraged the EO network to learn from

entrepreneurs in various industries. I met a winemaker in New Zealand, a fruit trader in Shanghai, China, and a financial advisor in Seoul, South Korea. These entrepreneurs ran businesses outside of my technology industry, which gave me a more holistic understanding of what it takes to manage people. The first thing I realized was that regardless of industry or location, managing people is the most gratifying, yet challenging, part of owning a business. Each entrepreneur I met shared tips on how to better manage their teams. In Seoul, I learned the importance of leveraging the after-work drinking culture, as well as conducting one-on-ones with different team members each week and asking, “What are we not doing that we should be doing?” And in New Zealand, I learned the value of teaching your staff yoga, because if they learn a shared activity, they’re more likely to look up to you as a mentor and less likely to leave.

Define Your Cultural Values

When I was starting my first business, I focused on customers, products, strategies, etc. With my new venture, TINYhr, I’m building my business around people and culture. During my travels, I wrote on a sheet of paper all of the people whom I loved working with in the past and all of the people who didn’t fit. Then I wrote down potential cultural values, overlayed them on the two columns of individuals and asked myself, “Do these values enable the ‘A’ players to flourish and weed out those who don’t fit?” The answer was “no.” So I kept editing and sharpening my cultural values until it met those two criteria.

Don’t Compromise those Cultural Values

EO Sydney’s Andrea Culligan liked my approach regarding cultural values, but

mentioned that they aren’t true values unless I was willing to hire and fire based on them. I now embrace that approach, and have also added my own rule, which is that I’m also willing to forego revenue if I don’t find the right person. In my past life, I’d bring someone on board because we needed them for a new project. I now realize the long-term costs outweigh the benefits. So now, before I consider working with a contractor or hiring an employee, I always share with them our vision, mission and cultural values. If they aren’t on board with these guideposts, it’s OK, but I won’t work with them.

When I first told my Forum, friends and family about my career-cation idea, I received one of two responses: “You’re crazy!” or “I wish I could do that.” I believe that the truth is somewhere in the middle. By making the decision to travel the world with my family, I learned so much about my wife, my daughter, my passion and myself. Now, I can’t wait for the next career-cation—who knows what it will teach me!

David Niu is the founder of TINYpulse.com, a lightweight employee morale and feedback solution.

Fun fact: David enjoys marathons, triathlons and “tough muddering” when not busy daydreaming about the next family career-cation.

David, with his wife and daughter.





The False-Start Entrepreneur

Allon Raiz, EO South Africa - Johannesburg

As a consultant, I've had the privilege of helping countless entrepreneurs achieve growth and greatness over the years. Along the way, I've seen many instances of what I call "The False Start"—companies that seem to be getting off the ground and taking their competitors by storm, only to quickly fall short.

It happens more often than you'd think. Entrepreneurs hit it big by landing a great contract,

but instead of using their success as a launching pad for bigger and better things, they wind up losing direction. They start making poor judgment calls because they think that their hard work is done. They lose sight of the strategies they need to implement to ensure that these big contracts come rolling in regularly, rather than just being one-off deals. The decisions that "False-Start" entrepreneurs make become based on ego instead of being driven by sound business objectives. And the company that a short while ago looked so promising ends up in the dust heap instead.

Over the years, I've identified 10 warning signs to check whether an entrepreneur is experiencing a False Start, rather than the beginnings of sustainable growth. In my experience, the danger of falling victim to a False Start is greatest when a company lands a deal that gets it noticed—a deal normally

worth more than three months' average turnover. So when a new company is brought to my attention, and people are saying that the company is ready to take off, I check to see if three or more of the following apply:

- » The entrepreneur recently bought a new car.
- » The entrepreneur is doing what I call "victory laps," telling everyone, "Look how great I am!"
- » Thinking that their old clients are "too small" now, the entrepreneur has taken his or her foot off of the sales pedal.
- » The entrepreneur has started to spend more time on self-image and grooming, or is buying expensive new clothes.
- » The company is looking for bigger, better, more expensive business premises.
- » New employees are being hired too quickly, resulting in more capacity than there is demand for work.
- » The entrepreneur has received a big bonus or a salary raise prematurely.
- » Decisions have been made to expand too quickly (which I like to call "planning world domination!").
- » The entrepreneur has started to spend a lot more time on the image of their company; i.e., repainting the offices or buying new furniture.
- » It seems that the entrepreneur is starting to think that they've made it, and will never have to struggle again, leading them to stop planning diligently.

