

Official Newsletter of the Andersen Alumni Association



ANDERSEN ALUMNI™

Straight Thoughts, Straight Talk

"Serving Andersen Alumni Worldwide"

Jan. 2013

Vol.6 No.1

Sponsored by: North Highland & Lenovo



northhighland®
HIGHLAND WORLDWIDE

#3 – Best Firms to Work For
Consulting Magazine's 2010 List

Best Firm to Work For / Best Firm to Work With



Editorial

This year got off to a fast and rocky start with the settlement or postponement of the fiscal cliff. I for one will be glad if I never hear that phrase again. Unfortunately, I do not think we will be that fortunate. If you have any interest in really understanding the United States fiscal issues, you should check out one of our most famous alumni's organization at The Comeback America Initiative (www.keepingamericagreat.org). David Walker is the CEO of this bipartisan organization. David worked at Andersen prior to being appointed the Comptroller General of the United States. He has been leading the effort to solve the fiscal problem by educating the public for a long time.

This year would have been Andersen's one hundred year anniversary. That is a bittersweet anniversary. Andersen Alumni will be helping plan several regional alumni gatherings to celebrate the past and so that you can stay acquainted with your Andersen alumni community. Additionally, Harris Connect will begin work on our 3rd Edition Alumni Directory.

This is our largest newsletter yet. I want to encourage you to scan through the articles that have been contributed. I am confident you will find them informative and even entertaining.

As always, we need your help to further strengthen and maintain our Andersen Alumni network. Please leverage our Social Media Presence and **LIKE** our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Andersen-Alumni/182112725168442> and **JOIN** our LinkedIn network at <http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/38306/6E0CB25BC94E> and lastly you can **FOLLOW** us at http://www.linkedin.com/company/andersen-alumni-association?trk=tabs_biz_home.

Sincerely,
Kirk Hancock

Coming Soon...

It's hard to believe but 2014 will be here before you know it... As such Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Harris Connect to publish our quadrennial directory. This will be our 3rd edition Alumni Directory. Harris Connect published both the 1st and 2nd editions of the Alumni Directory in 2006 and 2010 respectively. Given the growth in our membership and Harris's quality work it was a natural choice. **NOTE:** Keep an eye out for the yellow Harris Connect update postcards that will be coming out later in the year and please encourage other alumni to do the same!

The ABC's of Leadership

by Ed Maier, *Former Andersen Partner*

As this is our first newsletter of 2013, let me open with a belated greeting. I hope all of you had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope you had the chance to take some precious time with family and friends. I hope your New Year is off to a good start.

Recently, in preparing for a presentation, I challenged myself to create at least one leadership attribute for each letter of the alphabet. Here is my list and a brief description of what I mean by each word. Honestly, I could not come up with my own twenty-six. In those cases which I have borrowed from others, I have indicated so. I challenge you to help me out. You will think of some of your own attributes as you review this list. Don't hesitate to write and share them with me. Here we go!

Accountable – She holds herself accountable then holds others accountable.

Brainstorm -- He is open to the ideas of others and will listen to them when offered.

Caring – She knows and cares about her people and herself.

Clarity – He seeks clarity, provides clarity, and thinks with clarity.

Communicate – She delivers her message clearly, no matter the medium. She also recognizes that communication is a two-way street and listens very well.

Developer – He develops others. He encourages them to challenge the norm. He builds a succession plan with qualified people. He doesn't fear surrounding himself with people who are smarter than he is.

Diplomacy – She balances relationships with her board, other leaders, employees, customers, vendors and other stakeholders. She is tactful.

Emotional Intelligence – He knows who he is; she is aware of her own feelings and he is aware and respectful of the feelings of others; she knows how to manage her emotions and he knows how to manage his in relationships with others.

Energy – He brings a high energy level to his work and his team.

Encourager – She constantly encourages similar behaviors in the people she leads.

Ethical – He believes in doing the right thing. He believes in doing the right thing right. He understands that behaving ethically is how you behave when nobody is watching.

Example – She understands the importance of walking the talk.

Feedback – He does not fear being vulnerable. He seeks feedback and accepts it openly. He gives feedback fairly.

Feedforward -- She practices this skill in addition to traditional feedback (credit Marshall Goldsmith). As Marshall describes it, traditional feedback focuses on the past—what went right, what went wrong. The feedforward principle focuses on the future—what can we do to be better.

