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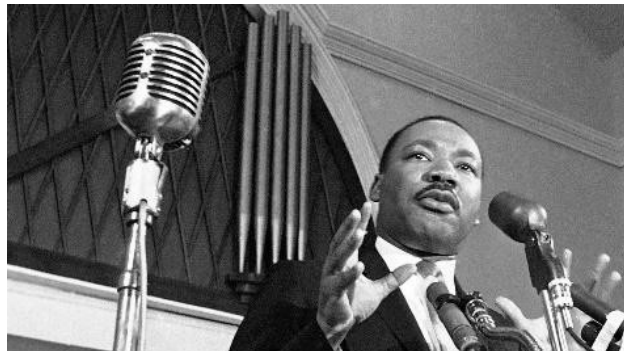
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Editorial

I hope everyone had a successful year and a joyful holiday season, but it is hard to believe another year has come and gone. 2023 marks the 16th year—our “sweet sixteen” if you will—of publishing the quarterly e-newsletter. During this time, both our Subscribers and our Alumni Content Contributors have grown significantly. In this spirit, I would like to give a special thank you to our Alumni Content Contributors for all of their time and effort in making this network a success. Please reach out to them and share your appreciation for their thoughtful, well-written articles.

On another note, this past Monday, we celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. on his respective holiday, MLK Day in the United States. As such, I would like to offer one of my favorite messages he shared:

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness;
only light can do that. Hate cannot
drive out hate; only love can do that."



His exemplifies our manta Think Straight, Talk Straight.

My hope for each of you this year is for your light to burn bright and for you to be a beacon for others. Wishing each of you protection and blessings this year.

Lastly, we need your help to further strengthen and maintain our Andersen Alumni network. Please leverage our Social Media Presence and [LIKE our Facebook page](#) and [JOIN our LinkedIn network](#), and lastly you can [FOLLOW us on LinkedIn](#) as well.

As always Think Straight, Talk Straight
[Warren Turner](#)
 Editor

Alumni On the Move

+ [Follow](#) us on our LinkedIn Company Page for the latest information on fellow alumni on the move.

If you have recently changed jobs and would like to share your good news with other Alumni, please email details to Admin@andersenalumni.com

Congratulations to the Following Alumni and Best Wishes in your new roles.



Jacky Wright	Gregory Peck	Marion Gray	Sheena Chandra
Grady Ligon	Renée Lercher	Eric Clark	Lee Kroll
Belinda Dorau Meier	Charlie Villar	Joshua Berwitz	Mohammad Abudaif
Rich Walker	Karl Johnsen	Nancy Buese	Dave Morgan
Nora James	Sheila Ravindran	Jerry Gagne	Jim Purcell
Michael Fortunato	Jason Cole	Steve Thornton	Brian Gilmartin
Dino Davanzo	Joel Silva	Kristy Illuzzi	Samantha Kjaerbye
James Vincent	Wendy Reeling	Frank Steele	Christopher Coleman
Todd Donaghue	Kim Voss	Scott Healy	Frank Connolly
David Brown	Mark Hall	David Frankenberg	Jessica Ross
Scot Parnell	Mike Lambert	Jennifer Cote	Eric Hall
Scott Bowman	Eric Hodge		

Agility in Manufacturing: Remaking the Supply Chain

By Erin Koss, CPA is an Andersen Business Consulting Alumni (1993-1999), and CEO of Syte Consulting Group, Inc.

Agility isn't a word we often associate with manufacturing companies. In fact, a huge strength of the manufacturing sector is the ethos of predictable, repeatable processes that ensure quality and safety in the production of goods.

But manufacturing companies are also businesses — and every business, no matter the industry, needs to be able to respond to changing market conditions and operational risks in order to survive. And if the past few years have taught us anything, it's that circumstances can change quickly, beyond our control, resulting in significant disruption in all areas of life.

I've been thinking a lot about agility in family-owned manufacturing businesses lately, and I'm going to spend some time in future blog posts talking about different aspects of it. In this article, I'd like to talk about what I think agility means for manufacturing companies, particularly as it relates to supply chain management, and how the right ERP system is critical to helping these companies stay agile and thrive in the face of unforeseen challenges.

Agility Isn't Always About Speed

When we talk about "agility" in a business context, we tend to envision a kind of "rapid response" philosophy — always being ready to switch things up in response to changing market demand, managing inventory carefully, and so on. Everything is done on a "just in time" basis.

But manufacturing is a different beast. The business processes and operational protocols that are necessary in a manufacturing environment don't lend themselves to sudden, reactive changes. The result would be chaos.

Agility in manufacturing is more about flexibility and transparency.

With so many moving parts and vendors involved, speed isn't so much an issue as making sure that the wheels stay on and the train keeps moving forward in the face of some unforeseen disruption.

For a manufacturing organization to be flexible and adaptable, it first needs full transparency of everything that's going on — who's doing what, which business processes are linked, and what's the next link in the chain. (This is why we always begin our client engagements with a [Business Process Assessment](#): we build an end-to-end

view of all the inputs and outputs throughout the manufacturing process, and everyone gets on the same page.)

That's for internal operations. But what about the dependencies that fall *outside* the manufacturing organization? This is where it gets trickier, and arguably, riskier.

Manufacturing businesses rely heavily on external partners and vendors for everything from parts and raw materials to transportation. In the past couple of years, the whole world experienced firsthand what supply chain disruptions look like, and for manufacturing companies, they can grind business to a halt.

That's why I believe that building redundancy and flexibility into the manufacturing supply chain is key to staying agile and resilient in the face of unexpected challenges.

Diversification Creates More Stability

It seems obvious that having more options when dealing with supply chain vendors would lead to more reliable outcomes. Yet paradoxically, up until recently the momentum has been in the opposite direction: instead of diversification, we've seen *consolidation* across almost every industry. Dealing with fewer suppliers means less administrative overhead, and exclusivity sometimes results in better rates.

The downside, of course, is that most of your eggs are spread across just a few baskets. Relying on the same channels for supplies and transportation can place companies at a disadvantage if those partners suddenly can't deliver. No matter how robust your internal processes and people are, you can't easily recover from something that's out of your control.

Supply chain disruptions aren't only inconvenient, they're costly. As demand exceeds supply, prices go up — and they're passed down along the chain. Transportation challenges are also still a problem, with a shortage of truck drivers on the one hand, and bottlenecks at ports of entry on the other.

