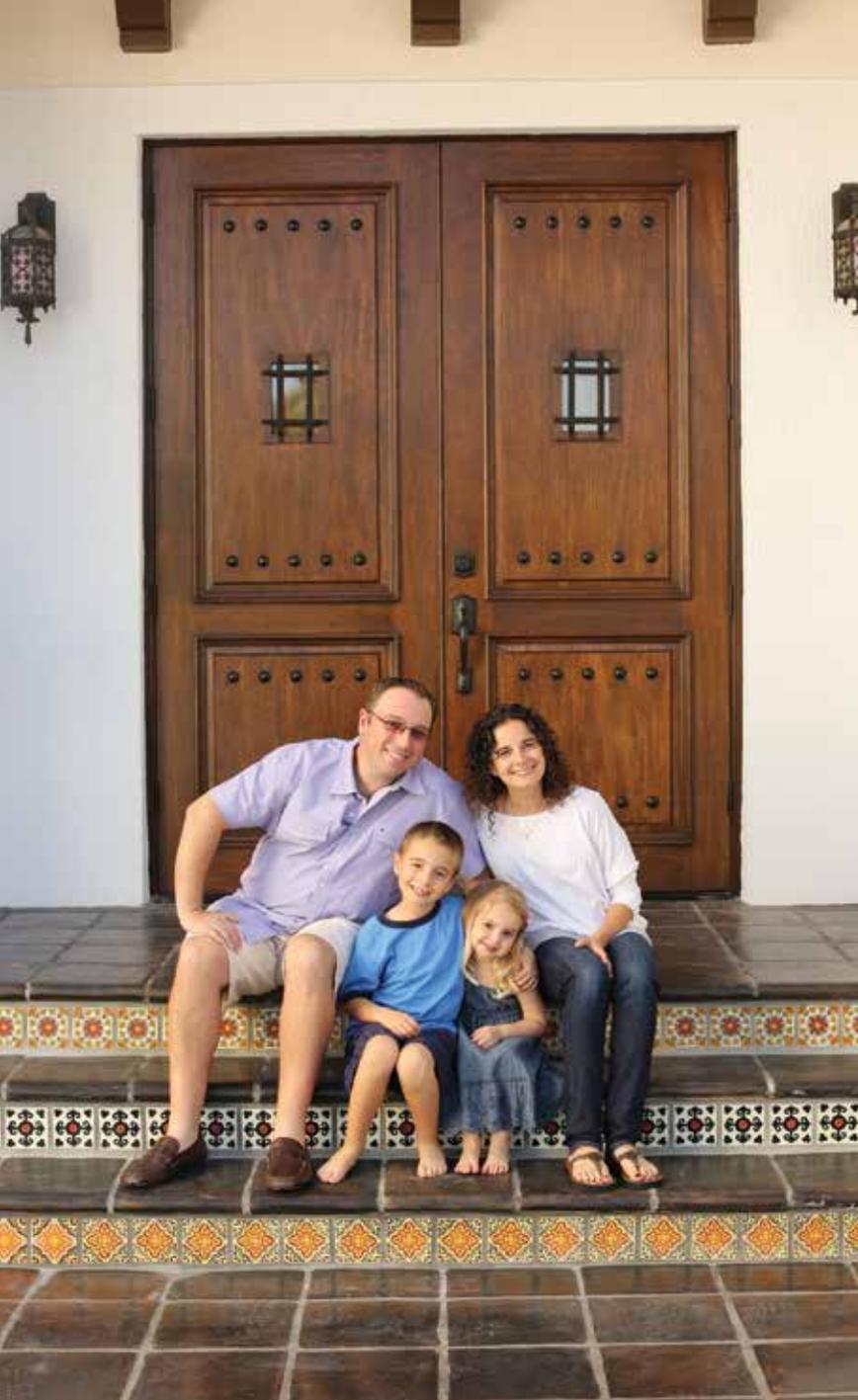


A man with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved button-down shirt and dark trousers, stands against a green background. The background is decorated with several circular graphics, some of which are stylized eyes or targets. The word 'octane' is written in a large, white, outlined font across the top of the image.

octane

The Entrepreneurs' Organization Magazine
December 2014

+ TARGETING A
NEW CULTURE



"EO's values remind us to 'make a mark' and leave a legacy. Protecting what we build is a sure way to do just that."

Imagine Your Business without You

Noah B. Rosenfarb, EO South Florida

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EO Global Board of Directors

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To access Octane's archive, scan this QR code or visit www.eonetwork.org/octane-magazine

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40624074
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
P.O. Box 503
RPO West Beaver Creek
Richmond Hill, ON L4B4R6

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octane

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Expanding #EONATION through Strategic Growth



Blair, showing his #EONATION pride in China.

When I joined EO in 2002 and became a proud member of the Edmonton chapter, the organization boasted approximately 5,000 EOers in 83 locations. Over the years, with the support of countless member leaders and professional staff, EO has achieved significant growth. From a handful of members in 1987 to 10,500 in 2014, we've not only strengthened our internal infrastructure, but our global standing as an entrepreneurial thought leader. And we're still moving forward.

At the start of every fiscal year, the EO Global Board aligns its efforts with an EO Global Strategic Plan, which serves as a roadmap regarding the organization's strategies. Supporting this plan are the EO Strategic Imperatives— 10 bedrock principles that both define and drive our operations (scan the QR code at right to view them). Since July, these imperatives have strengthened our #EONATION by setting in motion new measures of internal and external growth. As we look ahead at Q3 and Q4, we will continue to build EO's presence by committing ourselves to our fourth imperative:

"EO embraces diversity and will be a truly global organization, present in all societies where entrepreneurs live and work, which

respects different cultures, leverages its regional strengths and reflects diversity in its governance structure."

Now more than ever, EO is at its largest and most diverse. We will build on this stature by introducing more chapters—and in turn, more quality members—into our growing #EONATION. In doing so, your EO experience will be greatly enhanced through stronger Forums, more diverse chapters and expanded regional events, among other benefits. Imagine an EO network wherever you travel. Envision tapping into a broader community of 200 chapters around the world. That's the direction we're headed, and leading the way is the EO Global Growth Task Team (GGTT), comprised of member leaders experienced in global growth tactics. These leaders are setting the strategy to foster accelerated EO growth in geographies like Africa, China and South America.

Building the world's most influential community of entrepreneurs is a priority for the Global Board, one that involves global coordination, resources and the support of all EO members. Success here means EO becomes a key player in fast-growing markets, where we can serve as a leading resource for business, community and economic development. In pursuit of this globalization imperative, we will continue to identify those parts of the world with the greatest potential for growth and deploy teams of experienced members to start chapters there. You can help us expand our global footprint by referring prospective members, driving the launch of new chapters or engaging new members in our targeted locations. To learn more, contact membership@eonetWORK.org.

Thank you for your support as we strengthen the global business landscape and our role within it. I'm excited for what the future holds, and the promise of an even bigger #EONATION.

Regards,

Blair Assaly, EO Edmonton
EO Global Chairman, FY2014/2015
bassaly@eonetWORK.org



#EONATION

EO Globalization – Future Chapter Locations

Three geographic regions have been targeted for their potential to accelerate EO growth: Africa, China and South America. Combined, our initiatives (Africa 750, China 300 and South America 600) are projected to deliver 1,650 new members into EO by 2020. If you know of prospective members in these locations, please contact membership@eonetWORK.org.

Africa

Ethiopia
Ghana
Kenya
Nigeria
Rwanda
South Africa
Tanzania
Uganda

China

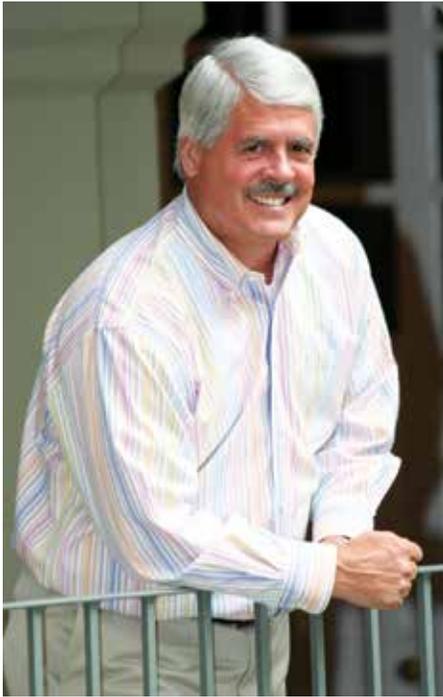
Bohai Economic Rim
Pearl River Delta
Yangtze River Delta

South America

Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Ecuador
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay
Venezuela



Farewell



This is my last column as your Executive Director. In July 2014, I concluded my seventh year in this role. As with any personal milestone, I reflected upon all that has happened over the years. I thought about what I had hoped to accomplish when I first accepted the position of EO's CEO, and I'm pleased with all that we've been able to achieve ever since. For several months prior to my milestone, I had some

deep conversations with my wife about what we envisioned for ourselves during the next decade and beyond. And after some considerable soul-searching, I decided that this is the right time for me to retire from EO and move into the next chapter of my life. I informed the Global Board, and they are actively engaged in conducting the search for my successor.

The world is a much different place than when I first arrived at EO's doorstep. I consider myself fortunate to have led with, and learned alongside, those who've made EO what it is today. And I am grateful to those EO members who raised their hands and served on the Board, a committee, a task force or a Regional Council, or who volunteered to champion a program, product or service. By doing so, you have multiplied the value received by your 10,000+ colleagues across the globe. Combined with the hard work of our first-rate professional staff, together we have made a real difference. Among the many highlights since 2007, EO has:

- » Grown the membership from 6,500 to 10,500 members
- » Increased the annual retention rate to just under 90%
- » Set records in just about everything we measure, including our membership value ratings; global event ratings; Forum ratings; chapter launches; and EO GSEA and EO Accelerator participation

- » Instituted a World-Class Member Experience initiative
- » Rapidly expanded its portfolio of strategic partnerships
- » Driven the Rock Star chapter program to new heights
- » Achieved its goals for contributions to financial reserves

... and so much more. Personally, this has truly been a remarkable journey—the ride of a lifetime, really. But as the saying goes, at some point all good things must come to an end. And at this stage of my life, I want to spend more time with those whom I love and are most important to me. At the same time, this allows the organization to get some “new blood,” new ideas and new leadership into the corner office. I am a firm believer that institutions and individuals need renewal.