If the entrepreneur is undertaking three or more of these activities, it's more than likely that the company will become another False-Start victim. While it's completely natural to want to make a big deal out of a big deal, the decisions that lead to the actions listed above are all ego-based, rather than focused on finding ways to capitalise on the success already achieved.

If you've recently landed an unusually big contract and are feeling untouchable, now is the time to re-evaluate any decisions you may have made recently. Are they solidly based in a carefully developed growth strategy for your company? Or are they simply a form of instant gratification that won't contribute meaningfully to your company's long-term growth—a warning sign of a False Start?

Allon Raiz (pictured) is the CEO of Raizcorp, the only privately owned small business "prosperator" in South Africa. Fun fact: In 2011, Allon was appointed as a member of the Global Agenda Council on Fostering Entrepreneurship, making him one of the 15 world experts in the field.

**SNAP SHOTS | New Zealand**



When he's not managing his stock photography business, EO New Zealand's **Stephen Green** is surfing the waves at Waimarama Beach in Hawke's Bay. A long-time surfer, Stephen enjoys the respite from work life. "Being on top of your game in business takes a lot of energy," said Stephen. "Surfing is a great way to recharge the soul!"

EO Partner Presents: The Business of Exercise

Susan Locke, M.D.
Healthnetwork Medical Director



As an entrepreneur, your time is precious. There are only so many hours in the day, and most of them are spent working on or in your business. To be effective in this role, you need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and stay in the best shape possible. How can you do that when you're busy running a company? Build exercise into your day.

The Surgeon General recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. For starters, make it a point to incorporate stretching, muscle strengthening and even short bursts of aerobic exercise into your workday. According to the American Council on Exercise, even 60-second bursts of aerobic exertion can be considered "cardio" if you can get in your target heart rate zone. The simplest way to calculate your target heart rate range is:

- » $(220 - \text{age}) \cdot .60$ = lower end of target heart rate range
- » $(220 - \text{age}) \cdot .80$ = upper end of target heart rate range

Want to burn calories while you work? Try the following for aerobic bursts of exercise:

- » Do jumping jacks for one minute.
- » Run in place for one minute.
- » While seated, pump both arms over your head for 30 seconds, and then rapidly tap your feet on the floor for 30 seconds. Repeat 3-5 times.
- » Do lunges in your office or in a vacant room.
- » Take the stairs; try two at a time, 5-7 times a day.

Want to do some strength training? Try these office-friendly tips:

- » Do squats while waiting for your computer to load a page.
- » Extend your leg while sitting in your chair and hold for two seconds, then lower your foot, stopping short of the floor; hold for several seconds. Alternate legs and repeat 15 times, each side.
- » Place both hands on your chair arms and slowly lift your buttocks off the chair. Lower yourself back down, stopping short of the seat, and hold for several seconds. Repeat 15 times.
- » Try pushups from your desk or the floor. Repeat 15 times.

Here are some other helpful exercise tips to consider:

- » Keep resistance bands and small hand weights at your desk.
- » Consider trading in your desk chair for a fitness or stability ball. It will help your balance and tone your core muscles.
- » Park at the far end of the parking lot for a longer walk.
- » If possible, walk down the hall to talk to your co-workers, rather than emailing or speaking on the phone.

Healthnetwork Foundation, an EO partner, is a non-profit whose mission is to improve medicine for all by connecting CEOs with leading hospitals and their doctors to provide the best access to world-class healthcare and increase philanthropic funding for medical research. For more information, contact help@healthnetworkfoundation.org.



Badr, carrying the Olympic torch in England.

Carrying the Olympic Torch

Dr. Badr Alshibani,
EO Saudi Arabia

When the selection for official 2012 Summer Olympic torchbearers was announced on 18 May 2011, people from all over the world dreamed of being included among 8,000 individuals who would be nominated by the event's presenting partners. The nominees underwent a tough selection process. I was one of the lucky picks to relay the historic Olympic torch.

Being a torchbearer has been considered an honor since it was first introduced in 1936. When I found out I was selected to represent my country, I felt a jolt of excitement and empowerment. I understood the honor and sense of fulfillment the opportunity would bring, and I believed that it would stimulate much-needed

awareness regarding the importance of fitness. As a healthcare consultant for more than a decade, I have helped thousands of people cultivate a healthy lifestyle. When I learned I had been selected by the Olympic committee, I knew it would be the perfect opportunity to inspire other people.