Clearly, manufacturers need some mitigation strategies to protect themselves — and remaking the supply chain is high on the list. Manufacturing businesses will need to vet additional suppliers, for example. They may also need to go global for these new partners, or conversely, get more creative domestically, and work with smaller players than they've been accustomed to.

According to research from [Deloitte](#), 41% of manufacturing CEOs plan on adding or diversifying suppliers in existing markets. And 53% are looking to enhance data integration for better supply-and-demand visibility and planning.

That last statistic caught my attention, because I've seen how technology can play a really important role in helping manufacturing companies become more agile and resilient. And when it comes to the supply chain, the right ERP solution lends itself to better vendor relationship management.

An ERP System Boosts Manufacturing Agility

Agility in manufacturing is highly dependent on transparency — having accurate, real-time data readily available allows manufacturing leaders to make timely, data-driven decisions. In fact, at Syte, we're big proponents of [ERP data as a critical business asset](#).

One of the biggest advantages we see our clients getting with their ERP systems is global visibility into all the critical parts of the business. They can manage inventory more efficiently and plan their procurement cycles with greater confidence. An ERP system also allows manufacturers to integrate all their business operations, automating and streamlining end-to-end processes.

Supply chain management encompasses so many things — inventory monitoring, the ordering process, the shipping and receiving process, accounts payable, and so on. And an ERP can help automate all those pieces. When it comes to vendor management, manufacturers can use their ERP data to compare quality, price and delivery times for each supplier, and track communications related to every transaction.

The other great advantage of these digital technologies (like ERP) is that they help streamline coordination between manufacturers and suppliers. Digital technology helps manufacturers connect to vendors in a variety of ways: when vendors have access to a manufacturer's ERP, they can see when inventory of critical parts is low, and address it proactively.

Bottom line, if you don't have a modern ERP system in place, vendor management and supply chain management is going to be a very difficult and manual undertaking. And worse, you won't be in a position to weather future supply chain disruptions, which are almost certainly on the horizon.

As the manufacturing industry continues to [embrace new technologies](#), a modern ERP system will be critical to taking full advantage of innovation and positioning manufacturing companies for growth, not just survival.

Flexibility and Resilience Starts With ERP

Family-owned manufacturing businesses have had to navigate a lot of change and disruption in the past two years. Supply chain management challenges aren't likely to go away soon — and trying to solve those challenges without a solid ERP solution in place

is not a winning strategy. The right ERP system will set manufacturers up for long-term resilience and success.

Are you thinking about building more agility into your family-owned manufacturing business? We'd love to help you get started. [You can schedule a complimentary consultation session right here.](#)

Erin Koss, CPA is an Andersen Business Consulting Alumni (1993-1999), and CEO of Syte Consulting Group, Inc. She is known for helping family-owned manufacturing companies scale with vision and integrity. Taking a people-first, process and technology readiness approach, Erin and the team at Syte ensure companies are ready to take on big change initiatives like ERP before diving in headfirst. A native to the Pacific Northwest, she enjoys traveling, being outdoors, hiking, biking, rowing, and supporting local culinary scene. [Talk to Erin about preparing your company for sustainable growth.](#)

Big vs Boutique what you should consider for your next Retained Search?

By J. James O'Malley, *Former Andersen National Director of Experience Recruiting, Jim is a Managing Director and leads the executive search practice for Felix Global.*

Several years ago, marketing guru Seth Godin <http://www.sethgodin.com/sg/bio.asp> wrote and spoke extensively about why “small” is the new “big”. He listed a whole host of reasons on why smaller businesses often outsmart and outsell bigger ones including:

- Small means the founder makes a far greater percentage of the customer interactions.
- Small means the founder is close to the decisions that matter and can make them, quickly.
- Small means you can tell the truth on your blog.
- A small firm is succeeding because they're good, not because they're big. So smart small companies are happy to hire them.

Let's apply Godin's logic to executive search. The industry is characterized by two types of companies. On one extreme are a handful of mega-firms, some of them publicly-held, with big brand names and revenues in excess of \$500M per year. These large firms typically cater to Fortune 100 clientele and have deep relationships with their boards. It sounds prestigious to say “*we're using a big name firm*”, but, unless you're a Fortune 100 company, your search can get very expensive, lost in the shuffle, and they will ultimately recruit from you after their hands-off time has expired. On the flipside, there are a multitude of boutiques, most of which specialize by industry and/or function. We believe strongly that most companies get better results by partnering with the right

boutique. By answering the following questions, we're pretty sure you'll come to that same conclusion:

Are you really dealing with the recruiter who will do your search?

When you engage a boutique, you are dealing directly with the person who will work on your project. In contrast, at big search firms, the search may be directed by a "Partner" but, in fact, a significant portion of the work is done by less tenured associates. These may be people you have never met. Or people with minimal knowledge of your company or your business challenges and goals. As a result, the candidates may possess the functional match to job description but may not have the cultural competence and traits (or what we call "the spirit") of the job description. This can result in bad hires who don't fit your corporate culture and perform poorly down the road.

Will you have access to more candidates?

Executive search firms have an ethical (and usually contractual) obligation not to recruit from clients. Big search firms have significant off-limits constraints, which limits the pool of candidates. As these firms get bigger, this problem also gets bigger. While the big firms are becoming cleverer by defining off limits around a project or client - and not the company they represent - boutiques can access more candidates because they have fewer off-limits companies. In addition, a little-known fact is that candidates that are active on a search within a firm are also off-limits for any other search projects. Large firms can have literally thousands of active candidates throughout the firm at any one time...many of whom are unavailable for your search!

How many searches is the firm or consultant working on?

A typical search firm partner may conduct 15 to 20 assignments simultaneously, overwhelming their associates and research staff. They operate in a "*book it*", "*bill it*" and "*forget it*" environment. Unless your search is carrying the highest fees or is relatively easy to complete, it may be regulated to the bottom of the pile. In contrast, boutiques typically work on fewer projects, devoting far more time and attention to each and every search. We recognize that our partners and associates are performing at their best when they have 3-6 projects at any one time and so we take measured steps to adhere to that.

What about Completion Rates?

Boutiques have higher completion rates than big firms. Completion rates at big search firms are well-known to be in the 60% to 65% range. At Felix Global, our completion rate is over 90%. There are many reasons that a search does not get completed, not all of them attributed to the search firm. But, with a 90% completion ratio, you know that Felix Global selects projects that we know we can complete successfully. It is imperative that we do so since a large portion of our retainer is performance based and at-risk if we do not complete the project.

Does the firm have in-depth knowledge of your company?