So although I will now be cheering from the sidelines, I take comfort in knowing that EO is in great shape as I take my leave. My seven-and-a-half-year tenure has been a fair interval, I think, and long enough to have been the leader of an organization this complex, ever-changing and vibrant. The Board, as well as the EO staff (the very best I have worked with in almost three decades as an association executive), will ensure a smooth transition. I know I am leaving you in very good and capable hands.

I want to thank all of you for allowing me to serve as your Executive Director, and for the richness that experience has provided me. I will never forget it. I also want to thank you for your support and many kindnesses over the years. You made my job so much easier and more enjoyable with your willingness to help, share, educate and welcome me into your lives. I am grateful for that, and I'll treasure so many fond memories as I head out the door.

EO has my every best wish for continued success. I'm off to new adventures, but I hope our paths will cross from time to time in the years ahead. Until then....

Farewell.

Bob Strade
EO Executive Director

Thank You, Bob!

On behalf of the membership, member leaders and Global staff, thank you for your tremendous service, passion and leadership.

In the words of EO, you have truly
“made a mark.”



To the Brink and Back

Nate Wolfson

President of Digital Bungalow, Inc.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” was all I could say.

It was 7 April, 2008, and my new business partner and I were exiting the office of our second-biggest client. We had just gotten yelled at by a group of red-faced, vein-bulging retail executives (“We can’t believe how much you guys suck!”). I was still in shock by the bleak picture our client had painted— how much they had been promised and how little had been delivered by the company I now owned.

Just six days earlier, I purchased half of Digital Bungalow, a 12-person, web-development firm. The company was founded in 1999 by a longtime friend and Forum mate who told me that the firm just needed a “little more leadership” to skyrocket from its current plateau. The day after I made the investment, my new partners and I met with our biggest client, who said he was pleased to meet me ... but that they’ve decided to take their business in-house. *Ouch.*

The next few months were a blur. It seemed like every rock I turned over had something ugly underneath it. Our clients were unhappy, our employees were miserable, our internal systems were a mess and the business had just pennies to its name. And then the bottom fell out of the economy in September, leaving us comatose as a company.

My first business, Thrive Networks, was a dream ride. My two partners and I started the firm out of college, grew it to 65 employees in six years and then sold it to Staples. There were bumps along the way, sure, but we had never faced challenges like the one I was experiencing at Digital Bungalow. I felt totally stuck. With everything broken, I didn’t know where to start fixing. I decided to focus on what I could control, and worked from there. Here’s how we turned things around:

We fixed one thing at a time: As an interim solution while I built a long-term plan, I decided to pick one thing to fix each week. Meetings with clients and employees made it clear where we needed to start, so we worked through our priority list, one item at a time. If I had tried to fix everything at once, I never would have gotten anything finished. It’s like losing weight: You can’t lose 20 pounds in a week, but you can lose a pound a week for 20 weeks.



The latter approach will get you to your goal. The first will just result in frustration.

We changed the culture: We redefined our core values, lived by them and sought out staff and clients who shared them. That meant hard decisions regarding who did and did not fit, but wiping the slate clean was the only way forward. Creating new values and using them as a compass helped us better define who we are and how we wanted to make a mark.

We over-delivered ... to the right clients: I implemented a culture-changing book, titled *Raving Fans*, which is all about exceeding client expectations. The key was focusing on clients that would fit for the long-term. By over-delivering to them, we were able to grow our recurring revenue and generate referrals to new clients. We also did a mountain of free work for our second-biggest client, which enabled us to more than double our revenue from them, giving us a tangible win.

We lost money that first year, but I knew we were on the right track. By year two, we were stable and profitable again, with happy clients, committed employees and cash in the bank. Today, we’re a two-time Inc. 5000 honoree, and more than 95% of our customers recommend us. As an entrepreneur, I’d like to think that my vision is what defines my company’s success or failure. But I’ve learned that sometimes it isn’t the brilliance of the plan that matters, but the ability to keep moving forward methodically. Slow and steady really does win the race.

Nate Wolfson (pictured) is an EO Boston member who started two EO-qualifying companies and was once stung by a scorpion in the Grand Canyon. Contact Nate at nate@digitalbungalow.com.

Driven by Difference

Eric McGehearty

Founder and CEO of Globe Runner

When I was a kid, I never imagined I would be in business. In fact, I spent the majority of my young life thinking that I should *avoid* going into the corporate world altogether. It wasn't the hard work, risk or logistics that scared me. I didn't consider pursuing a business path because I'm dyslexic.

I joined EO in 2012, and the more I network with peers, the more I discover many of them are dyslexic, ADD or hyperactive. What's more, through research I've learned that an estimated 35% of entrepreneurs are dyslexic, compared to just 10% of the overall population. Equally as interesting, dyslexics are more likely than non-dyslexics to delegate authority and excel in oral communication and problem-solving. Looking back at my own journey, I can attest that dyslexia has helped me learn, grow and lead in several key ways. Here's how I use my differences to my advantage:

I Exploit My Weaknesses

Even though I'm dyslexic, I built a business around words. One of our company's core competencies is understanding search keywords and selecting the right terms that will lead more customers to our clients. With that said, I've spent a great deal of my life learning how to be a great listener. Lacking the ability to take notes, I had to focus my attention on understanding the "big idea" behind a complicated lecture so that I could retain the information. This helps me quickly identify my clients' challenges and better communicate solutions back to them.

I Delegate My Weaknesses

Many entrepreneurs I know spend a majority of their time on administrative tasks, and the rest on truly high-value activities. The dyslexic advantage is that I've spent a lifetime *avoiding* administrative tasks. For me, reading and writing are slow and laborious processes. Because I always had to ask for help in school, I was naturally encouraged to gather others around me in order to be successful. As a result, I've become great at delegating my weaknesses and focusing my time on more important activities. For example, my first hire was an intern to help me with written communication and administrative tasks, which freed me up to focus on the business decisions that mattered.

I Seek Talent in Unexpected Places

Another advantage of being dyslexic at an early age is that you need to evaluate whether or not someone has the right skills to help you. For instance, I dictated a lot of papers in high school and college. I quickly learned to recog-

nize people who could take dictation well. Ironically, as a dyslexic, one of the key factors I look for when hiring is strong written-communication skills. I've found there is a big connection between the way people write and the way they think. Employees that can communicate clearly on paper also tend to bring good ideas to work. In fact, I have an administrative assistant and office manager on staff whose work history was almost entirely limited to being a literature professor. Hiring for useful talent instead of relying solely on a resume has made us a stronger company.

I Use Backdoor Problem-Solving

Over the years, I've become a great problem-solver despite my dyslexia, coming up with solutions that others don't often see. Whether this is a result of the creativity common to people with learning differences or a byproduct of adversity is irrelevant—it's useful for anyone in a position like mine. For example, I once needed to spell the word "curious," but found it very difficult to spell on my own. No matter how hard I tried to search Google for the correct spelling, I kept coming up short. I even tried "George," but that got me nowhere. I finally realized that I could find it with a simple, alternate answer: "The Man with the Yellow Hat." By tearing down preconceived notions of problem-solving, I'm able to stop beating problems to death and simply reinvent them.

Eric McGehearty (pictured back and center) is an EO Dallas member, artist, motivational speaker, proud husband and father of four. Contact Eric at eric@globerrunner.com.





SELL GLOBALLY, WORK LOCALLY



Dwayne Lehman
Founder and president
of Streamline Automation

With 95% of my company's sales coming from out-of-country clients, you might assume that I spend the majority of my time in airports and rental cars. However, I have come to realize that the resources required for extensive travel and face-to-face marketing are often better put to use in channels that can operate independently of my (or my team's) physical presence. In large part, this is due to the costs of being based in Calgary, which is far from everywhere and expensive to operate within. With a small staff and limited travel budget, it became imperative to reevaluate our traditional international sales tactics. Here are some strategies I've found that support global marketing from a local platform:

Approach Clients as On-the-Ground Marketing Resources

It's all about perspective. We never see a final sale as the completion of a client interaction. Rather, a satisfied customer transitions to a marketing resource within their locality. To this end, building a long-term relationship with a client is a key part of our sales process. Once a client is using our equipment, their shop becomes an extension of our showroom. Their industry connections become *our* industry connections. They become our on-the-ground marketing team wherever they might be situated. Obviously, we don't expect customers to act as salesmen out of the goodness of their hearts. By offering a sales commission or reimbursements for their assistance, most customers are extremely amenable to acting as corporate ambassadors. Dollar for dollar, this has proven to be a far more effective strategy than sending staff (or myself) to drum up business in a distant location where we have few local connections. It also has the benefit of being self-perpetuating. Once initiated, the action is largely on the part of the client, requiring few resources on our end.

Perfect a Virtual Showroom

Beyond the nice website and glossy brochure, consider developing a virtual showroom that promotes your product better than you could in person. Online-marketing strategies are nothing revolutionary, but they are effective. Compared to taking on more staff

or hitting up tradeshows, I have found that building a comprehensive portfolio of online resources has provided more effective and long-term sales results. For the cost of a single sales trip, we've produced product videos that generate hundreds of leads. For the price of a trade show stall, we've launched (and maintained) multiple industry-specific micro-sites that allow us to dynamically market our products to thousands of targeted customers. By developing a comprehensive range of videos, interactive presentations, websites, F.A.Q. documents and image portfolios, I can instantly provide a customer with an immersive product experience geared toward their industry applications—right from my desk.

Redefine the Direction of Sales Travel

Rather than traveling to a prospective client, have them come to you. If at all possible, have interested buyers visit you for a product demo. While this started out of necessity (heavy machinery like our FROG3D® system doesn't fit in a suitcase), over the years I have observed that reversing the onus of travel from myself to the client has correspondingly increased sales. We even offer a discount on equipment purchased after a product demo. Again, dollar for dollar, the financial encouragement for clients to travel to us provides a much higher return than if the same money was spent traveling to our clients. Clients that visit us are also more serious potential buyers, and smart scheduling means that I can accommodate numerous client visits with a smaller staff.