Flexible – He is flexible, but not malleable; he understands and seeks reasonable compromise when appropriate. He is not afraid of change. He recognizes the need to do so.

Follower – She is a good follower. She can take a seat on the bus behind the driver when it is necessary for someone else—more experienced, more knowledgeable – to drive through unusual or unfamiliar terrain. She recognizes that sometimes she must step aside and let another lead for a specific purpose.

Gratitude – He shows his thankfulness for the contributions of those that work for him. He recognizes that everyone in the organization has a role. When someone fulfills their role, he thanks them.

Greatness – First, she recognizes this attribute in others; then, she recognizes it in herself. She sees the greatness in everyone who works with her. She encourages others to achieve greatness in their role.

Humor – He knows when to laugh and encourages others to laugh; he sees the humor in situations.

Integrity – She does what she says she will do and she holds others accountable to do what they say they will do.

Just – He treats everyone fairly and communicates his beliefs of fairness, honesty and integrity.

Knowledge – She possesses it; she seeks it; and she does not fear or envy others that have more.

Learner – He is a lifelong learner; he learns from and respects history but does not live it. He enjoys learning new things and adapting them to his style.

Manners – She says “Please” and “Thank You.” She treats others with respect. She asks all of her fellow workers what they think about things.

Moderate –He practices moderation in all facets of his life and the business. He works hard, fervently, passionately. But, he also knows when to relax, take a breather and re-energize. He expects the same of others and encourages them to do so.

Numbers – She understands that data and analytics are important contributors to success. But she is not married to them. She expects to have systems and processes which capture relevant information and measure outcomes. She uses it to assist in making decisions. But she is also willing to accept new ideas, even if the data may not indicate it.

Opinionated – He knows when to hold to his opinion; he knows when to stick to his beliefs. But he also knows when to compromise.

Organized – She appreciates the need for structure and process to exist in her own life and in the life of the organization.

Passion –He has a strong desire for the success of the organization. He believes in its vision and mission. He encourages everyone else to be similarly engaged. He fosters an environment that promotes this passion.

Persistent – She sets goals and maintains a steadfast course of action to achieve them. She is willing to modify the goals or change course along the way. She recognizes that the most effectively designed plan will change immediately upon implementation.

Plan – He has one. He communicates it – again and again. He monitors it. He changes it when the circumstances require.

Quizzical – She seeks out new information and new ideas. She has a curiosity for new learning. She encourages the same in all of the people with whom she works. She asks good, relevant questions. She is not afraid to challenge the status quo.

Respect – He recognizes the worth in each and every individual. He honors their worth by treating them fairly and with dignity. He demonstrates trust so that they will trust him. He does not expect others to do things the way that he does. He does, however, expect them to treat others the way that they would have others treat them. He holds himself and everyone else to that standard.

Responsibility – She knows when to take action and does so. She understands what her role and responsibilities are in the organization. She communicates the roles and responsibilities of others with clarity. She holds herself accountable and she holds others accountable to the agreed standards.

Risk – He is fearless about taking appropriate risks. He evaluates the positives and negatives of a situation; he weighs the risk factors; he analyzes relevant data measuring the risk. He is not afraid to make risky decisions.

Self-awareness (also self-esteem, self-respect) – She knows who she is. She understands her strengths and weaknesses. She understands her capabilities, limitations and potential. She knows her values and lives them.

Self-confidence –He has a strong sense of self-worth and his own capacity to achieve. He makes and defends his own decisions.

Strategic – She understands the business beyond her area of responsibility. She understands the potential impact of the decisions she makes on her own and other parts of the organization. She considers the impact her thoughts have on other people and parts of the organization.

Supportive – He provides support to the members of his team; he understands the resources, tools, training and development they need. He sees to it that they receive them.

Think straight and talk straight (Come on, you didn't think I could let a list go by without this one!) – She thinks straight. She gets the relevant facts, understands the context, avoids the noise and fluff, keeps it simple, applies logic, and decides and acts on her decision. He talks straight; he tells it like it is, keeps it simple, considers the perspective of others, and affirms that he is understood. He is courteous and respectful; he manages his emotions throughout.

Team builder – She understands the importance of teamwork and how to build high-performance teams.

Trust – He creates it by being trustworthy; he exemplifies it for others. He holds others accountable to demonstrate their own trustworthiness.