Because boutiques have a business model that enables them to form a genuine partnership with you, they are willing to take the time to get to know you in the hope that this will be a long term relationship and not a transaction. As a result, smaller firms like Felix Global usually are better at selling your opportunity and assessing candidates because we know you. Combining our access to talent with our knowledge of your opportunity and applying our proven performance-based assessment -- this is where we combine the art and science of executive search as true consultants in talent acquisition.

What is the firm's process and how will they bill?

Many search firms operate on a “don't ask, don't tell” basis, convincing companies that the search process is mysterious and incomprehensible. The reality is that most big firm partners cannot explain their process, nor do they adhere to a proven methodology. At Felix Global, we believe that being transparent is key. That's why we transfer all of the research we do on your project to you after the search is completed. This helps develop your database for future needs as well as to fill the specific open position. The same goes for our fee. Our initial retainer is invested in new research and name generation, while the second retainer goes to our operating costs. In contrast, the big firms often attempt to pad this by charging an high administrative fee (usually 10% of the retainer). We cap ours at 6%.

What are Felix Global's differentiators?

Beside our people and our one-firm approach we have a unique value proposition in how we leverage assessments and coaching into our executive search process. Many firms have similar capabilities, but few offer it as a part of the search. Our Talent Advisory Service are incorporate as part of the overalls search fees so we can provide the expertise of external executive coaches untainted by organizational politics, with a proven coaching methodology grounded in the stages of assimilation and the goodwill built with new hires who otherwise might “sink or swim” alone in their new roles. We provide this on-boarding and acculturation coach of the new hires first three months.

Big Fish...Small Pond?

If your company plans to do more than ten searches a year, you may have enough leverage to get the attention you deserve from the big search firms. But, if your needs for search are more focused, you will get far more personalized and attentive service from a boutique. Typically, the big firms sell the strength of their network as the major selling point. The reality is that their network is full of previous placements that they are ethically obligated to never recruit again. We start each project with fresh research; by getting the specific names and contacts on individuals currently in the roles you have asked us to recruit for. No old names - new ones.

In Summary

Bigger is not better in executive search. In fact, big search firms face significant obstacles to client service, off-limits and availability of the right candidate pool. Large scale makes it easier for search firms to build their brands, and create their own economies of scale but does it provide value to their clients? Search firms are service providers. When evaluating vendors, look past the false allure of name brands and critically evaluate the quality of service you will receive. Determine the firm's commitment to your company, assess its process and determine whether the search firm is passionate about serving your company's needs and providing what you and your company want, not what they want to sell to you.

Don't wait. Think big. Go Small. For more information on our Executive Search Practice, contact us at:

www.felixglobal.com

About J. James O'Malley: Jim is focused on helping professional service and financial service organizations with critical talent needs. For over 30 years, Jim has leveraged his passions for executive search, talent acquisition, workforce planning and analytics, and executive coaching to solve a variety of talent acquisition challenges. For more information and to contact Jim at: jomalley@felixglobal.com.

Patience

By Ed Maier, *Former Andersen Partner*

Have you ever lost yours? I had an experience over the holidays with an airline that reminded me how easy it is to lose this; and how difficult it is to find it.

I won't bother you with the details, but since this is my first article of the year, and some of us are into "resolving to do better" in certain areas, I would like to share a few thoughts with you about it.

Dictionary.com defines patience as:

- the quality of being patient, as the bearing of provocation, annoyance, misfortune, or pain, without complaint, loss of temper, irritation, or the like.
- an ability or willingness to suppress restlessness or annoyance when confronted with delay.
- quiet, steady perseverance; even-tempered care; diligence.

As I think about my incident with the airline, and my behavior during phases of that incident, I am reminded of my own bywords at the top of this article. I know many of you have heard me use them before and you, as alums, have used them yourself. Think straight, talk straight.

So how could I have used the meaning of these words to better handle my situation with the airline? Here are my observations on how I could have used the guidance from these words, rather than how I reacted emotionally.

Think Straight--

Gather and understand the facts. When faced with the information the airline provided me, instead of becoming frustrated over concerns about what their action was doing to our schedule, I should have simply followed their instructions to use their website to help me reschedule our flight. Since others in the same predicament were faced with the same challenges, I now realize I lost precious time and probably limited my alternatives by letting my frustration keep me from dealing with the issue immediately and rescheduling to one of the flights they offered.

Understand the context. I didn't really care what the context was related to the flights' discontinuance and cancellation. I wasted time expressing my frustration with the airline rather than just thinking through the problem and using the resources available to me to solve it.

Avoid noise and fluff. There is always a great deal of "noise" in the system, but the noise in this circumstance was created by my own mind thinking all of the negative things that could happen to us because of this "catastrophe". Since a nonstop alternative was not available and we had to switch planes at the first stop, would we make the connection? If we didn't make the connection, where would we stay overnight? Would the airline help us with this? Instead of trying to eliminate the "noise" in my head, I just should have followed the facts. I should have let them come at me one at a time and deal with each appropriately instead of creating my own personal flight doomsday scenarios. Why couldn't I simply throw out the hyperbole. One of the things I try to remind myself of is to only listen to the sources I trust. I have been flying with this particular airline for the majority of my fifty years in business. Their facts, though on occasion frustrating, are always accurate. Why didn't I just take comfort in that and reduce the level of noise coming at me?

Keep it simple. In retrospect, the information the airline provided me to solve my problem was straightforward and accurate. All I had to do was follow it. Instead, I let my emotions run ahead of my brain and increase my frustration level.

Once I assembled, analyzed and concluded about the information presented to me, I could have done a better job of talking straight.

Talk Straight—

Understand Your Audience. I violated this in spades because I virtually ignored the audience I was speaking to – particularly a gate agent who frustrated me. I should have never raised my vocal volume when speaking to him. For that behavior, I apologize.

Tell it like it is. I finally got something right. Our first flight on the replacement journey (as created by the prior day's cancelled flight) was late; so we missed our connection. This led to my previously-mentioned poor interaction with the gate agent. But then I met a service agent who turned my entire experience around by following my own simple guidance of this principle. She:

- **Kept it simple.** She explained the airline's solution to our missed flight briefly and concisely. She quickly described our options and gave us the best alternative. She even volunteered how our luggage would be handled. She was brief and to the point, and very courteous. She kept us moving along to our next flight in an extremely efficient manner.
- **Asked if I understood.** After she made our options very clear to us, she asked if we understood them. She handled our questions in a thoughtful and professional manner.
- **Considered our perspective.** She empathized with us, anticipated our concerns and responded as best as she could in the situation.
- **Showed courtesy, respect and appreciation.** Throughout our conversation she was thoughtful and understanding of our situation. She showed respect for us as customers and treated us fairly in the circumstances. She displayed great patience with me and my frustrations. Afterward I realized how much she exemplified how I should have behaved throughout the entire cancellation-rebooking-missed connection incident. She treated both of us with respect and professionalism.
- **Managed emotions.** She was calm and peaceful throughout our conversation which helped me dial my own emotions down.