Essentially, working locally has allowed me to keep my sales resources more focused and more efficient, even while the company's international sales quickly outpaced those closer to home. Putting a dynamic and self-perpetuating marketing plan into place that brings clients to us rather than us to clients might seem like a matter of semantics. However, it has proven to be a highly successful and cost-effective approach for managing a global client base from a single Calgary office.

Dwayne Lehman (pictured) is an EO Calgary member who was a member of the National Canadian Bobsleigh team, which competed in Switzerland's World Cup. Contact Dwayne at dwayne@3dcutting.com.

Seeing Errors as ~~Dead Ends~~ Opportunities

Wadih Haddad

Founder and CEO of The Box Self Storage Services, LLC

Back in 2005, I began my entrepreneurial adventure by storing a few boxes in my bedroom. What I couldn't have known at the time was how this simple chore would lead to my self-storage business, which now operates 24 facilities in the region. As my journey unfolded, I found myself stumbling many times, encountering the kind of mistakes that make you want to give up entirely. But those errors, while painful, taught me some valuable lessons learned. Here are a few that kept me going:

Burn the Boats

There's a point in the beginning of business development when you reach a crossroads and have to make a choice—do you go left or right? Most people help themselves to a third option by staring at the crossroads, never taking action. One thing that's helped me move forward is learning to accept the reality of situations and never look back. It's like that movie, *Troy*. The first thing the Greeks did when they arrived on the island was "burn the boats." When I decided to quit my high-paying (and secure) job to pursue my business idea, I used my nervous thoughts, fears and anxious feelings as points of clarity, leveraging them to propel me out of my comfort zone. I never looked back.

Follow in the Footsteps of Nike

Nike has a slogan that I think sums up the essence of entrepreneurship— "Just do it." It's so simple, yet so powerful. Early on, I discovered that it is much quicker to make a mistake, learn from it and move in the right direction, than to stay idle. Mistakes are proof that you're trying, learning and growing. We recently rolled out an internal campaign called "Celebrate Mistakes," which encourages staff to share their experiences with failure—and document them—in an open knowledge base. This method of experiential learning not only crafts a competent team free from the fear of mistakes, but it keeps us up to speed in the markets we operate. We can now take our lessons learned in one market and execute them in another.

Share Your Dreams Early and Often

If you have a dream, it will always stay a dream until you put it on paper and bring it to fruition through a plan. To ensure I was held accountable to my own dreams, I shared them with my staff. I was open and honest and vulnerable. And I risked being humiliated if I said something and didn't achieve it. I discovered along the way that when I shared something socially, I was able to set a commitment I could more easily stick to. Whenever I do this, I imagine I'm on a football field where 100,000 people are observing my actions. I don't want to screw up, which keeps me moving through



any "defenders" that get in my way. Most people don't share their dreams due to the inherent risk of failure, but I've learned that risk is what pushes you to get things done.

Take the Stick Out of the Wheel

Just as pressure produces diamonds, creativity sparks when you're in a stressful situation. One of the biggest turning points for me was going through a management buy-out after only four years into the company's existence, all while growing the company and committing cash flow to finance the transaction. This was one of the toughest decisions I've ever had to make, but it was a necessary one to continue our growth, create jobs and expand our reach. To keep things moving, I made sure that all of the stakeholders, team members and vendors focused on *one* dream, vision, plan and target. If I didn't have everyone on the same page, there would've been a stick in the wheel, impeding movement. Thankfully, my logistics paid off. With the right team in place sharing the right values and understanding the objectives, we were able to accelerate our business growth exponentially.

Wadih Haddad (pictured) is an EO U.A.E member who loves the sun, the sea, speed and delivering amazing customer experiences. Contact Wadih at wadih@theboxme.com.

Torpedo Toxic Workplace Behavior



Marissa Levin

CEO of Information Experts

Can we be honest with each other? As much as we love running a business, we don't always love the people with which we work. All too often we encounter an employee, client or contractor that can suck the life out of us while we're trying to grow our company. I've coached dozens of CEOs over the years, and this issue continues to present itself. So what can you do to protect your mindset and productivity when negative energy oozes into your workday? Here are a few strategies:

Embrace the Concept of Containment

The concept of containment came to me during a session with a client. While she's one of the best in her field, the biggest threat to her success is her vulnerability to negative people. The first change of any behavior is the awareness that you need to make a change, followed by the acknowledgement that you are *empowered* to make that change. When my client realized that she could be the master of her circumstance rather than the victim, her entire mindset shifted. I will take this one step further. To be an expert in your field, you are obligated to mitigate threats that can drag you down or hold you back. Containing toxic people, energy or behaviors not only benefits you, it enables you to bring your best self to those whom you serve.

Whenever Possible, Schedule Difficult People

If you know you have to engage someone who is difficult, take control of the situation. Schedule them according to what works for you. If you need to get them out of the way in the morning so you can be positive the rest of the day, schedule your interactions first thing. If your energy increases as the day goes on and you don't want these people dragging you down, hold off engaging them until the end of the day. The important thing is to be cognizant of your energy levels and schedule accordingly. In doing so, you will be better able to handle the ramifications of toxic people and their energy-zapping behavior.

Build in Buffers for Recharging

One of my clients has to engage with industry leaders that are downright mean. She invests a lot of energy into building long-term relationships, so when she comes across someone who uses bullying tactics to get what they want, it derails her. We're helping her build a stronger mindset and thicker skin. She is realizing that how people treat her is merely a reflection of who they are. It's

essential to minimize the mental impact toxic people can have on you so that you can stay positive and continue moving forward. My client has now incorporated "buffers" into her schedule that consist of 15-minute breaks for breathing exercises, walks outside or mental reminders that she can't please everyone. These breaks clear the "energy palette," reset her mindset and help her bring her "A" game.

Create a Paper Trail

Paper trails eliminate misunderstandings over what was said and what should be expected. They also help to institute accountability. To minimize the fallout of misunderstandings, I've taught my clients to send an email after every important conversation, one that summarizes what was discussed, requests either agreement or confirmation about what was discussed, and clearly states and assigns follow-up actions and expectations as a result of the conversation. What is the outcome of the discussion, and what comes next? Paper trails help answer these important questions. They minimize the chance of a misunderstanding and remove the opportunity to revise history.

Say "No" ... It's a Complete Sentence

As entrepreneurs, it can be tough saying "no," especially when we want to build bridges for future opportunities. But when people try to drag you into their situations—or force their way into your own—setting boundaries is crucial. When you're feeling pressured to say "yes," don't. Instead, tactfully say "no" in a way that minimizes confrontation and conflict, but enables you to stand your ground. Own your decisions, energy and outcome. If your intuition is telling you to walk away, *run*. Life is too short to be hanging out with miserable people.

Marissa Levin (pictured) is an EO Chesapeake Bay member who writes a leadership blog for small business owners (www.successfulculture.com/blog). Contact Marissa at mlevin@informationexperts.com.

Personalizing YOUR EO EXPERIENCE

For nearly 30 years, EO has been committed to maximizing membership value through the introduction of new programs, events and resources designed to enhance the EO experience. One of those programs is MyEO, a dynamic platform that gives members the keys to personalize their EO and entrepreneurial journey. **Jim Benjamin**, an EO Cleveland member and MyEO champion, shares his experiences engaging MyEO and the personal and professional value it provides.



How does MyEO contribute to a stronger EO experience?

JB: Finally—an easy and fun way to maximize your membership! MyEO has quickly become one of my favorite EO benefits. With more than 10,000 members worldwide, why would anyone *not* want to connect, learn and share experiences? My chapter is great and my Forum experience has been top-notch, but MyEO takes EO to the next level, offering once-in-a-lifetime experiences, specialized business or interest groups, Forums that match your business or life experiences, and more. Best of all, if there isn't an event, group or Forum you want to engage, you can start your own and invite the EO community to join. I've always said about EO: 'Make your own experience. Don't wait for it to land on your lap.' MyEO helps you do just that.

What was your most impactful MyEO experience?

JB: I went to the Black Rock Desert of Nevada, USA, to experience Burning Man, an annual art event and temporary community based on radical self-expression and self-reliance. I spent a week in the desert experiencing incredible cultures and bonding with EOers from around the world. Trust, confidentiality and respect served as drivers of the trip. The experience made me want to encourage others to push themselves out of their comfort zones and see the world; to open minds to other perspectives and encourage people to share more openly and deeply. I've found this to be quite satisfying, and that your EO peers are very receptive.

How did you get involved as a MyEO champion?

JB: I've always been very involved with EO on the chapter level, and constantly encourage others to go outside of their chapters to experience all that this organization has to offer. As a former Chapter President, I made a big push to get members to engage *beyond* the local, and while many hesitated, those who expanded their horizons were glad they did. In many ways, MyEO is the next extension of this type of global engagement—one that offers limitless opportunities. Naturally, it was something I wanted to be a part of.

You recently started a MyEO event about flying. What was the process like?

JB: Creating a MyEO event can be as easy or complicated as you want. I recently put together a fighter pilot event where members got to fly a plane and conduct laser-tag dog fights. After only an hour of training, people couldn't believe that they would be the actual pilots. Loops, rolls,

pulling up to 6 G's ... it was an incredible experience! Creating the event was easy, and I learned that presenting people with a chance to do something that others only dream of is quite powerful. Who hasn't dreamt of flying? I really wanted to do that someday, and it turned out others did, too. Thanks to MyEO, 14 of us shared something that will forever unite us.

Why should your EO peers engage MyEO?

JB: Where else can you leverage your lifetime of learning, share your dreams, connect with like-minded peers from around the world, enjoy once-in-a-lifetime experiences, and form powerful and lifelong connections? Who wouldn't want to do all of those things and more? As a member, it's easy to settle into your Forums and chapter events, but when you step out of your comfort zone and experience all that EO has to offer, you'll find there's so much more to enjoy. MyEO helps you do that. The program teaches you how to make your own experiences, own your own journeys and boldly go!



Jim, with fellow MyEO participant and EO Cleveland member, Lynlee Altman.

Read another
MyEO testimonial!