Understanding –He seeks to understand before he is understood (Thank you, Steven Covey!). He wants to know how things work, how they fit together, how the processes are effective. But most of all he seeks to understand the people. He wants to know what they think and how they feel. He wants to know what their issues are. He wants to understand all aspects of the organization's environment. He wants to understand the environment outside the organization so that he can be ready for change.

Visionary – She has a strong belief in what the organization can be and has a personal belief in what she can be.

Wisdom – He usually doesn't credit himself with having wisdom. He prefers to recognize it in others. He can't really define it, but he knows it when he sees it.

X (The Unknown) – She must learn to deal with and solve for the unknown (this came from the Internet in a similar article credited to Peter Drucker and written for Forbes Magazine).

Y (Why?)– He should ask “Y”? Many years ago in a training program, I learned of “The Five Why’s”. According to Wikipedia, this is a question-and-answer technique that is used to probe to the root causes of an issue. The questioner keeps asking why until the real cause of the problem or issue is uncovered. It doesn’t necessarily have to be five questions; it can be more or less. It is credited as being developed by Mr. Sakichi Toyota, the founder of Toyota Industries.

Zeal – She approaches all she does with bridled enthusiasm. She doesn’t carry her zeal to extremes, but she knows when to demonstrate it openly.

One word that is not in my list sums up my belief about the definition of a good leader. It is “Environment”. My personal leadership definition is simply this: A leader creates an environment in which people willingly work together to achieve a common goal. This captures the essence of leadership in a simple statement. It is true to my own think straight, talk straight beliefs.

What is your leadership definition? I encourage you to develop your own. Take some time, think about it and put it in your own words. Refer to it often to remind yourself of your essence of leadership.

As always, I am interested in your thoughts on this subject. If you were putting your own ABC list of leadership principles together, what words would you use? I am sure I will be adding to this list as I move on. Feel free to send me your thoughts and I will include them! Write to me at ed@thinkstraighttalkstraight.com and have a great 2013!

Perception Deception by John Blumberg *is an Andersen*

Alumni and a full-time professional speaker and author who speaks with organizations who want to strengthen their core values and turn their people into better leaders. You can learn more about John at www.keynoteconcepts.com

My good friend, Dr. Beverly Ann Smallwood, made an observation on her Facebook posting the day following the Vice Presidential debates. She simply noted the irony in how millions could watch the same exact factual event and see such different things. How? Perception she noted. There is no question that perception is a powerful force.

Perception can also be a deceptive force.

Perception drives from perspective ... and perspective is often driven by our circumstances. Not to oversimplify, but I often think how the temperature on any given day can be a great indicator of this. A 45-degree day is a 45-degree day no matter what day it falls. Factually, the temperature is exactly the same ... assuming winds and humidity are the same (just trying to get ahead of those of you who might be splitting hairs on this analysis!). But what we experience could be significantly different. Let’s assume one of those days falls in early September and the other one in late January. Each day will feel very different and we are likely to have very different feelings about it. Our

circumstances between autumn and winter are different. This drives a different perspective creating a different perception with the same set of facts.

This truth doesn't only apply to temperatures.

Unnoticed, it can be a fatal flaw for leaders. The problem is that sometimes it is so unnoticeable ... unless we always assume the perception deception is continually in-play. And every leader needs a strategic counter-attack to diminish the blinding capability of this deception.

Sometimes this deception is fed from the outside.

It happens when we solely surround ourselves with only people who think like we do and have precisely the same viewpoints we do ... whether it relates to a business strategy, political viewpoint or spiritual theological belief. When you never have a counter viewpoint coming at you, you can rest assured it is only a matter of time until you are well on your way to the deception of perception. As the pressures on business performance become increasingly short-term focused, business leaders fall into the trap of this deception. As our political rhetoric becomes louder and more divisive, politicians and every citizen fall into the trap of this deception. And the more intense the perception deception becomes, the louder we shout our viewpoint. It then becomes a vicious spiral downward into greater deception because those with other viewpoints are nowhere to be found. We have repelled every one of them! Every leader needs to be fed with counter viewpoints. These viewpoints don't have to change our stance but they do need to test our perception. More often than not, they will fine-tune our stance.

Sometimes this deception is fed from the inside.