As we boarded the plane for our destination and settled down in our seats, I began thinking about the events and the way I handled them. Indeed, I violated some of my own principles by the way I thought and communicated "in the heat of the moment". In retrospect, I remember something I learned from reading Stephen Covey. He said that you should not just immediately react when things happen. Slow down your thinking. Plan your action. Then act. If you apply this line of thinking to events that happen to you before you react to them, you can better control the emotions caused by that event and, generally, take better action.

Unfortunately, I did not follow my own beliefs in this situation. I know I could have done better. I also know that this will not be the last event in my life which frustrates or angers me. I just hope the next time, I remember to think straight and talk straight a little better.

If you have any comments, I welcome that you write me at edmaier46@gmail.com And, as always, I will remind that if you like what I write, you can read more. Go to www.amazon.com and pick up my book – **Think Straight. Talk Straight.** Thank you!

Are You Owning It

By Gary Thompson, *Andersen Alumnus and currently a Managing Director at Thompson Consulting*

I look at planning for and owning the future as something that is combat driven. Let me explain.

Both of my grandfathers served in World War II, one in the infantry on the frontline and the other as a codebreaker in generally safe spaces. Both were trained for those specific jobs, and they had their respective responsibilities they owned. The infantry didn't do well without intelligence information, and the codebreakers couldn't do their job safely without frontline protection.

They had to take their responsibilities personally and own them – and accounting professionals on all levels must do the same as we face our own “war” on talent, finding the right clients, and growing our firms. We all have our own responsibilities to support the greater good, and we all must believe our individual leadership is imperative to our firms' success.

What does “owning it” mean?

- **Leadership:** What if it's up to you? Whether you asked for the call, established yourself as a candidate, someone recommended you, or you simply were out of the room and drew the short straw, you can now have a significant impact on your firm. Opportunities to demonstrate leadership are everywhere, but it matters less about why you received the call and more about what you do in leading – and how.
- **Embracing your firm's mission, vision, and values:** Don't just list them on your website or internal documents. Owning the future means you demonstrate alignment with these critical elements of a firm. People hear what you say, but they embrace what you do. Consistently advocating for and living out the firm mission, vision, and values shows others you are owning the future of your firm.
- **Decisiveness on the intersection of culture and performance:** It's unique to your firm, requires no external justification but is impactful to your overall strategy. Leaders set the tone and carry the mantle of culture in their actions and words – they drive culture from the top down.
- **Clarity:** Make sure your firm's strategy is understandable and understood; don't just assume it is! Firm leadership tends to be afraid to make decisions. However, not deciding actually sends the message you're not clear about the firm's future and what you want from your team.

- **Alignment:** When we are clear on where we are going and what our strategy is to get there, we can then work together to set goals that align with the firm’s overall strategy and provide the tools for everyone to succeed.
- **Vision:** Seeing beyond our present circumstances and gaining assistance where our vision of the future may be limited.

We typically look at firm leaders as having responsibility, but everyone shares ownership. It’s easy to come out of a partner retreat with strategic imperatives and say the CEO or managing partner will take it from there but be cautious with that approach.

While holding yourself – and others – accountable, you are most focused on being the best you can be – performing at your highest individual level. You can’t wait for or just watch others; you need to be actively engaged in achieving success.

Whether you’re on the executive committee, a production-oriented client service technician, or in operations support, all of those individuals have centers of influence that are looking to us to get our view of the future. Everyone at every level has influence, people who listen to and look to you for guidance, advice, and support. They want to know what you’re thinking about the future and what responsibility you own.

So how can you “own it?”

- Set smart goals: Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based
- Be results and action-oriented (admire solutions, not problems)
- Manage expectations
- Provide motivation

While these may sound like easy tasks, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Each person must create a strategy that accounts for their unique situation.

The good news? While your issues may be unique because of your specific responsibilities and your firm’s strategy, the overarching challenges are relatively common among all firms and professionals, no matter the size or experience level. And there are benefits to learning to own it alongside someone who can help – as an accountability partner, a strategic thinker, or even a sounding board.

How can I help you own it? Feel free to reach out to me gary@thomsonconsulting.com

Uncertainty Allowances: How CFOs Can Prepare For The Unexpected

By Jim DeLoach, *Former Andersen Partner and currently a Managing Director at Protiviti*

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The interconnected disruptions roiling markets and industries today confront boards, CEOs and CFOs with more possible futures than they have ever had to consider. CFOs contending with uncertainties that resemble sci-fi plotlines (war, climate change, natural disasters, nuclear saber-rattling, beached container ships) are trending toward the approach that makes the most sense: Allow for the unexpected and prepare the organization for the most likely and extreme of those futures.

Doing so involves a combination of financial planning and analysis (FP&A) together with contingency planning—competencies that reside squarely in the CFO’s increasingly sophisticated wheelhouse.

An uncertain landscape presents an unclear future with multiple scenarios—so lean on FP&A

These risks—persistently high inflation, soaring interest rates, fears of recession, talent shortages, energy crises, climbing wages, regional conflicts, reshoring, near-shoring, friend-shoring and more—require finance leaders to develop “uncertainty allowances” by identifying possible alternative futures and preparing different plans to exploit the upsides and manage the downsides of the most plausible and extreme scenarios. Conducting this assessment requires CFOs to lead data-driven contingency planning activities across numerous domains, including strategy-setting and execution, capital expenditures, supply chain risk management, and human capital management.

A fully integrated FP&A capability equips finance leaders with the data inputs they need from across the enterprise as well as relevant external sources (economic and marketplace trends and indicators) to produce and update [rolling forecasts](#), [dynamic cash flow plans](#) and scenario-driven assessments of the impact of changes in various economic and other market assumptions and emergence of various risks on the business. Allowing for all potential future challenges requires organizations to be flexible as they focus on the fundamentals and optimize their most promising revenue-generation opportunities while being prepared to shelve moonshot projects.