Navigating the Maze



John Bly

Managing partner of LB&A, Certified Public Accountants, PLLC

No one said mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are easy, but there are some key strategies every business owner can consider when the time is right. Since 2004, my firm has grown from zero to US\$8+ million through eight acquisitions and three mergers. In that time, we've analyzed more than 80 deals, learning how to simplify the M&A process along the way. From finding a deal to closing a deal, there's a lot to consider. It's even more difficult when it's *your* business on the line. Here are a few ways you can navigate the M&A maze with confidence:

Find the Best Deal

Whether you're seeking to acquire or merge, landing the best deal starts with finding the best seller. A great way to do this is through referrals and word of mouth. Inform your banker, attorney and the entire business community of your interest in a deal, and have them spread the word. With that in mind, work on widening your pool of prospective sellers to find the ideal candidate (and price). We advise our clients to contact their competitors about an M&A opportunity. You'll be amazed at how many of them might be interested in the opportunity, and how many doors open up from doing so.



Examine the Culture

Culture plays a bigger role in business transactions than people might think. Whether you're merging or acquiring, you want your business in the hands of the right people. While it shouldn't be the deciding factor in the M&A process, your personal feelings toward the new business owner and staff are definitely something to keep in mind. I believe this to be the most important aspect of an M&A deal. To get the most out of the process, it's important to ensure that you share similar beliefs regarding accountability, culture, vision and management style.

Perform Due Diligence

To make the due diligence process less stressful, I encourage clients to send a complete list of all required information at one time, which avoids the hectic exchange of information in bits and pieces. And I always encourage clients to ask specific questions about the company, instead of focusing only on the financials. By digging deep about vendor relationships, staff retention, equipment age, etc., they're kept from being surprised later in the process. The more you know in the beginning, the better deal you'll get in the end.

Structure Your Deal

For a merger or acquisition to be successful, both parties need to be comfortable with their end of the deal. I worked with a roofing company on a US\$3-million sale a few years ago. The way the original deal was structured, it would have cost the roofing company nearly US\$1 million in taxes. We were able to eliminate about US\$600,000 of that tax through the transactional structure. As a result, the buyer was able to write off the value over a longer period of time, and our client received capital gains instead of ordinary income, which made a significant difference. It was a win-win for both parties. If you feel you have a win-lose situation on your hands, be prepared to negotiate, wait, negotiate some more, and then wait some more.

Assess the Value of the Business

Buying a business is much riskier than selling a business because future financial success is never guaranteed. If you're the buyer, make sure the business you want to invest in is worthwhile. Never assume a growing business is a successful business. I once had a client that grew from US\$2 million to US\$15 million in five years ... but their growth wasn't profitable. When we went to value the company, the owner realized the financial slide, so he added investors to accelerate growth. From my experience, you cannot easily value a business when determining what it could sell for and what the market would bear. By being open to the "big picture," however, you can be better prepared.

John Bly (pictured) is an EO Charlotte member and author of Cracking the Code: An Entrepreneur's Guide to Growing Your Business through Mergers and Acquisitions. Contact John at john@lba-cpa.com.

Connections to Experts: How to UP Your Customer Service

When it comes to business, delivering quality customer service requires more than just exhibiting a positive attitude. Just ask **Ron Kaufman**, best-selling author, acclaimed speaker and management consultant for clients around the world. In this interview, Ron offers insights on how to build uplifting customer service into your business.

On the true definition of “service”:

RK: My definition of service is ‘taking action to create value for someone else.’ The first and most important part of this definition is not the action you take, but rather how well you understand the needs, preferences, concerns and aspirations of someone else. Only then can you take the right action to create value for that person. Actions you take that don’t create value can be classified as waste.

On the importance of creating a service-oriented culture:

RK: To build a strong and sustainable competitive advantage, you must take on the larger challenge of building a service culture. That starts with teaching everyone in your company the definition of service, as well as the fundamental service principles that can be applied in any situation. Getting your leadership team committed and fully supportive of service is critical. And you must use every opportunity you have to remind, enable, encourage, support and reinforce your company’s commitment to service every day. Only then will service be a foundation of your company culture.

On how a business determines whether its service needs improvement:

RK: There are some key indicators of a needed service shift. Most commonly, service needs improving when customers complain a lot, don’t come back often—or at all—and when they don’t refer you to other people who need your product or service. Other indications include when you’re losing money by competing on lower prices, and when your employees complain about serving ‘difficult customers.’ Most of all, your service needs improving when you want to stand out from the competition and enjoy higher levels of pricing, market share, customer loyalty and staff commitment.

On the service mindset and “The Big Picture”:

RK: Adopting a service mindset is important, but it must be incorporated into a larger framework we call ‘The Big Picture,’ which includes four categories: Primary Product (the products and services you provide); Delivery Systems (the systems you use to get your products to your customers and your customers to your products); Ongoing Relationships (cultivating value for the future, not just in the current transaction); and Service Mindset (the way you meet,

greet and treat other people). Aligning your business with these key elements will supercharge your customer service.

On common misconceptions of service:

RK: Sometimes people think good service is ‘serving others the way you want them to serve you.’ But different people value different things. Some people value speed, while others value time and patience. Some people value options, while others just want you to give them a clear recommendation. What’s important is not to serve people the way you want, but to serve them the way *they* want. And that means being curious, caring and committed at all times.

Ron Kaufman (pictured) is the founder of UPI Your Service, a customer-service training company, and the author of The New York Times bestseller, Uplifting Service. Ron recently spoke at an EO event in Washington, D.C., USA. To learn more, contact Ron at Ron@RonKaufman.com or visit www.RonKaufman.com.

Discover more customer service tips from Ron—scan the QR code for a special video series!



Imagine Your Business without You

Noah B. Rosenfarb

Founder of Freedom Business Advisors



Take a second to envision what would occur in your company if you could never communicate with your team again. What would happen if you didn't show up for work? If tragedy struck, how would your business and family cope? Disability and death aren't the stuff we want to think about, but the truth is bad things happen. Unfortunately, 100% of entrepreneurs die. While chaos is unavoidable, here are some things I always consider should something happen to me or my clients:

Who's Going to Run the Place?

Whether it's making payroll or deciding on compensation and capital projects, someone on your staff has to have the authority to make decisions. A "Continuity of Operations Plan" addresses these issues and more. Beyond being able to use it in an emergency, this type of plan can serve as a roadmap for who you should be training to take over critical responsibilities as your business grows.

Your New Owner is....

Most of the time, I see the ownership of a business transfer to a family member or a trust for the benefit of the family. All too often, these people have no experience acting as an owner. They don't even know if they should sell the company or continue to own it. For one of my businesses, I structured an agreement where a trusted competitor will pay my wife a price that makes it a great deal for them and fair enough for her. While my wife knows many of my clients, she doesn't have the technical expertise or licensing to own and operate the company. By implementing a buy/sell provision in my operating agreement, I can enable an existing owner to purchase the ownership at a predetermined price.

Don't Spook the Herd

You won't imagine the things I've heard after a surprise heart attack had an owner incapacitated in the hospital. Rumors abounded both in the office and with customers—the son was taking over, the dad was selling, the management team was going to run it—and everyone thought something different. But the one thing nearly every employee had in common that day

was that they were open to leaving the company for a competitor because they just didn't know what was going to happen. This can be avoided if you have a written "Continuity Story," a game plan for who calls whom and what they should say if something happens to you.

Keep Your Talent

When a local marketing firm owner was putting his plans in place, we structured a stay bonus to reward loyalty. Funded by US\$900,000 in life insurance that only cost US\$4,500 a year, a pool of cash would be created if the owner died. That pool would pay out US\$150,000 each quarter for six consecutive quarters to those employees that remained (based on a pro-rata percentage of total compensation paid). Since everyone is aware of this, should something happen to the owner, the team is motivated to stick around to earn the bonuses.

Cash is King

Most EOers derive the majority of their income from their efforts, and have the bulk of their net worth tied up in their companies. How would your cash flow and net worth be impacted if tragedy struck you? After years of being "begged" by his close friend, an EO member I knew purchased US\$6 million worth of life insurance and, sadly, died in an accident two weeks later. When the agent delivered the check, the wife was crying, grateful that this friend never gave up asking the EO member to protect his family. She knew she would face many challenges in her new life, but was relieved knowing that money was not going to be one of them.

All of us should have a plan to protect, grow and transfer our businesses that ties into our financial and estate plans. We may rightfully focus on growth for the goal of increased profits, but EO's values remind us to "make a mark" and leave a legacy. Protecting what we build is a sure way to do just that.

Noah B. Rosenfarb, CPA, is an EO South Florida member with a long history of advising entrepreneurs on their investments. Contact Noah at noah@freedomadv.com.

Get Back to Being Scared

Crystal L. Faulkner

Co-founder and partner of Cooney
Faulkner & Stevens, LLC



Several months ago, I heard a quote by Eleanor Roosevelt: “Do one thing every day that scares you.” I thought about that saying and wondered: Was I still challenging myself? Did my goals still “scare me”? Have I become entirely too comfortable in my business?

I run an accounting and advisory firm, and over the years we’ve built a strong business with a significant client base. In fact, we just recently celebrated our 15th anniversary. Although our business is considered successful, I found myself reflecting on my own progress as an entrepreneur. I questioned whether I was still pushing myself, and recalled the “scared excitement” I felt when we started out. I had to step out of my comfort zone so many times to make the company what it is today ... when did that end?

I conceded that maybe I wasn’t pushing myself like I had in the beginning. I wanted to rekindle that scared excitement because I was afraid to consider what I might miss if I didn’t challenge myself. Here is how I “re-embraced” getting comfortable with being uncomfortable:

Write Down Your Goals

Unless a goal is written down, it is only an idea. Writing down my goals and assigning deadlines to them helps me visualize what I want to accomplish. Having my goals publicly displayed also holds me accountable. My goals are displayed in frames in my office and home to remind me of my priorities, both professionally and personally. If I can see it, I can do it.

Make the Decision to Raise the Bar

It’s easy to be comfortable with what’s familiar. But I knew that if I wanted to grow alongside my clients, I needed to stop procrastinating and earn my certification in Business Exit and Transition Planning. That meant dedicating time to studying, taking exams and attending conferences ... while running my business. It was worth the effort. These credentials now enable us to offer a new service that provides a holistic review of our clients’ objectives, in turn helping them increase the value of their businesses.