I firmly believe the value of core values is in the specifics. This is true individually and it is true organizationally. I am also reminded of a quote I have repeated a million times ... if you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything. Having a clear, specific and solid core is critical. Otherwise, your current stance is simply a reflection of the most recent viewpoint you've heard. You are like a rudderless boat tossed in the waves. Yet, it is important to remember that two people with the same core values can have very different viewpoints.

It is fully possible to misuse your solid core.

The same way we can spin-the-facts, we can likewise spin-our-core ... be it knowingly or, more often than not, unknowingly. Sometimes our motives become corrupted. It may be our pride or our need to be correct that gets in the way. For some, it is simply the arrogance of thinking we have it all figured out.

I am not advocating soft cores or weak leadership. In fact, quite the opposite! Ironically, it is the soft core or the weak leader who feels most threatened by opposing viewpoints. It

is precisely the deep core of strong leaders which allows them to be fully engaged in trying to understand different perspectives. It is in this engagement that they make authentic connections ... and protect themselves from the deception of their own perception.

Weak leaders build themselves up by pulling others down. Unfortunately, through the filter of a perception deception, they will never see it that way. Strong leaders pull others up. It is there they find their core values most alive.

PS ... If this does not ring true for you, feel completely free to disagree!!

Keeping third-party risk in check

Reprinted by permission from GRANT THORNTON

The reliance on third parties has become a business reality in today's complex and highly competitive environment. The risks involved in this reliance are also a reality. As more companies outsource significant and critical business functions, they're knowingly or unknowingly relinquishing more and more of their control environment to others.

Of particular concern in this datacentric business world are cloud providers, consultants, business process outsourcers, third-party transaction processors and others with whom you share significant information. The need to protect confidential data is an issue that cuts across industries. Any organization that entrusts outside entities with sensitive data, intellectual property, client data or proprietary information needs a framework for identifying, assessing and mitigating the risks involved. Organizations also need to ensure compliance with various security and privacy regulations.

Although internal audit may drive the coordinated collection of information relating to these third parties, other functional areas — including finance, compliance, legal, procurement and business operations — are critical to formulating a complete picture of the use of third parties within an organization. Furthermore, third-party risk management should be a subset of the larger enterprise risk management (ERM) program or similar initiative.

Although typically there are contractual protections in place, when agreements with third-party partners go awry, it's usually too late for companies to do much beyond trying to recoup or minimize losses. A better approach is to be more proactive in assessing and managing risks on the front end when relationships are established, as well as continuous monitoring of the interrelated control environment between parties throughout the life of their contracts.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to managing third-party risks, but a consistent thought pattern can be applied to the assessment process. As with many exercises, getting started is half the battle. Third parties are generally defined as business partners that are not under direct business control of the organization that engages them. These entities may include vendors, distributors or suppliers of products and services, joint venture or alliance partners, and franchisees or licensees.

The following types of vendors should generally be subjected to a deeper third-party risk assessment:

- IT hosting/co-location data center providers
- Cloud or software-as-a-service providers
- Outsourced financial or operational service providers such as these:
 - Payroll processors
 - Securities settlement providers
 - Mortgage servicers
 - Remittance processors
- Medical, dental or insurance claims processors
- Others that support operational activities on your behalf, with access to your company's/client's data:
 - Courier services (e.g., medical files, cash co-pays)
 - Printing and mailing servicers
 - Marketing service providers
 - Telecom providers
 - Help desk or user support providers

Most vendor relationships will surface during a thorough search of accounts payable records, but an additional source of information may be an in-house legal department. In those organizations that take an ad-hoc approach, internal audit may also need to seek vendor information on a department-by-department or business unit basis.

Your documented assessment should include identification of all vendor relationships, as well as an assignment of weighting to the selected risk factors/attributes. The assessment provides a basis for determining your next steps — planning appropriate risk mitigation techniques for each vendor.

When the risk assessment identifies critical or high-risk vendor relationships, internal auditors will want to consult with the relationship owner and the legal department to determine how best to close the gap on risks. Before entering into contracts with these vendors, conduct a robust due diligence process. Having access to a Service Organization Control (SOC) report and asking for a right-to-audit clause are effective ways to preserve your ability to seek additional information regarding the services provided by third-party vendors.

In some cases, the company may need to evaluate switching to another service provider. Your organization should be in the driver's seat when it comes to feeling comfortable with third-party relationships.