For me, this once-in-a-lifetime experience brought with it three desirable things: A worthwhile experience to cherish forever, an honor to keep and an inspiration to mankind. On 18 June, I proudly carried the flame throughout Bridlington, England. Along with the other torchbearers from different countries around the world, I had my moment to shine and bring pride to both my country and fellow Saudi nationals. The 70-day torch relay may have been just a simple part of the 2012 Summer Olympics, but for me nothing can be compared to it. I consider this experience a significant milestone in my life, as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Global Entrepreneur Indicator

Entrepreneurs and their businesses drive the global business landscape. The Global Entrepreneur Indicator taps into the minds of the world's leading business owners to identify trends in the world economy. In August's Indicator survey, a total of 2,293 members responded. Here are some high-level results from the survey:

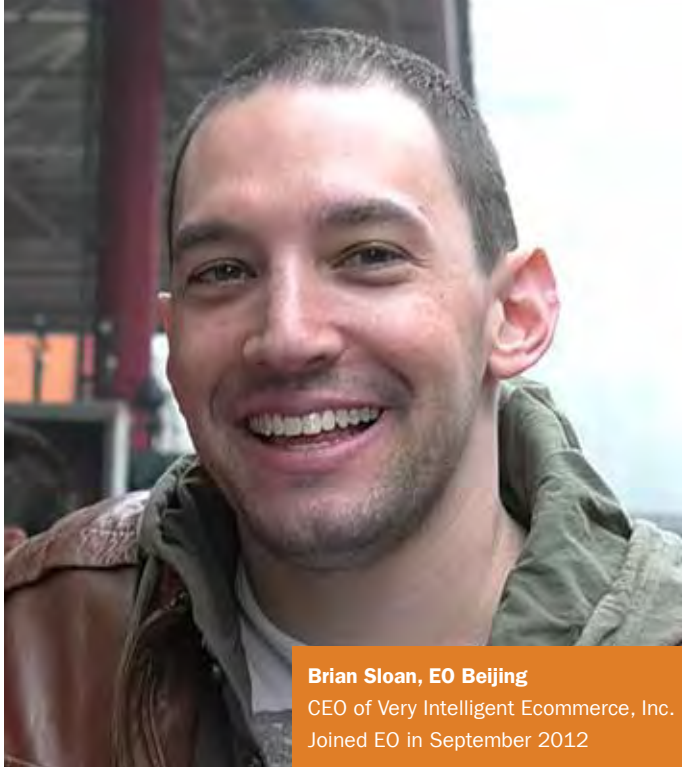
» The number of entrepreneurs who expressed interest in starting a new venture increased from 62% to 80% since the survey six months ago.

» In all, 76% of business owners expect profit margins to increase in the coming six months.

» Roughly 62% of entrepreneurs expect to create new jobs in the coming six months.

For more information, visit
www.entrepreneurindicator.com
or scan the QR code at right:





Brian Sloan, EO Beijing
CEO of Very Intelligent Ecommerce, Inc.
Joined EO in September 2012

New Member Spotlight

When did you know you wanted to be an entrepreneur?

BS: When I was in my second year of law school, a friend took me to an antique auction, where I bought an original version of the Monopoly board game for US\$50. Having no use for it, I put it on eBay and sold it for US\$150. I spent the rest of my free time in law school traveling and buying items from antique auctions, and then selling them on eBay. It was a ton of fun, and more than paid the bills. When it came time to getting a job, I couldn't picture myself sitting behind a desk, taking orders and doing difficult work for a relatively small salary. I pledged to myself that I would never work for someone else.

What's the hardest thing you've had to accept as an entrepreneur?

BS: I've had to accept that my success or failure depends 100 percent on my own actions or mistakes. There's no safety net.

What's the most appealing part about being a member of the EO community?

BS: I view the opportunities for learning as the most valuable for me, both in and out of Forum. As an entrepreneur, I am solely responsible for my own personal growth, and having a few events to attend each month ensures a constant flow of new ideas and information.

What's something people would be surprised to learn about you?

BS: I never cease to surprise people when I tell them what I do for a living, which is manufacture my own brands of adult toys. Most people laugh and then say, 'No, really. What do you do?' Apparently, I'm the only person in my line of business who most people have ever met. Some are surprised I don't have horns or wear a cape!

Who inspires you in business or life?

BS: I've always been impressed by auctioneers. I found that a good auctioneer is an entrepreneur who runs his own company, a great actor and a good comedian. Every entrepreneur can learn something from their tenacity and ability to adapt their style to different audiences while thinking on their feet.