One key is validating data quality and integrity. Cross-functional collaboration ensures that all data feeding into FP&A are appropriate. Relevant inputs and robust analyses produce better scenarios and forecasts as well as more robust plans for adjusting to those future conditions. Knowledge is also king for finance groups, which need to identify and

access data inputs that shed light on expenses and revenues related to supply chain and procurement, manufacturing, service lines, talent management, marketing, IT, treasury/cost of capital, and the rest of the business. In addition, regardless of whether the FP&A function is centralized or decentralized, it should be regarded by the business as credible, collaborative and communicative.

Prioritize cost optimization over cuts

Two other points are important to keep in mind when leveraging finance-led forecasts and scenarios to develop contingency plans. First, while many contingencies involve cost reductions, it is often more profitable to prioritize cost optimization over cuts. For example, rather than a broad objective to reduce purchasing activity by 10%, there may be more valuable opportunities to optimize procurement costs by making changes to sourcing, planning and/or supplier negotiations that yield similar and systemic structural savings without impeding the business areas that use those purchases to generate revenue.

Second, finance groups should develop a hierarchy for cost optimization initiatives. The plan should offer a menu of cost-saving steps that can be implemented as a possible future scenario (e.g., a severe recession) materializes, with targeted cost savings in the current and subsequent projection periods. Each initiative should be prioritized to create a scalable plan. Depending on the severity of the scenario or scenarios that materialize, some or all of the steps may be implemented.

Preparation breeds resilience: three key areas of focus

While contingency plans should be comprehensive, the following areas are great places for CFOs to focus their foundational work to help their organizations enhance resiliency by preparing for the unexpected:

Capex

As finance groups plan for contingencies affecting capital expenditures, they should focus on product and service lines likely to prove most resilient in each scenario, as well as revenue opportunities, payback periods, carrying costs and adjusted targeted rates of return. The CFO is responsible for determining what it costs to execute both short- and long-term strategic objectives, as well as the opportunity costs associated with delaying or permanently shelving capex investments. This determination can be of vital importance given the need for many companies to stay the course in modernizing their legacy technology infrastructures and investing in digital capabilities to stay connected with and continuously improve the customer experience. So if a severe downturn were to occur, the company should strive to exit it in a strong position conducive to growth.

Supply chain

As CFOs run through scenarios with supply chain leaders, they should identify and measure risk across all operations and regions. They also should assess risk across different time dimensions—current risks as well as those likely to pose challenges to short- and long-term operations based on the organization’s strategic direction. The plans developed to address these scenarios should not overemphasize cost factors; instead, costs should be evaluated and monitored in conjunction with supply chain reliability, resiliency and responsiveness.

Talent

Hiring freezes, reductions in force, compensation adjustments, reassignments and other people-related changes should be planned and executed with surgical precision and empathy amid a long-term talent shortage and challenges to attract and retain needed skills. CFOs should [work closely with their chief human resources officers](#) to ensure that talent strategy aligns with business strategy and that data-driven talent assessments and skills inventories are conducted semi-annually (or, better yet, quarterly) to identify and eliminate gaps that impede the achievement of business objectives. These skills inventories provide critical decision-making insights when reductions in force are needed and/or when difficult-to-source skills become available (due to less surgical layoffs by other companies) while also ensuring that sufficient resources are in place to pivot back to growth mode faster than the competition.

These three areas cover only a portion of the scope of a comprehensive contingency plan, but they represent a great start. An effective plan prioritizes, sequences and groups actionable steps by function and operating unit to establish clear ownership, authorities and accountabilities via key metrics that are managed against specified targets. Once the plan is completed, it should be reviewed and approved by the CEO and board of directors. Moreover, management should review the plan periodically—annually, at least—to ensure it remains current, and test its underlying assumptions, before finally briefing the board following such reviews.

The future cannot be prevented and remains uncertain, but CFOs can prepare the organization to be resilient when it arrives.

Check out Jim’s [website](#).

New Book Release Written by Andersen Alumnus Maggie Mistal, Are You Ready to Love Your Job? Make a Great Living Through Soul Search, Research and Job Search

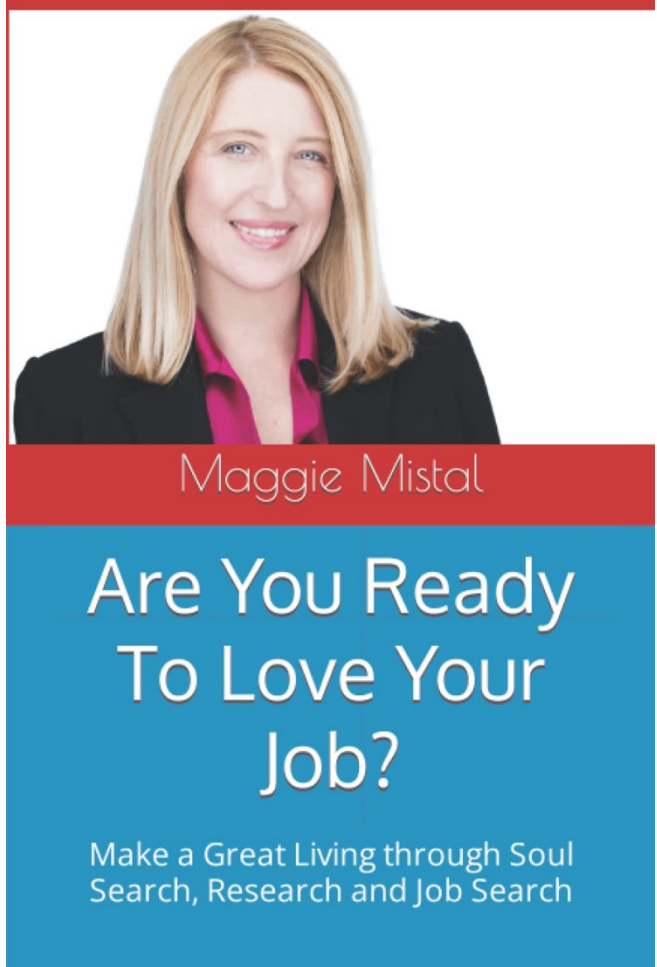
Author Bio: *Maggie Mistal, former Arthur Andersen Business Consulting Manager and career change expert.*

Are you ready to love your job? After its release at last October, the book was named the #1 New Release in Job Hunting on Amazon!

Job dissatisfaction is at an all-time high as evidenced by the Great Resignation. If you are hungry for a book that can help you find what is missing, look no further. And for those of you for whom the economic climate is forcing you out of a job, you may want to utilize this opportunity to find a new career where you are passionate about your work.