Identify (and Weigh) the Pros and Cons

What will happen if I take action and venture outside of my comfort zone again? Our business may experience growth. What will happen if I don’t? Nothing will change. Measuring the pros and cons of my action and inaction was beneficial when deciding whether to pursue the exit-planning certification. I was perfectly content to keep doing what I was doing. However, it was clear that several clients were entering their retirement years, had no exit plans for their businesses and no idea where to start. I didn’t want to miss the opportunity to bring added value to our clients, while also expanding our service offerings. By weighing my options, I was able to build equity in myself and the business.

Fail Forward

Generally, entrepreneurs don’t think about the benefits of failure. However, if we apply what we learn from our failures, we can use it to practice, improve and try again. Several years ago, I made a proposal to a real estate developer, but didn’t get the business. At the time, this potential client thought our firm was too small. I stayed in touch and continued to send the business owner valuable information that was pertinent to his company. The owner witnessed firsthand our understanding and knowledge of the real estate industry, as well as our commitment to providing value. Recently, this same individual reached out to me and hired us to handle his personal and business accounting needs. By using my failure as fuel, I was able to set myself up for the future.

Ask yourself these three questions: Are you truly stretching yourself and your business? Are you constantly learning and developing as a leader? Are you reaching new heights and realizing your full potential? If you didn’t answer “yes” to these questions, do what I did: Take Eleanor Roosevelt’s advice and “do one thing every day that scares you!”

Crystal L. Faulkner, CPA, (pictured) is an EO Cincinnati member. Her firm specializes in exit-planning strategies for privately held businesses. Contact Crystal at cfaulkner@cfsdpa.com.

TARGETING A NEW CULTURE



For most entrepreneurs, the hardest part about running a business is perfecting the company culture. After all, without a well-oiled workforce, progress can stall pretty fast. For **Paul Chu**, an EO China South member and founder of RedWolf Airsoft, creating a strong company culture was a defining factor in his 16 years of business success. In this featured interview, Paul walks us through his entrepreneurial journey, and how fostering a “West meets East” management approach has positioned his staff toward continued growth.

What inspired you to turn a part-time hobby into a full-time business?

“I was living in New York City in the late 90s, where I worked as a management consultant, advising multinational companies on how to embrace e-commerce. I spent a lot of time sharing best practices with clients, but I was never part of the execution. Around that time, I found myself getting into Airsoft, a sport where you compete with opponents on a combat course ... think paintball, but with non-metallic pellets and replica firearms. One day, I was searching online to order parts, and I was surprised to find that there weren’t any international retailers for Airsoft gear. I saw this as my ‘blue ocean’ opportunity, and I spent the next few weekends building a website from scratch.

“It was all very exciting because I was finally able to put my e-commerce advice into action. I was operating on a shoe-string budget, and any free time I had was devoted to the business. I would purchase products at local shops, take photos of the items and upload them online, package the gear in boxes and drive them to the post office in the trunk of my car. It was hard work, but it was exhilarating! Five years later, I saw RedWolf grow to a scale that required my complete attention, so I took a leap of faith and committed to it full-time. Today, we’re the largest international retailer of Airsoft products, we’re building our own brand of gear and we’re establishing a presence in new frontiers like Russia and South America. We’ve come a long way since 1998, but none of it would have been possible without the people around me.”

A big part of your success stems from your thriving company culture, but that wasn’t always the case. Why did you feel the need to “reset” your culture?

“We’ve enjoyed tremendous success over the years, but it wasn’t without its challenges. A few years ago, there was a lot of negative energy in our company—gossip, ill feelings about management, conflict among the staff. It became so bad that two employees nearly got into a fist fight in a stairwell. The workplace had become very poisonous, and I could see it spreading slowly in all corners of the company. I had spent so much energy fighting battles externally that I failed to nurture a healthy culture internally. Healthy cultures don’t just happen. They need to be built, and I knew that if we didn’t address the issue, the company would quickly fall apart. The competition wouldn’t need to kill us—we would kill ourselves!

“As luck would have it, Cameron Herold, a former EO member, spoke at an EO Hong Kong event around that time. He talked about how to build not just a company culture, but a *cult* for your company. He explained how he built a terrific culture at his previous business—1-800-GOT-JUNK?—and I was motivated to follow in his footsteps. I immediately put together a plan to reset my company culture; one that was built around his best practices and my international business experience. Specifically, I implemented principles that leaned more toward a Western style of management. Although every idea didn’t work in my business, many did, which helped us resolve some of our major problems.”



What were you hoping to accomplish by introducing a Western style of management into your traditionally Eastern workforce?

“First and foremost, we wanted to establish a greater sense of unity. We had been experiencing some difficult issues within the workplace, which stemmed largely from cultural differences and our inability to work from the same page. With offices in Hong Kong, London, the U.S., France and Russia, that was especially difficult. I recognized areas where I could improve as a leader and where my staff would most benefit, and I went from there, knowing I would have to adjust my approach to meet the needs of my diverse staff. Having gone to school in the U.S. and worked in various countries, I have become adaptive to different cultures, which helps when it comes to building relationships with my staff. With such a global mix of employees and customers, I knew I needed to select the best of both Eastern and Western management styles to forge my own unique blend. Using my background as a compass, coupled with Cameron’s steps, I set out to strengthen our company culture.”

What hiccups did you encounter while implementing this hybrid approach, and what did they teach you about leadership?

“With my new plan in place, I began to integrate a ‘West meets East’ approach to management, one that emphasized openness and social engagement, rather than a centralized, top-down ‘command center’ approach. For starters, we created more opportunities for staff to build positive relationships outside of work, and we started a series of ‘town hall’ meetings to facilitate company-wide communications and create a platform to discuss high-level issues. During these meetings, I would ask employees to pinpoint the company’s weaknesses and

“Introducing a new management style is never easy, especially when it requires your staff to adopt foreign concepts.”

offer suggestions on how to resolve them. The goal was to inspire constructive criticism in pursuit of solutions, but it didn’t work. Typically, Asian employees never want to say anything negative, fearing retribution further down the road by traditional bosses who may see the criticism as loss of face or a lack of loyalty. Not all Chinese bosses are like that, of course, but it is simply engrained in our culture to not go against the grain. Western staff, on the other hand, need no

invitation to comment on issues. They usually speak freely about the shortfalls of the company and where we are underperforming, and how that is affecting their ability to perform. So I learned to adjust my communications style for my Asian staff, while comforting and explaining to my Western employees that we will address those issues that concern them.

“Introducing a new management style is never easy, especially when it requires your staff to adopt foreign concepts. But I knew that infusing a Western approach into the company culture would position our business for greater growth, so I took every opportunity to learn from the process. Looking back, I’ve learned that when you’re applying new management techniques, you have to be sensitive to your audience and adjust accordingly. In my case, running a company that’s fueled by both a Western *and* Eastern mindset requires a lot of knowledge regarding cultural sensitivities, as well as consistent flexibility from the leader. I have to remind myself to keep an open mind and accept that this is a learning process ... and never be afraid to change my thinking if I detect something isn’t working.”

With so many offices around the world, each with a unique work culture, how are you able to maintain this style of management?

“It’s definitely an ongoing challenge, but it’s an exciting one. I’m fortunate to have employees that come from various parts of the world. This diversity affords us unique perspectives when it comes to tackling client or company challenges, though it can be tough to navigate at times. When employees come to work, they experience the workforce differently, subscribing to their traditional sense of how businesses run and processes operate. Knowing this, I try to enforce a universal set of rules so everyone understands what role they play in the overall ‘game’ of business. I always paint the picture of our staff as a soccer team, with everyone playing a different and important position. Like soccer, the rules of the game transverse across cultures, and similarly so with our company. It doesn’t matter what their cultural background is— employees understand what they need to do to achieve the overall objective. And it’s my job, as their coach, to provide a game plan they can use to take us to victory. That being said, every player is different, requiring different strategies.

“For example, when managing my Chinese staff, I have to be precise when it comes to reviewing a process; they’re looking for a specific and measurable result. With this in mind, I spend a lot of



time detailing their daily, monthly and quarterly tasks in a job description document, and those who excel the most tend to check off each point on that list. When engaging my Western staff, however, they require less guidance and tend to find their own way as long as the goal is set. This is a perfect example of staff operating from different cultural perspectives in pursuit of the same goal: My Chinese employees tend to be more detail-oriented, while my Western staff require more freedom to accomplish tasks. Recognizing these cultural differences, I've adapted my approach to laying out goals and processes for every employee, whether they are of Eastern or Western descent."

Looking back, what kind of impact did adopting a "West meets East" management style have on your business?

"After forging our own mix of Eastern and Western management styles, our focus has become exponentially better. There is more goodwill between the staff now, which I attribute to a better understanding of cultural differences and a more methodical way of working together. Everyone understands the importance of unity. Our social and team functions have also helped to strengthen our bond, driving home the understanding that while each employee has one job to do, that job is an integral part of a bigger goal. All in all, introducing a new management style into the workforce has infused more positive energy into the company, which is producing happier staff and greater results."

Insights into International Business

Thinking about starting a business in Asia? Want to open an office in Hong Kong? Paul offers a few insights regarding local management and staffing:

+ HIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

As in other countries, hiring the right people is crucial. For foreigners opening offices in Asia, it's important that you hire people who are open to a Western style of management. I've found this to be an important part of our long-term growth plan.

+ SEEK LOCAL TALENT

When hiring local personnel, finding people who can help you bridge the gap between Western thinking and local execution is important. Hong Kong employees, for example, are very sharp, and can be counted on to become specialized in a particular skill set rather quickly.

+ EMBRACE CULTURAL TENDENCIES

A solid understanding of cultural tendencies—especially in the workplace—is critical for the success of your venture. For example, Asian employees typically value loyalty, so you will need to be sensitive when facing issues head on.

+ SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

If you want to do business in Asia, encourage local staff to carry their work beyond the specific tasks that you request, so that they can drive the process forward toward the final objective. It's a challenge, but it's worth it in the long run.

Learn how Paul revamped his company culture—watch a special Octane video by scanning the QR code or visiting blog.eonetwork.org/paulchu.



(pictured left to right) Paul, with his multi-national team at a tradeshow in Germany; Paul's Hong Kong staff during a recent team-building event; and Paul's showroom at his Hong Kong office.

Proving the Critics Wrong

Glen Carlson

Managing director of Entrevo Pty, LTD.