Conclusion

Executive management faces ongoing scrutiny and pressure from the board, external auditors and regulators to ensure robust ERM practices. Third-party relationships are a key area of concern in an era of widespread outsourcing and reliance on third parties for

noncore operational services. Organizations need a comprehensive process for evaluating and mitigating the risks inherent in these relationships, preferably as part of ongoing internal audit risk universe and ERM initiatives. This article was provided by Grant Thornton and can be downloaded by clicking on the follow link: [Corporate Governor series Winter 2013](#)

Training vs. Learning ... and the Professional's Struggle to

“Comply” *by Rod Mebane, partner St. Charles Consulting Group. Before joining St. Charles Consulting Group, he served for as Learning/Knowledge Director for BDO USA and as Senior Performance Consultant and Director for Arthur Andersen*

Many professions have continuing education requirements. Doctors, lawyers, accountants, and many people in numerous other professions are subject to laws or regulations that require them to take some designated amount of continuing education over some designated period of time.

The rationale for this requirement is solid. These professionals are vested with trust that they will serve in the public interest and so need to be licensed to practice by the state or states in which they do business. In licensing such professionals, the state regulatory boards are of the mind that it is critical for such practicing individuals to stay sharp (and we in the public also want them to stay sharp). Consequently, the boards establish certain continuing educational requirements to ensure that levels of knowledge and skill are maintained and enhanced over time. Sounds great... in principle. But it's not always so great ... in practice.

What gets measured gets done

The main problem in practice is related to the oft cited concept that “what gets measured gets managed” or “what gets measured gets done.” In the world of professional continuing education, what gets measured is credits – usually one credit equals one hour of training. So if, say, a professional accountant needs to get 40 credit hours every year in order to maintain the CPA license, the accountant will take 40 hours' worth of training and the requirement will be satisfied. But did the accountant stay sharp? Who knows? Did the accountant learn anything of direct value to the work? Who knows? The quality and effectiveness of training is not measured. The quantity of training is.

To provide a specific example, there is in the training management parlance a measure referred to as the “butts in seat” metric. To explain, in the context of a workshop or seminar, a participant in the training event is given credit for the training as long as his/her butt is in his/her seat. It doesn't matter if the participant is reading the Wall Street Journal or reading client email on the iPad or texting someone back at the office – as long as the butt is in the seat, the training counts toward the license requirement.

Some feel that there is nothing harmful in this situation – what difference does it make if someone snoozes through a conference presentation or multi-tasks during a webinar? Odds are that some of the good stuff is absorbed via osmosis, right? And I guess from that perspective, it is fair to say that no one is physically harmed. However, what has been created in most professions where there is a continuing education requirement is a prevailing frame of reference that emphasizes meeting the numbers, not necessarily learning what is most important to know.

A colossal waste of time

In my estimation, this creates an extremely harmful situation. In my view, the overall compliance-education-in-the-professions situation results in a colossal waste of time by the professionals involved – people who are among our best and brightest – and I do not believe that we as a public can afford to have our best and brightest wasting their time. We need them to be as sharp as possible – in mastering that newest surgical techniques or knowing how (and how not) to give ethically sound tax savings advice. We do not need them compromising their learning opportunities.

Now, to be fair, clearly lots of good learning does occur despite the credit-counting measures that dominate. And I am somewhat overstating the downside of the situation for effect. On the other hand, I know the world of continuing education for CPAs very well, and I can reliably report that, toward the end of a state reporting period, many CPAs will take lots of courses – sometimes for hours at a stretch – that have little to nothing to do with their real educational needs.

Learning professionals to the rescue

The ideal scenario, of course, is for professional practitioners to cultivate a sound learning discipline whereby: 1) they identify the areas of knowledge and skill that are most relevant to the work that they do or will do, 2) they document their learning needs (or what we refer to in the learning biz as “competency gaps”), and then 3) they deliberately develop meaningful learning plans and put those plans in play in a timely way.

These are sound learning principles, but it is not realistic to expect these behaviors of regulated professionals – creating meaningful, structured learning plans is not their forte. But it is the forte of learning professionals, and learning professionals need to step up and re-paint the world of professional training with colors that make it look more like a world of professional learning.

The Illinois CPA Society example

To provide an excellent example of the kind of approach that may be taken to help address the problems, there is a best practice emerging in the public accounting market in the form of what’s called the [KnowledgeHub](#), sponsored by the Illinois CPA Society.