It's estimated that most people will change careers at least 3 times in their lifetimes. But for you, the idea of career change is overwhelming, with seemingly impossible obstacles. This book breaks it down into a simple process of practical tips and easy steps. Maggie's audience on radio, TV, podcasting, at speaking engagements, and on the internet wish they could have a personalized career coach take them by the hand. This book does that for you.

- Not doing the work you love?
- Unsure of your next career move?
- Not taking the next step?
- Wasting time?



If you struggle with answers to these questions, Maggie's proven approach and story will inspire you and offer tips to make your dreams a reality. She will enable you to redefine the realistic.

Everyone who has a job or is looking for a job will find support with this book. Whether you are employed, unemployed or under-employed, you want to find happiness, meaning and success in your work, and this is the book that will show you how.

You can order your copy at <https://www.maggiemistal.com/shop/buy-maggies-book-and-get-ready-to-love-your-job-paperback/>.

***About the Author** : Maggie Mistal worked in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and New York in her corporate career. She started at Arthur Andersen in Audit and moved into Business Consulting working on the Finance Business Solutions Team and in the Change Enablement Group. Maggie left Andersen when it ended to work at Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia and also started her own Life Purpose Career Coaching practice. She became Martha Stewart Living Radio's career coach, hosting her own show on the Martha channel on SIRIUSXM for 7 yrs. She continues to coach full time and now lives in the Florida Keys with her husband and son. She hosts a podcast called Making a Living with Maggie and has outlined her proven Soul Search, Research and Job Search approach with 20 years of client success stories in her new book – Are You Ready To Love Your Job?*

New Book Release Written by Andersen Alumnus Robert Wilson, *Hellhole, 98520:* From Aberdeen to Arthur Andersen to Living in the After

Author Bio: Robert Wilson, former Arthur Andersen audit and business consulting partner in Seattle and Washington, D.C., chief financial officer, and corporate board member.

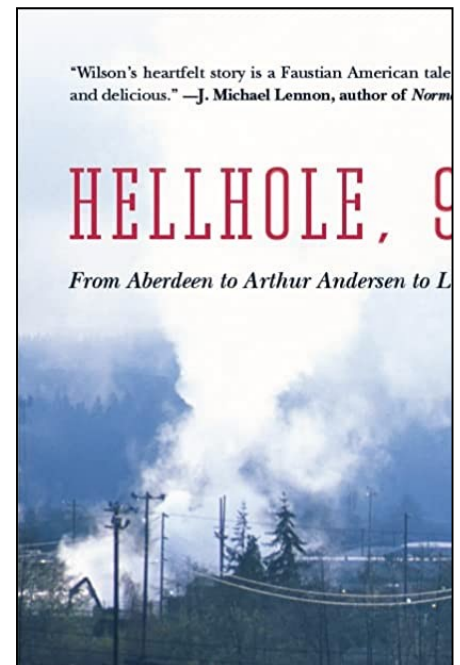
This rich story is an up-from-nothing coming-of-age memoir, a partner's account of the colossal business failure of Arthur Andersen and, in the aftermath of the acutely personal effects of that calamity, a search for and rediscovery of a higher purpose and spiritual meaning.

The author grew up in Aberdeen, Washington, a tough, immigrant, harbor town of lumber mills and violent labor wars, pollution, and dozens of whore houses, dubbed by the popular press as “Hell-Hole of the Pacific” at the turn of the last century, and ground zero in “America’s war on sin” in mid-century. Like Kurt Cobain, another native son a generation later, the author wanted nothing more than to escape the shackles of Aberdeen. But his path was the corporate world, not grunge music, where he climbed the greasy corporate pole to the partnership at Arthur Andersen.

Andersen collapsed in 2002 under the weight of Enron and other financial scandals. While the book chronicles the author’s unlikely ascent to the partnership at Andersen, it also provides his perspective into what went phenomenally right during the firm’s heyday, and disastrously wrong in the end. When Arthur Andersen died, the author’s world imploded as well. He was left with no choice but to re-examine everything he thought he knew about himself. What he discovered at the dead end of the path of self-flagellation was a new beginning radically different than the one he left behind.

Praise for **Hellhole, 98520:**

"The book’s first virtue is its portrait of the tough mill town of Aberdeen. Like another native son, Kurt Cobain, Wilson broke free, and by dint of extraordinary effort rose to the partnership at Arthur Andersen. His searing anatomy of the firm's vertiginous collapse in 2002, which produced in him a spiritual reawakening, is the brunt of this powerful



memoir. Wilson's heartfelt story is a Faustian American tale, dramatic, Dreiserian, and delicious.” J. Michael Lennon, author of **Norman Mailer: A Double Life**, and **Mailer's Last Days: Remembrances**

“A cautionary tale that is a must read for aspiring business professionals and executives.” Jeffrey R. Alves, Dean Emeritus, Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership, Wilkes University

“Although the details of Wilson’s story are uniquely his, the brushstrokes are universal to the human experience: economic hardship and striving for betterment; loss, resiliency and recovery; spiritual search and rediscovery; and, above all, the rescuing power of love.” Lydia Jumonville, President and CEO, SCL Health, Intermountain Healthcare

Available now on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [TBM Books](https://www.tbmbooks.com).

The Essence of Leadership

By Todd Dewett, *Andersen Alumnus, author and speaker*

I’m often asked about what really matters for leadership success. At the risk of oversimplifying, I’ve landed on three main functions. Leaders help, inform, and inspire. Any other function you might think of can be reasonably subsumed by one of these three.

To help means to provide structure in the form of expectations and goals. It also means to facilitate work by providing resources, coaching, and actual assistance when needed. It definitely includes empowering decision-making and looking for chances to make collaborative decisions with the team. Finally, helping is predicated on lots of listening and eventually results in creating developmental opportunities.

To inform is to give your team information that facilitates trust and productivity. It’s all about proactively embracing transparency. First, you provide feedback as needed that keeps them moving forward. Next, you explain your key decisions and behaviors. Don’t let them make assumptions – ever. Finally, you share higher level information, as appropriate. They need to know why certain things happened and what’s coming or being considered that might impact their work.

Last but not least, to inspire is to push them past mere motivation towards a stronger sense of purpose. You do this first with recognition and rewards, of course, but there’s much more. It’s about being human and compassionate. So, admit your mistakes, embrace learning, and make sacrifices. Be their advocate. Demand and model positivity. Finally, find ways to connect them to the ultimate purpose their work supports. Help them see meaning beyond the money they earn.