{ EO Opportunities in Q3 }

January

Elevate Your EO Experience

If you qualify for EO Insignia (7+ years of EO tenure) or EO Quantum Leap (US\$15+ million in annual revenue), then you are invited to join your EO peers at the EO Insignia and EO Quantum Leap Campus event in Park City, Utah, USA, from 6-8 February 2013. Register now! For more information, contact Allison Hetzel at ahetzel@eonetwork.org.

February

Send Us Your Feedback!

Want to play an integral role in the way EO operates? Let your voice be heard! EO's All Member Survey will open on 1 February and close on 28 February. This is your chance to share your feedback, submit suggestions or comment on local, regional or Global EO benefits. For more information, contact Frank MacPherson, EO's Director of Marketing, at fmacpherson@eonetwork.org.

March

Learning and Networking in Miami

Celebrate success and innovation at the 2013 EO Miami University, to be held 13-17 March. Hundreds of members from around the world will unite to reveal their entrepreneurial spirit in the heat of Miami, Florida, USA. Register today by visiting www.eomiami.com.



EO Charlotte Member in *Fortune* Magazine

For the seventh consecutive year, Brian Haupricht, an EO Charlotte member and president of Park, Inc., was ranked in *Fortune* magazine's "2012 Inner City 100," a list highlighting the fastest-growing inner-city companies. Brian's leadership and Forum involvement has increased his company's ranking from #87 in 2006 to #56 in 2012.



EO Columbus Member Named Finalist for Prestigious Award

EO Columbus member Kristen Harris, co-owner of Portfolio Creative, was recently selected as a finalist for the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. An Inc. 5000 fast-growth company for the past four years, Portfolio Creative is the nation's fastest-growing creative staffing and recruiting firm.

EO Fort Worth Member Quoted in *Chief Executive* Magazine

Johnette van Eeden, an EO Fort Worth member and president of Star Wellness, was quoted in the November/December edition of *Chief Executive* magazine. In an article titled, "CEOs at Serious Leisure," Johnette talked about target shooting, a sport she pursues when she's not running her healthcare-screening business.



EO New Zealand Member's Architecture Firm Receives High Praise

EO New Zealand member Ken Crosson, of Crosson Clarke Carnachan Architects, recently had one of his eco-beach houses shortlisted for *Home New Zealand Magazine's* "2012 Home of the Year." The property went on to win an Exterior Innovation award at the NZ Timber Design Awards and a Commendation at the Architectural Review Awards in London.

New Jersey Business Named Company of the Year

EO New Jersey member R.J. Lewis' company, eHealthcare Solutions, was recently named "Company of the Year" by *PM360 Magazine's* 2012 Trailblazer Awards. The award recognized eHealthcare Solutions' achievements in evolving its brand, introducing new product offerings and creating innovative, solutions-focused initiatives.



Want to be in next issue's "Quoted & Noted"?
Email your news to octane@eonetwork.org.

GLOBAL LEARNING CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2013



6-8 | EO INSIGNIA/QUANTUM LEAP CAMPUS
Park City, Utah, USA

MARCH 2013



13-17 | EO MIAMI UNIVERSITY
Miami, Florida, USA. Register now!

APRIL 2013



11-14 | EO INSIGNIA /QUANTUM LEAP
MASTERS GOLF TOURNAMENT
Augusta, Georgia, USA



29 APRIL-1 MAY | EO GLOBAL LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE
Manila, Philippines

MAY 2013



15-17 | EO GLOBAL LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE
Panama City, Panama



29 MAY-2 JUNE | EO ENTREPRENEURIAL
MASTERS PROGRAM, CLASS OF 2015, YEAR 1
Dedham, Massachusetts, USA.
Applications due 1 February 2013

COMING IN 2013



EO BUENOS AIRES UNIVERSITY
Buenos Aires, Argentina

For more information or to register for an event,
please visit <http://events.eonetwork.org> or
contact events@eonetwork.org.

Looking for EO multi-chapter events?

Visit <http://events.eonetwork.org/blog/category/multi-chapter>.



Do you have what it takes to become the
EO Global Citizen of the Year? Learn more
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The application deadline is 21 March 2013.
Terms and conditions apply. For more infor-
mation, please contact info@eonetwork.org.

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to learn and grow.



*THIS COULD BE
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about self-selection, choice and making a
mark. The possibilities are endless.

Get the most out of your membership—
contact MyEO@eonetwork.org for details.

*EO members celebrating during their EO Nations – Mount KK
Expedition, a MyEO event held 16-20 October 2012 in Malaysia.*

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