Stop me if you've heard this before: Every industry insider told you it can't be done, that you'll just blow yourself out of the water before the game even begins. You were facing barrier after barrier, confronted with extraordinary competition and just *scratching* your way to the top ... and then you broke through. I've been there. Looking back, I'm glad all of the naysayers cast me aside. It makes my business success story more enjoyable to tell. Here's part of that story, as well as a few things I did to take my company from a fledgling startup to a reputable force.

Nail the Pitch No Matter What

I ran an underfunded, bootstrapping startup, so I needed a way to cut through the noise and make the competition irrelevant. Mike Harris, founder of three multi-billion-dollar businesses, pointed out that amateur musicians would never dream of playing to an audience before tuning their instrument, "but that's exactly what businesses do every day." He added: "One of the most powerful ways to differentiate yourself and your business is with your words." I spent weeks testing my business pitch. I reviewed my spiel during sales calls, meetings and when I answered the question, "What do you do?" I would keep tweaking the pitch until it paid off. Not only was I able to land some respected brands to endorse us, but having a polished pitch helped me negotiate better terms with our suppliers and attract a core team that was worth more than I could have afforded at the time.

Use Published Content to Build Street Cred

Daniel Priestley, my business partner and an EO UK – London member, authored *Become a Key Person of Influence*, the book our business is built around. It became our secret weapon. Although I had crafted a sharp business pitch, it wasn't always enough for the more discerning targets. If heavy hitters were still lukewarm about working with us, I'd casually say, "By the way, my business partner just wrote a bestseller. How about I send you a copy, call you back in a few

weeks and see where it goes?" The answer was often a noncommittal "sure." But then when I'd call back, I'd get cut off halfway through my introduction. "I loved the book!" was a typical response, followed by, "We'd love to work together. What were you thinking?" Leveraging valuable content helped us get ahead as a reliable business.

Ignore Competition— Embrace Collaboration

Competition is a zero-sum game; it works for no one. Collaboration, on the other hand, *expands* the pie for all involved. When I started out, I had no money, contacts, trust or track record, but I knew there were people out there who did. Someone somewhere had a surplus of the very things I lacked— I just needed to find them and pitch them. If I wanted people to support us in our growth, I needed to find ways to make our success *their* success. So I made a list of potential partners by asking myself, "Who has the same target market as us, but with no competitive overlap?" The resultant list of people and brands was perfect because we could cross-promote without the threat of any real competition. Once I had my list and knew what I wanted to do, my next question was: "What could I offer in return?" That got the ball rolling. Since then, we've developed more than 300 joint ventures and strategic partnerships with internationally respected companies, small businesses and freelancers.

While it's always easy to look back and find a formula for business success, in my case these three tenets served as my strategy from day one. In fact, they've helped my firm become the ninth-fastest-growing company in Australia in just three years. And I'm still hungry to prove the naysayers wrong. It's what has helped get us here, and it's what will keep us ahead of the pack.

Glen Carlson (pictured) is an EO Australia – Victoria member, speaker and co-founder of Entrevo, an international leadership and training company operating in the UK, U.S. and Australia. Contact Glen at glen@keypersonofinfluence.com.au.



Leave a Legacy that Lasts

Brian Hansell
President of Hansell
Consulting Group, Inc.

you're establishing a foundation through a managed service, weigh the administrative charge against the work that will be delivered. It was a no-brainer for me, considering my schedule and abilities.

As I moved forward with the Paul Hansell Foundation, I discovered two drivers that are integral to establishing a foundation or charity: Its mission needs to be compelling on a personal level (empowering you to overcome any hurdles that may crop up), and its objectives need to be relevant to the community at large. Here are some other lessons I learned along the way:

- » **Find a cause you're passionate about and define it in as few words as possible.** This will become your framework and filter for the decisions you'll make about what your foundation supports.
- » **Figure out what motivates you.** Are you doing good because it makes sense? It's just good business? It's fun?
- » **Work out who will receive support from your foundation.** Also, what will be the form of your support: cash, securities, proceeds from a life-insurance policy, gifts through a will or estate?
- » **Determine where the support will come from.** Will it be personal, family trust, business, friends or family? How often and for what length of time?
- » **Reach out to your local community foundation.** Take some time to see what they can do to help you get set up.
- » **Enlist the support of family, friends and business associates.** Get everyone behind the cause, promote it, keep supporters informed of results and create opportunities for ongoing financial support.

Looking back, creating a foundation in honor of my son has been a truly rewarding process, and one that continues to make a mark through the awareness of our youth's mental and emotional wellbeing ... something that was often overlooked in our community. Today, I get a deep sense of fulfillment whenever I see or hear that we are making a difference. I hope my experience inspires you to leave a legacy of your own, and that you'll learn and grow as I have along the way.

Brian Hansell (pictured with Paul) is an EO Southwest Ontario member and the founder and president of Hansell Consulting Group, a firm specializing in helping organizations take a preventative and proactive approach to benefits. Contact Brian at brian@paulhansellfoundation.com.

I've met two kinds of people in the 20 years I've been an EO member: Those who make a mark and leave a legacy, and those who think they have to be Bill or Melinda Gates to do so, which is not true. In my experience, establishing a foundation is a great way to give back.

Like Peter Thomas, EO's Chairman Emeritus, I suffered a personal tragedy in the death of my son, Paul. In 2010, Paul took his own life while attending university. We were very close, and there weren't any warning signs. Peter was kind enough to share his experience, and walked me through how he started the Todd Thomas Foundation, an institution that raises awareness about the magnitude of mental illness. As EO so often allows, my engagement with Peter inspired me to start my own foundation to promote programs that support the mental and emotional wellbeing of youths.

As the president of a consulting firm, I knew very little about what it took to create a foundation. But through research and support from EO, I set out to make my mark in honor of my son. For starters, I needed a turnkey operation that was easy to establish and maintain. I learned some foundations allow fund management without the bureaucratic administrative work. This means a busy entrepreneur can engage a fund and have it deal with the tax deductions, administration, accounting and regulations reporting—all of the red tape that may put one off. What's more, these foundations only charge a small fee to manage the fund, and are flexible enough for you to direct usage of the fund's proceeds. If

Combining passion with purpose is at the crux of every entrepreneurial dream. For **Noemi Kis**, making a mark is a part of her daily operations as the founder of Western RO, a wholesale distributor of water filtration products.

1. Who were your biggest supporters when you started your business?

NK: My biggest supporters have always been my family, especially those in Hungary. My grandparents were entrepreneurs, and they owned a bed and breakfast that I helped operate when I was growing up. My grandmother and aunt have been my main sources of inspiration in business!

2. How did you get your start in such a unique industry?

NK: My idea for the company came from a friend who operates a similar business. He helped me get started, and I learned a lot from him in the first year. In this industry, it's all about quick turnaround times and prompt customer service.

3. Is being a female entrepreneur difficult in your industry?

NK: Owning a business in a male-dominated industry has produced many learning opportunities. I've always felt I had to work hard in order to be taken seriously and for my business to grow and thrive. That being said, I am seeing a rise in female entrepreneurs.

4. What was your first job, and how does it help you in your business today?

NK: My first job was in accounting. I quickly realized it wasn't a good fit for me, but I did learn many skills that I later relied on when starting my business. One of those skills is learning to plan weekly, monthly and annual goals, and then execute them on a daily basis.

5. What are the most important characteristics that you look for in an employee?

NK: I look for people who are dedicated and committed to the mission and purpose of the company. We have daily meetings, where we ensure everyone is working with the same intention.

6. What is your favorite day-to-day activity in your business?

NK: My favorite activity is measuring our success in terms of our KPIs, and seeing the progress we've made along the way. I'm all about results, and I love seeing the numbers go up!

7. What has been your greatest accomplishment since joining EO?

NK: Since joining EO, I've been inspired by my peers to start another revenue stream for our company. In fact, we just started the product-development process on a new and revolutionary water filter that we'll showcase at the 2015 Water Quality Association trade show.



Noemi Kis

EO San Diego
President of Western RO, Inc.
EO member since July 2014

8. How has EO helped you strengthen your business?

NK: Being a part of EO has completely shifted my perspective regarding what's possible for my business. Since joining, I've implemented new systems that I've learned from Forum peers, one of which has increased our sales process efficiency. And I often discover new ideas from EO events that I can take back to my business.

9. What do you love the most about EO San Diego?

NK: I love my chapter! We have amazing people, host fun events where we can build relationships and get to explore learning opportunities to raise our skills as business owners.

10. What advice do you have for emerging entrepreneurs?

NK: They need to have passion and persistence while pursuing their dreams. Building a business is both an art and a skill, and it takes a lot of practice and learning. An organization like EO offers the opportunity to learn from others who've been in their shoes at one point in time.

Want to be interviewed in the next edition of "10 Questions"? Contact us at octane@eonetWORK.org.

Mistakes are the Best Teachers

Joe Fuld

President of The Campaign Workshop

On my way to work the other day, I saw this restaurant sign and found myself wondering: Have I *actually* learned from my mistakes this year? I often make errors in my business—some big, some small. But I try and look at every mistake as both the awakening of a problem that I never knew existed and the beginning of solving that problem. Did I always look at it that way? Hardly.

I work in a high-pressure business. I started a political consulting and advertising firm six years ago after a lengthy career as a campaign manager, employee and partner at other firms. Much of my job involved starting and closing “small businesses” that ran for sixth-month periods. But political campaigns are not, historically, the best training grounds for corporate culture and long-term growth, given that they are for such short periods of time.

When I started my own business, I discovered that success is achieved when you accept that you are going to make mistakes, and then embrace them as opportunities to learn and grow. Here is how I’ve learned to do just that:

Forget Your Ego

I still find it hard to listen to other people’s opinions. My goal is often just to plow ahead and get things done, but that isn’t always the best course of action. I’ve found that listening to my team and clients is the beginning of my growth as a leader. I work in a creative business, and while I often have a good idea, a better one may come from an employee or client directly. I’ve had to teach myself to take emotion and ego out of the picture, and simply listen for what works best.

Don’t Blame— Learn

When you build a culture free from blame, your teams will be more likely to learn from their mistakes. And if people are free to share their mistakes, others can learn from them, as well. Early in my career, I would get angry about errors. But now I look at them as opportunities. Sure, we don’t want them to happen. But when they do, it’s a chance for us to fix a broken system or show a client how committed we are to improving, even in the face of failure.