Principals at the Society – a not-for-profit organization that has high credibility in providing educational services to accounting and other finance professionals – were very sensitive to the time-burning phenomenon already mentioned. They were also mindful of the fact that many of their members do not have the time or talent to sift through all of the “noise” in the vendor-driven professional education marketplace to make sense of the continuing professional education (CPE) options that are available.



So, in collaboration with St. Charles Consulting, the Illinois CPA Society set out to create KnowledgeHub, which provides a complete online university environment that is distinctive in several significant respects. For one thing, it is a **multiple-vendor environment** – currently, the content libraries of four reputable providers are all available to the learner to expand the educational reach. Secondly, the content is structured on the basis of a proprietary framework that functions as a **“card catalog” designed specifically for accounting and finance professionals** – making it intuitive and easy to find relevant learning titles. And, third, the online university supports **individual learning plans that are very easy to build** and modify over time.

Simplify sound decision making processes

In selecting among continuing education options, regulated professionals – like people in general – will tend to follow the path of least resistance. Coupled with cost sensitivity and last minute decision making, the result is all too often characterized by selection decisions that meet the regulatory numbers but do not optimize learning.

Learning professionals cannot change the realities of the regulatory environment, but we can change the way training content is packaged and presented so that it facilitates decisions that lead to good learning, effective competence building, and more productive and responsible practitioners across the professions.

For more information on regulatory education requirements in general, contact [Rod Mebane](#). For more information on the Illinois CPA Society's [KnowledgeHub](#), contact [Jennifer Schultz](#).

ENTREPRENURIAL SPIRIT – The Intersect Group

The paradigm of how work gets done and who's doing the work has dramatically changed. The Intersect Group, the only company that marries successfully the consulting services of a Big 4 firm with the capabilities of a national staffing company, is at the forefront of this change, leading clients with a unique flexible delivery model. As one of the first companies to understand and embrace the new shift, The Intersect Group is in a distinct position to offer helpful perspectives on staffing, consulting, finance, accounting and IT trends.

The Intersect Group is a different and better business partner as they create unparalleled value for clients by combining industry-leading Consulting capabilities with comprehensive Staffing and recruitment services. Clients entrust them to deliver results based on the deep rooted expertise and proven resources. Through their flexible delivery approach, clients get the right solution, at the right time to accelerate success and achieve mission-critical objectives.

While the vision, message and structure are clear now, it was an evolution over time. The Intersect Group was founded in 2006 squarely as an IT contract staffing company by Jim Childs, former Arthur Andersen Audit Atlanta. He gathered three former employees of a company he sold a few years prior and re-started the staffing business. About the same time, Scott Meyerhoff, former Arthur Andersen Audit Atlanta was ready to escape the acquisition crazed, globe hopping CFO role at Infor (ERP Software Company) and partnered with Jim to form The Intersect Group F&A division in order to provide high-end transaction advisory services and contract and direct hire services to finance and accounting executives. The two businesses worked side by side in about 1400 square feet – 2 or 3 people to a desk; sending a strong message to everyone to get out of the office and serve clients! Wade Hughes, the third partner to join the duo in early 2007, brought business process and technology consulting services to the mix. Wade spent 13 years at Arthur Andersen Atlanta, first in the Audit division and then evolving to Business Consulting. Over a three and a half year period, Jim's "first job" became a very vibrant business – Childs Advisory Partners - which he now spends 100% of his time running. Scott Meyerhoff joined his largest client (Incomm) as CFO due in part to the tremendous work he did and their explosive growth. Wade now runs The Intersect Group with very active Board participation by Jim (the majority shareholder) and Scott. The trio's relationship dates back to 1990; born from the incredible Andersen culture and network.

CIO's and their teams count on The Intersect Group for staff augmentation, contract-to-hire, and direct hire services. Their services span across all levels of IT organizations

from executive management to technical support, typically filling roles such as: Chief Information Officer, Vice President/Director, Software and Web Developers, UI Designers and Architects, Business Analysts, Project Managers, ERP and CRM Technical and Functional Resources. Consulting solutions are centered on Sharepoint, program management, and business intelligence.