Leadership can feel difficult at times given the complexities of situations and personalities, but you can focus just by asking whether or not you're doing enough to help them, to inform them, and to inspire them.

Dr. Todd Dewett is one of the world's most watched leadership personalities: a thought leader, an authenticity expert, best-selling author, top global instructor at LinkedIn Learning, a TEDx speaker, and an Inc. Magazine Top 100 leadership speaker. He has been quoted in the New York Times, TIME, Businessweek, Forbes, and many other outlets. After beginning his career with Andersen Consulting and Ernst & Young he completed his PhD in Organizational Behavior at Texas A&M University and enjoyed a career as an award-winning professor. Todd has delivered over 1,000 speeches to audiences at Microsoft, ExxonMobil, Pepsi, Boeing, General Electric, IBM, Kraft Heinz, Caterpillar, and hundreds more. His educational library at LinkedIn Learning has been enjoyed by over 30,000,000 professionals in more than one hundred countries in eight languages. Visit his home online at www.drdebett.com or connect with Todd on LinkedIn. He can be reached at todd@drdebett.com

Stewing Over Mentorship

By John Blumberg, Andersen Alumnus and author of *Return On Integrity*
(www.BlumbergROI.com)

Discussions about mentorship have been coming-up a lot lately. Maybe it's the time of year – the reflective nature that cooler winds and falling leaves seem to bring. I love to lean into such discussions because they always call to mind people who have meant so much.

One advantage of getting older is the perspective uniquely gifted by the arc of time – the experience of many seasons. And over that arc of time, it seems to me that mentors often pass through our lives for specific reasons in specific seasons.

My parents were certainly my first guides. And then Kaye, like a second mom, came along to teach me to swim, golf and drive a car. Mr. Lenahan became like a second dad when my father passed away the summer following my 13th birthday. I made it a practice to send him a card every Father's Day well into my adult years, up to and including the year of his own passing. They were all loving teachers, anchors, and guides each in their own self-giving way.

Yet, it was in my early years at Arthur Andersen that I began to discover and understand the value of a mentor. I was deeply fortunate that a new mentor arrived in every season ... actually, in every city ... across the course of my 18-year career there. It was Jerry West and Garland Irwin in Houston, Jim LaBorde in Albuquerque, Jack Henry in Phoenix, and Denny Reigle in my years in Firmwide Recruiting in Andersen's World Headquarters in Chicago. Then there were mentors like Dave Houser and Pete Pesce who guided me across many seasons. In the early years of my transition into the speaking profession, Kevin Freiberg, Barbara Glanz and Mark LeBlanc each showed up at the

perfect time. Deep into my speaking and writing, Sister Madelyn and Al Gustafson spoke into my life. I have loved the guidance from season-to-season from each and every one of them.

And in their genuine guidance, I came to love them.

Recently, in a group conversation with my long-time business coach, Mark LeBlanc, he posed the question: *Who is on your own personal Mount Rushmore?* It was a great question that stimulated a meaningful, vulnerable, and authentic conversation amongst the group. No doubt, it calls us to think beyond what we have done – to the more important realization – *who have we come from.*

I believe the concept of being a self-made anything is just another illusion – a deceptive expression of arrogance and pride, rather than a realization that we are a blended stew of those who have poured themselves into us. Most importantly, it robs us of the joy of honoring others. This isn't to diminish the endless hours and incredibly hard work individuals put into whatever they are building. But it is to say that all of it is seeded and nourished by mentors in some form or fashion – directly or indirectly. In many ways, it is the essence of their legacy.

You can't repay a mentor ... you can only pay it forward.

In my years at Arthur Andersen, I always tried to discourage the concept of “mentor programs” because it undermines the truth of mentorship. Mentorship is a naturally evolved relationship. It is not a program or an assignment. Assignments have their place, yet mentors and mentees are never assigned to each other – *they discover each other.*

I have now lived long enough for others to bestow the mentor title upon me. At first, it always takes me by surprise ... and then it makes me realize that there is nothing to repay ... for the relationship itself was the payment. In the most genuine mentorships, it is never a transaction – it is a transformation. For both.

In July 2021, I had the honor to deliver the eulogy of my great friend and mentor, Jim LaBorde. It was rich and meaningful experience to discern what to share – what words to use. For words can sometimes seem inadequate to describe the worth of someone as priceless as a mentor.

No doubt, each mentoring relationship is a gift. A gift that has the possibility to keep on giving. Who is on your Mount Rushmore?

As always, I'd love for you to share your thoughts! We could all benefit, if you would be so kind to share your thoughts email me at John@BlumbergROI.com!

Ring in the New Year with these 2023 LinkedIn Resolutions

By **Wayne Breitbarth**, *Andersen Alumnus and CEO-Power Formula LLC (Author of “The Power Formula for LinkedIn Success: Kick-Start Your Business, Brand and Job Search”)*

Happy New Year!

I hope you had a safe and fun New Year's celebration and are looking forward to having a super successful 2023.

In doing my part as your trusted LinkedIn advisor, I'd like to share with you the very best resolutions for improving your LinkedIn profile and LinkedIn activities so that your efforts on the site can contribute (hopefully in a really big way) to your success this year.

I have also included an additional resource for each of the resolutions in case you need more details on that specific LinkedIn strategy.



Resolutions for your LinkedIn profile

I will make sure that my LinkedIn profile photo and background photo are current and properly reflect my personal (and company if applicable) brand.

These photos are very important because they set the tone for the rest of your profile, where you can only include a few photos and limited graphics. So choose photos that display your professionalism and will make a great first impression when people view your profile.

- **Additional Resource:** ["Picture Perfect: Make A Great First Impression with Your LinkedIn Profile Photo"](#)

I will make sure my LinkedIn profile Headline clearly states what I do and how I can help people.

Are headlines important on articles we read—or don't read, for that matter? Of course, they are. So don't simply use the default LinkedIn headline (your current job title and current company name). Create a headline that will entice readers to look at the rest of your profile and then reach out and ask you to connect—and hopefully these relationships will lead to quantifiable results.

- **Additional Resource:** [The Definitive Worksheet to Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile Headline](#)

I will properly keyword-optimize my profile so the LinkedIn search ranking algorithm gives me the favor I deserve.

I do quite a few [one-on-one LinkedIn consultations](#) each week, and keyword optimization is the quickest way to get my clients to come up on the first few pages of LinkedIn searches for their products and services. It is not the only thing that goes into the magic LinkedIn algorithm, but it is the easiest thing to fix. Don't wait around to make this critical adjustment to your profile. Your competitors and the other candidates for the job you're looking for may be getting this advice as well..