Avoid Inaction through Delegation

We should learn from our mistakes, of course, but many of the ones I’ve made weren’t conscious decisions. Rather, they were due to my inaction as a leader or my inability to delegate responsibility, like removing myself from day-to-day relationships with clients. I have employees who can do a better job than me and provide more attention to detail. Giving the responsibility to others enhances my client’s experiences, while freeing me up to focus on larger issues.

Share Your Mistakes

When I make a mistake, I try and share it with my staff. One of the best ways to learn as a team is to examine your mistake and find out what you could have done better. I also make it a point to own my mistakes. It’s never easy to call a client and say you blew it, but you need to. I’ve never lost a client because I admitted a mistake. It has, in most cases, actually made our relationship stronger.

Like all entrepreneurs, I make big and small errors. But I’ve learned over the years not to let them paralyze me. I cannot learn by doing *nothing*. I can only grow from the experiences, and by using those experiences in ways that make me and my business stronger.

Joe Fuld is an EO DC member who also writes about politics, advocacy and engagement strategies on www.thecampaignworkshop.com/blog. Contact Joe at jfuld@thecampaignworkshop.com.



MAXIMIZING Your Online Marketing

Roger Janik
CEO of Fair Marketing

Every business relies on marketing to grow, but accurately measuring that growth in order to gauge results is an ongoing challenge for most business owners. The good news is that taking the guesswork out of marketing ROI—especially when it comes to online—is possible. After much agony and years of testing, I've created a goal-oriented method of defining and quantifying a business's online-marketing goals. Getting there ... well, that was the tricky part.

My marketing firm has grown exponentially in the past decade, affording me valuable discoveries along the way. One of the most profound had to do with client retention. Specifically, a pattern among clients who've left dissatisfied. Even though we had developed a standard of transparency and accountability, some clients insisted they simply didn't "feel" results. It was frustrating. We knew we were producing—and measurably so—but that didn't always matter. Our efforts to track every lead and demonstrate value just didn't translate to the level of satisfaction required. So, I set out to discover a fool-proof retention strategy, one that could lasso even the jumpiest of clients.

Along the way, I learned that the core of our client attrition issue was a discrepancy between our goals and our clients' goals. Or perhaps more importantly, I found a lack of clearly defined goals on the clients' end to begin with. A lot of clients simply knew they wanted to do "better," without ever defining what *better* was. From this, it was clear that a one-size-fits-all marketing solution could never work, and that to effectively tailor our efforts to meet our clients' goals, we first needed to define them. That's where my formula for determining true marketing ROI begins.

Step One: Identify Your Online Goals

Begin by defining your current performance baselines—consider the following questions: What is your monthly online revenue goal? How much website traffic do you currently receive each month? How many website leads are generated by your website each month? How many of these leads convert to actual paying customers each month? What is the average dollar worth of one new customer? How much are you currently spending on digital marketing?

Once you've answered these questions, you can determine how many more web visitors, leads and sales you would need to hit your online-revenue goal (use this tool: www.fairmarketing.com/roi-calculator). This discovery was a major eye-opener for us. Why? Because if we knew how many website visitors we needed to drive to our website, we could create a custom online-marketing strategy to capture those new visitors. How would we go about doing that?

Step Two: Craft a Marketing Strategy

Once you've defined your goals, you'll need to determine the number of organic impressions it would take to equal actual website visitors. For example, if you used the calculator mentioned earlier,

it may tell you that you may need 50,000 organic impressions to convert 5,000 new website visitors. How do you capture those 50,000 impressions? Get ranked on Google's first page for your keywords by finding the targeted phrases that support your goal of earning 50,000 impressions (use this tool: <https://adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner>).



Step Three: Measure Goals and ROI

When using metrics-reporting tools, you'll need to evaluate and adjust your marketing efforts to determine if goals are being met. Once enough time has been allowed for sufficient analysis and report generation, you'll be able to track results against the baseline goals defined in step one. Here are some tools to help you do that: website visitor tracking (www.google.com/analytics); leads/sales tracking (www.keymetric.net); and keyword rankings (www.myseotool.com).

By following these three steps, my business now has clearly defined goals, keyword targets to hit those goals and tools to quantify results for clients, all of which have greatly reduced client attrition. The only ingredient that's missing is the marketing plan needed to push your site to page one of Google. That conversation is about SEO, and is a much longer discussion. With these tips, however, I hope you can find similar value in your business.

Roger Janik (pictured) is the Community Outreach Chair for EO Houston, and believes in putting family first above all. Contact Roger at roger@fairmarketing.com.



Pruning Your Client Base

Mark Borge

Principal of Best Facility Services

I remember our mindset when we launched Best Facility Services, a bootstrapped venture rich with naïve enthusiasm and low on cash flow—we had none. Any building was fair game for our janitorial services startup. Persistence and a few properties brought in from my co-founding partner eventually yielded some success. Before long, our client base “tree” began to sprout. At first, landing a new account was akin to adding another small branch to our sapling. But eventually, revenues began to build momentum, account managers were hired, office space was rented (almost 600 square feet!) and I finally started to draw a paycheck. We had a full-grown tree on our hands.

It didn't take long for our business to find a successful rhythm. We were named to the Inc. 5000 list two years in a row, but more importantly, we had created a model for compensating key account managers, which was unique in our industry. We felt that by paying a percentage of gross profit produced from each building to the respective account manager, there would be a greater sense of ownership. What started out as a simple incentive system quickly turned into a philosophy. We knew we needed to attract (and retain) great talent to produce lasting business relationships. This required a tracking mechanism, one that could calculate gross profit on each account so that “retention commissions” could be paid

out monthly. A simple Excel spreadsheet was created to accomplish this task, which also provided insight into the accounts' financial value.

After a few reviews of our monthly report, I noticed some patterns emerging. There were certain accounts that consistently produced a higher percentage of gross profit than others. It seemed some of the branches on our client tree were withering, while others were a leafy green. Further investigation identified common criteria that would either contribute to, or hinder, the financial health of each account. It illuminated problems and suggested opportunities, and we began to recognize qualities common to those that were flourishing. Questioning account managers about the time invested into problem accounts revealed that in most cases, more time was spent on low-profit accounts than those that produced greater profit. There were additional considerations, as well. How much time is spent collecting money from these accounts? Do these accounts have any potential to produce in the future? What are our administrative costs in maintaining these accounts? It became evident that our client tree needed a little pruning in order for our profit to reach new heights.

Our system for pruning is simple, although our criteria for ranking and selecting these “bad branches” continue to evolve. We start by sending a letter

to each client identified as “ripe for pruning,” announcing that higher billing rates are forthcoming (usually toward the end of the calendar year). Our clients can choose to accept the new rate, or we will accommodate a transition to another provider. The first year we did this, I was surprised (and in some cases disappointed) to see how many clients accepted the higher rate. Imagine the euphoria you would feel thinking you were firing an account manager, only to find out they just won't leave!

Through this approach, low-profit accounts are transformed into profit producers, or they're simply eliminated. Furthermore, our account managers have more time to maintain or pursue new accounts that provide greater financial benefit for them; the company realizes a higher gross-profit percentage overall; and our now-healthier bottom line is poised to reach new heights. Best of all, we are given improved ideas regarding target marketing, and are able to better identify prospects we need to beautify and fortify our client tree down the line. Looking back, this process has helped us achieve new measures of growth and success. Who knew all it took was a little pruning?

Mark Borge is an EO Fort Worth member, as well as the CEO of Afterimage Concepts, Inc. Contact Mark at mark@bestfacilityservices.com.

EO Program Spotlight: The Benefits of Spousal Forums

Moonlake Lee
Spousal Forum Moderator

In January 2014, the Singapore chapter launched its first Spousal Forum to much acclaim. Given its popularity and immediate impact, the chapter's second Spousal Forum "soft launched" in November. As the Forum Moderator for the initial W³ Spousal Forum, I can attest to the valuable role Spousal Forums play in the growth of a chapter and its membership. In our experience, when fully utilized, Spousal Forums represent one of the most important EO benefits. There are plenty of reasons why you (or your partner) should establish (or join) a Spousal Forum. They include:

- » **Personal and professional growth.** Growth beyond one's comfort zone, pushing boundaries and learning to trust are all part of the Forum experience. It's a liberating process, and one that enables participants to work through difficult issues in a supportive environment. What's more, he or she will receive countless opportunities to develop leadership skills by accessing learning and training programs available to EO members.
- » **Strengthening bonds.** Since all Spousal Forum members go through the Forum Training Program, spouses will be more understanding about their partners' involvement in Forum. And any insecurities or anxiety about the confidential nature of Forum are minimized (or eliminated) since there is a greater acceptance about the need to create a safe environment for deep sharing. Furthermore, couples can apply Forum principles in a familial setting— open communication channels, a non-judgmental environment, and trust and respect can bring the whole family together!
- » **Chapter benefits.** Spousal Forum members will gain greater benefit from their partners' EO membership. Naturally, they will be more supportive of participation in chapter activities, and enhanced engagement helps with retention rates. What's more, the chapter benefits when Spousal Forums play a supportive role in their activities. For example, several members of the W³ Spousal

Forum organized a movie fundraiser on behalf of the chapter, raising SGD\$62,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation!

Although there are many clear benefits to having Spousal Forums, we found that stereotypes and misconceptions can undermine their establishment. Here are some common assumptions about the Spousal Forum experience that should be corrected:

FALSE

» **A Spousal Forum is populated by housewives.** Never mind that EO Singapore's second Spousal Forum will have at least two male members. Many Spousal Forum participants are professionals who are actively involved in their own businesses or are co-founders of EO member companies. Members of the W³ Spousal Forum, for example, include an aesthetic doctor, jeweler, managing director of an herbal supplements company, pre-school director and event organizer. Before becoming the Moderator, I was a lawyer who, until recently, managed the business affairs of an award-winning dental practice.

FALSE

» **Spousal Forums are gossip dens.** Just as entrepreneurs face unique challenges, their spouses deal with unique pressures, too. Spousal Forum meetings represent opportunities to learn from the experiences of a group of peers who may have gone through similar business or personal issues. There is no interest or time to spend on idle gossip, as Forum meetings follow an agenda with strict adherence to the time allotted for each segment. As many seasoned EO members can attest, emotional, psychological and practical support from your Forum mates is priceless.