- **Additional Resource:** [Keywords: The Key to Being Found on LinkedIn](#)

Resolutions for your LinkedIn activities

I will prepare for important "networking type" meetings by reviewing the LinkedIn profiles of the participants and doing a filtered search of their networks.

LinkedIn makes it extremely easy to research people's career paths, what they're currently doing, what they're interested in, and who they know. Do some research beforehand, and then you'll spend less time getting to know them and more time learning how you can help them and they can help you (perhaps by introducing you to important people in their networks)..

- **Additional Resource:** [Here is the Best Free LinkedIn Feature that Most People Haven't Discovered Yet](#)

I will always customize my invitation when asking someone to join my LinkedIn network.

Remember, you're asking to be part of someone's treasured asset—their network—and you should be respectful and take the time to let them know that you'll treat them and their network with the highest level of professionalism—and don't forget to tell them how they'll benefit as well.

- **Additional Resource:** [Is LinkedIn Actually Hurting Your Chances For New Relationships?](#)

I will consistently review who has viewed my profile and take the appropriate steps to not only connect or message them but perhaps make a follow-up call, send an email, or schedule a meeting.

Based on my most recent LinkedIn user survey, *Who's Viewed Your Profile* is the top rated LinkedIn feature—and for good reason. They took the first step toward you, which makes it really easy for you to take the next step.

- **Additional Resource:** [Why Is It Important To Know Who's Viewing Your LinkedIn Profile?](#)

I will not simply hit the *Accept* button on the inbound invitations I receive that meet my acceptance criteria, but I will consider a follow-up call, email, and/or meeting.

Just like the step above, an inbound invitation was initiated by the other party. Therefore, it's your move. Make it one that will have an impact on this new relationship rather than simply adding another body to your network. As far as I know, there's no prize for having the biggest network. What you really want is a robust network that will help you reach your business and career goals.

- **Additional Resource:** [Is Opportunity Calling You On LinkedIn?](#)

There you have it—the very best LinkedIn new year's resolutions. Whether you do every one of these or pick and choose just a few, I'm confident that LinkedIn will help you achieve great success in 2023.

SPECIAL OFFER

If you'd like me to help you formulate your 2023 LinkedIn plan, sign up for one of the four to six personal sessions I fit into my schedule each week. These consultations are specially priced at \$197. Book your time [here](#).

I will share my computer screen with you during the call and send you a marked-up copy of your profile prior to the call.

Interested in becoming a Sponsor?



Andersen Alumni Association is proud not to charge annual alumni dues and relies rather on strategic sponsorship to fund operations. Given advances in technology and alumni mobility Andersen Alumni Association is seeking a few additional qualified sponsors. If you think your company may benefit from a strategic partnership with the Association, please email Admin@andersenalumni.com for more information.

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PDA is providing a 20% discount on corporate or individual membership for Andersen Alumni Association members*

To take advantage of this discount, contact PDA directly at membership@pcdassociation.org or (847) 986-9350

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Visit www.privatedirectorsassociation.org to learn more, or visit us on [LinkedIN](#)

*15% going to the alumni members as a direct membership discount and 5% to the Andersen Alumni Association organization

Medicare Medical Savings Accounts (MSA)

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Medicare Caddy to provide our members with a NO COST TO YOU Medicare insurance expert to help you optimize the Medicare benefits available - wherever you live. Medicare Caddy, LLC is a licensed insurance agency that only works with existing or soon-to-be Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare Caddy KNOWS the Medicare course and is a leader in providing educational programs about the unique benefits of Medicare Medical Savings Accounts (MSAs) as well as other Medicare Advantage, Medigap and Part D Prescription Drug Plans.



Greg O'Brien is Managing Principal of Medicare Caddy, LLC. Based in Atlanta, GA, Medicare Caddy is a licensed insurance agency specializing in all forms of Medicare related insurance. Medicare Caddy has helped hundreds of people evaluate Medicare options and enroll in the plans that optimize their Medicare benefits. Greg can be reached by email at greg.obrien@medicarecaddy.com, phone 404.821.1886 or visit <https://www.medicarecaddy.com/medicare-msa/AndersenAlumni>

Long Term Care – Insurance Coverage

70% of Americans over 65 will need some form of long-term care. And that care will be expensive. According to a recent survey, the cost for long term care can currently range from \$48,000 a year for home care to \$98,000 a year for a private room in a nursing home; and costs are increasing every day. Planning for these expenses with long term care insurance can help you maintain your lifestyle, protect your assets and savings, and give you the options necessary to receive care and services.

BPB Associates of Atlanta has been helping families like yours with their extended health care planning needs for 33 years and has negotiated special discount carrier pricing for Andersen Alumni members. Click here for more information: www.bpbassociates.com/andersenalumni/LTC

International Travel – Medjet Assist

Medjet provides reduced annual rates for its Air Medical Transfer membership program on a voluntary purchase basis to North American members affiliated with *Andersen Alumni Association*. Medjet provides single point coordination for the safety and protection of organizational clients and individuals/families as they travel for personal or business reasons - domestically and abroad. Zero cost beyond the membership fee for services coordinated by Medjet in medically transporting a member back to a home country hospital of their choice in time of need.

Medjet also offers an optional membership upgrade branded as Medjet Horizon that provides (among multiple membership benefits) a 24/7 Crisis Response Center for **Travel Security and Crisis Response** consultation and coordinated in-country services.

Learn More/Enroll? Persons from the U.S., Canada or Mexico can visit Medjet at www.Medjet.com/Andersen or call Medjet at 1.800.527.7478 or 1.205.595.6626.

Reference Andersen Alumni if calling. Enroll prior to travel.

Reduced Medjet annual membership rates for persons from North America under age 75 start at \$250. Multi-year and short-term rates are also available. Rules and Regulations available online and provided with Member ID cards.

Social Media: Association’s LinkedIn Group (Join), Company (Follow) and Facebook Fan Page (Like)



Social Media is a great way for us to stay connected. To request the Association Status be added to your LinkedIn Profile click on the following URL to JOIN:

<http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/38306/6E0CB25BC94E>

Additionally, you can “FOLLOW” the Association by clicking on the following URL:

http://www.linkedin.com/company/andersen-alumni-association?trk=tabs_biz_home

To “JOIN” our new Facebook fan page simply click on the following:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Andersen-Alumni/182112725168442>