In many ways, Spousal Forums provide clear value to chapters and their regions. If you're interested in championing a Spousal Forum, or your significant other would like to participate in one, contact your EO Chapter Administrator or reach out to me (moonlake@moonlakelee.com) for insights into the experience.

Moonlake (pictured far right), with her Spousal Forum.



EO Partner Presents: Healthnetwork Foundation

“What’s the most important EO benefit I’ve experienced as a member? That’s easy— Healthnetwork Foundation! I took advantage of this valuable EO partnership for the benefit of my health and wellbeing. My father had his first heart attack at age 39, and as I neared that birthday mark, I found myself wanting to get a thorough checkup to ensure I was in prime shape. I was looking for something a bit more intensive than just a ‘regular’ checkup, so I engaged Healthnetwork and arranged for an executive physical. They connected me with the Mayo Clinic in Arizona.

“On the morning of my physical, I arrived at the hospital and found myself in a crowded lobby. I went to the counter to sign in, and was quickly whisked away by a nurse to begin my lab work. This was followed by an exchange with a nutritionist, which afforded me an incredible opportunity to learn more about my diet. Afterward, I met with a physician who had spent 15 years as a flight doctor for NASA— I was in good hands! Upon reviewing my family history, he changed my afternoon appointments and scheduled me with their top cardiologist for a stress test and EKG reading. I was amazed at the special attention I received, and by how quickly they tended to me.

“All in all, taking advantage of Healthnetwork was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made! In one day, I met more medical experts than I have my entire life. My physician shed some much-needed light on my health and the risks I face, and I am better for it. I definitely saw the value of participating in an executive physical, and I recommend others take advantage of it, as well.”

-Brandon Ames, EO Arizona
President of Able Information
Technologies, Inc.

Learn more about the
Healthnetwork Foundation by
emailing benefits@eonetwork.org.



What was your “Achilles heel” as an entrepreneur, and how did you address it?

“My greatest weakness is my desire to be liked by everyone. I can’t compromise my organization’s success to appease my personal desires, so I’ve identified our core values and operate in alignment with those values. Now, when a difficult decision has to be made, people often respect the reasoning behind the decision and the way the situation was handled.”

-Chris Carey, EO Minnesota
Founder and president of Modern Automotive Performance

“As the owner of an advertising agency, coming up with ideas is my business— that makes it very easy to get distracted. So I implemented a ‘Top Five’ approach, which involves a Post-It Note and a Sharpie. Each morning, I think about the five things that I *must* get done and write them on a note. I then attach that note to my laptop so I can see it all day long. As soon as I get to work, I set out accomplishing those five things. It’s simple and low-tech, but it works!”

-Denise Blasevick, EO New Jersey
CEO of the S3 Agency

“Starting new projects before the ongoing one is complete has always been a challenge. Formal strategic planning has saved me from this trap! I take an off-site retreat with my leadership team for two days and review feedback from a staff SWOT survey. From those results, we create a one-page roadmap with key objectives. This prevents me from chasing shiny objects unless it was in our plan.”

-Rob Nelson, EO Utah
Co-founder and CEO of Grow

“I’m a naturally optimistic person, and I often fail to consider what may go wrong in my business. As a result, I get stuck in the day-to-day operations. I’ve made it a ritual to spend 30 minutes every Sunday evening in my ‘thinking chair,’ where I answer a series of questions with my ‘thinking pen’ about my business. This helps me be more disciplined about my thinking, and having physical reminders like a chair and pen keep me focused.”

-Damien James, EO Australia – Victoria
CEO of Aged Foot Care



HOW EO HELPED ME Buy a College

Vonda White
EO Central Florida

As a graduate of the Entrepreneurial Masters Program (EMP), I had the pleasure of attending the program's 20th anniversary in 2012. I went in expecting to learn more about leadership, and left inspired to make an even bigger mark through entrepreneurship. I own an insurance brokerage firm, but it hasn't been my life-long passion. My heart has always been in giving back to children through education.

Several years ago, I researched "sleep away" camps for my kids, and found myself wading into an exciting industry. I was astounded by how much children learn at these camps. I knew deep down that I wanted to give young people the support they need to push their boundaries, grow their potential and excel academically. So with my EMP learning, I embarked on a new adventure—creating my own camp for children to expand their talents.

As I did the legwork, I was reminded of something EO Vancouver's Brian Scudamore once told me. He advised taking a

blank sheet of paper and filling it out with what your business could be without any limitations. I did that for my camp, and then researched locations for a place where entrepreneurs of tomorrow could be encouraged. I realized that a college campus was the best fit for my vision, and came across a property located in Owatonna, Minnesota, USA. In true EO fashion, I figured out a way to buy Pillsbury College with no money down. I didn't have time to waste. I had less than eight weeks to reach my goal of opening the doors to "Camp Pillsbury."

In June 2014, I realized my dream. That summer, 240 kids from 20 countries attended the camp. Ridgely Goldsborough, an EOer of 18 years who sent his children to Camp Pillsbury, said: "It was a priceless experience that my kids talk about frequently. To this day, they communicate with friends from multiple continents." Rounding out my vision is the opening of Pillsbury College Prep in September 2015, which will offer an entrepreneurial environment and teach students to thrive. Thanks to EMP, I was able to fulfill my dreams. And thanks to EO, I'm changing the world, one camper and student at a time.

Vonda is excited to partner with MyEO for a Global Family Camp Experience, to be held 24-28 June 2015. Her goal: To help EOers connect with their kids, build stronger bonds and create lasting memories. Learn more by contacting Vonda at vonda@camp-pillsbury.com.

Small is Proven Powerful in Switzerland

Set against a backdrop of indescribable beauty, 327 members and guests from 26 countries united in Geneva, Switzerland, for the **EO Geneva Global University**, held 3-7 September. Delivering the kind of learning and engagement that strengthens our #EONATION, the University offered attendees once-in-a-lifetime experiences that underscored how "Small is Powerful" in business and life. Highlights included learning sessions with Swiss innovators; a special MyEO event at the European Organization for Nuclear Research; socials at dream locations like the Olympic museum and a medieval French village; and the first-ever #EONATION Conversation at the United Nations Assembly Hall.

A big thank you goes out to the University committee, EO Switzerland – Geneva and the EMEA region for making this the sixth-highest-rated University in EO history! To view more event photos, scan the QR code.



New Member Spotlight

Andy Knell

EO UK – London

Founder of Andy Knell Limited

Joined EO in October 2014



You call yourself a “creative headhunter.” What does that entail?

AK: I headhunt the best ‘creatives’—art directors, copywriters, creative directors—for the world’s leading advertising agencies. My agency clients are focused in Europe and North America, whereas my creative talent search takes me to the far-flung corners of the earth.

What’s the secret to landing the perfect hire?

AK: It’s imperative to understand a client’s culture and vision, and then use that as a basis for evaluating candidates. When reviewing candidates, their track record of winning creative

accolades is the starting point, not the end point. We conduct an intensive interview process to evaluate if they will synergise with the business they would be working for.

I want to hire the world’s best creative director for my company. What should I keep an eye on when looking at resumes?

AK: A conventional, written CV is less important than the creative’s portfolio, which showcases their experience in the form of creative campaigns they’ve been responsible for producing. You need to feel a

strong connection to the ideas in the portfolio. You need to be moved, and ideally, wish you had thought of the ideas yourself.

What common mistake do you see business owners make when hiring creative talent?

AK: One of the most notable mistakes made by agencies that are trying to transition from producing average work to producing great work is hiring a big-name creative director, thinking it will solve all of their problems. Often this fails because once the PR buzz and initial excitement produced by the hire dissipates, the same underlying problems in the business remain— problems that won’t be fixed by hiring the new creative lead alone, however talented they are.

What’s the craziest thing you’ve seen on a candidate’s resume?

AK: Most of the gimmicky efforts to make a portfolio stand out are seen with junior-level creatives who haven’t produced creative work that can speak for itself. I tend to switch off when a creative tries to be too cute or jokey.

Welcome Andy to #EONATION— contact him at andy@andyknell.co.uk

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Limited spaces for member judges are available, so sign up today! Register by visiting events.eonetwork.org, or contact gsea@eonetwork.org to learn more.





EO Brisbane Member Talks Outsourcing on Local Radio

Aimee Engelmann, managing director of Beepo, was recently interviewed by Clark 105.5, where she discussed the popularity of outsourcing to the Philippines in Australia’s small- and medium-sized business market. Aimee credits EO for the inspiration to start her outsourcing firm, one she launched after a business research trip to the Philippines.



EO Philadelphia Member Publishes First Book

Susan Meitner, CEO of Centennial Lending Group, recently published her first book, titled *Crazy Lucky Girl – Do YOU Have the Keys to Success?* Susan’s debut leverages her 22-year career in the finance industry and offers insights into building a business during economic turmoil.

EO Calgary Member Profiled in Prominent Newspaper

Milena Radakovic, president of Nexus Exhibits, was recently featured in the *Calgary Herald*. In the profile, Milena discussed her journey from Belarus to business owner, highlighting her lessons learned along the way. Nexus Exhibits is a leading provider of enhanced visual displays and services.



EO Iowa Member Invited to Attend Elite Forum

Todd McDonald, president of ATW Training & Consulting, was recently selected to attend the 61st Annual National Security Forum in Alabama, USA. In all, 150 civilian leaders in business, education and government participated in the prestigious event.

EO New York Member Company Earns Prestigious Honor

Thomas Michael, CEO of Michael Management Corporation, was recently named a “Leader in SAP Training” in the IDC MarketScape: U.S. SAP Training Ecosystem 2014 Vendor Assessment. The IDC MarketScape analysis is based on vendors’ market success, viability for end users, growth momentum and company size.



EO Winnipeg Member Creates App to Save Young Drivers

Kevin Glasier, owner of Tactica Interactive, built a distracted-driving simulator to help young drivers experience the dangers of texting while driving. Upon completing the simulator, users are asked to pledge to not text and drive. Results have been so positive that the simulator was added to the province’s driver’s education curriculum.

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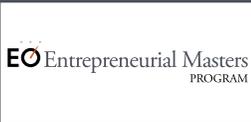
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