From a finance and accounting perspective, The Intersect group is designed to help CFOs and their teams solve the demands they encounter every day. The finance and accounting services provided address clients' specific needs and provide workable solutions to increase effectiveness and efficiencies, furthering broader corporate strategies. As experts with decades of experience placing all levels within the finance and accounting organization, The Intersect Group can help with anything from staff augmentation, contract-to-hire, and direct hire. Some commonly placed roles include: Vice President/Director, Controller/Assistant Controller, Accounting Manager, Internal Audit Professionals, Tax and Treasury Professionals, SEC Reporting Professionals, Financial Systems and Business Analysts, and Accounting Staff. Consulting services focus on optimizing shared service operations from strategy to processes, systems and supporting organizational design and implementation.

Since inception, The Intersect Group's revenue has grown 1300 percent, posting \$3 million in revenue in its first year and approximately a record \$50 million in annual revenue at the end of 2012. The Intersect Group is one of the top 500 fastest growing privately held companies in the United States, as determined by *Inc.* Magazine. In addition, *Inc.* Magazine ranked The Intersect Group within the top 100 in the Business Products and Services category. The Intersect Group's 400 employees serve clients nationwide from offices in Atlanta, GA and Dallas, TX.

Turning Age into an Asset *By Randy Hain, Managing Partner of Bell Oaks Executive Search, a fan and advocate of Andersen Alumni*

It is a common tale these days. A 60-something senior leader in career transition has a series of job interviews since departing his last role, but nothing to show for it. Another leader with a long track record of success in her 30-year career struggles to even get interviews. Another candidate in his 50's realizes after he is downsized that he doesn't know enough people who can help him in his job search. They all wonder what they are doing wrong: "Is it my resume?" "Have I forgotten how to interview?" "How do I build a network from scratch?" "Do I need to hire a career coach?" "Why don't companies realize my value?" "Am I still relevant?" They may also wonder if they are a casualty of age bias.

In my 13 years with [Bell Oaks Executive Search](#), I have interviewed countless candidates in career transition and drawn clear conclusions about helping professionals like the ones mentioned. This article is meant to be helpful to three distinct groups:

1. Employers who have open positions for which these professionals may be a fit.

2. Professionals over the age of 45 in career transition.
3. Anyone else who will join the preceding groups at some point in their career.

Reconsidering Seasoned Workers in Today's Workforce – Advice for Companies

I choose to believe companies have the best intentions with regards to hiring seasoned employees. My observations lead me to think the real challenge for organizations is a need to embrace more creative approaches and develop internal training on how to best utilize the skills and talents of more experienced professionals. Part of the problem is the assumption game:

1. *“Older employees don't work well under younger employees.”*
Instead of assuming older employees can't work for younger ones, purposely pairing a younger employee in need of training and development with someone more experienced is a good idea. This mentoring relationship can pay big dividends to all involved (especially Generation Y) if handled appropriately.
2. *“If they accept a position with a lesser title and reduced income they will leave as soon as they can find a more suitable job.”*
Trust someone if they say they won't leave for a better opportunity. Consider offering a sign-on bonus that has to be paid back if the employee leaves within a year or two. With many companies looking carefully at their (often low) employee engagement scores, investing in our employees and making them feel appreciated is often the best way to avoid turnover.
3. *“They don't fit our exact position requirements so there is nothing we can do.”*
I consistently question why companies don't more proactively consider employees with great experience as consultants or contractors. A little creative scheduling and training for internal hiring managers could help companies tap into a vast pool of talent in a cost-effective way.
4. *“Older employees are too set in their ways and not coachable. We can also hire who we need for a lot less money.”*
Older employees are often more coachable than the emerging Gen Y population. Hiring someone with less experience and lower income requirements because you think they are more coachable may in fact be setting that individual up to fail. Typically, older employees possess not only strong experience, but maturity and perspective as well. They may be more expensive, but they offer things younger employees cannot and they may be at a place in their lives where income is no longer their primary motivation.

There are several approaches an organization might take in tackling this growing issue and I hope we will see more open-mindedness and creativity from Corporate America when considering older employees in the future.

Taking Stock – Advice for Candidates

You have been through countless work experiences and dealt with a host of unique situations. You have worked through good and bad economic cycles. And you have likely accumulated your own “best practices” in dealing with a host of people and business issues. Write these down with a list of skills and those things you are passionate about at this point in your career. Now, what do you do with this information?

Your experience to date is your greatest asset as you consider a new or better job. Are you using it appropriately? Being aware of your gifts, skills and passions is only the start. The challenge is to use this information to focus on those career opportunities where you can add the most value to a prospective employer. Describe your assets in a compelling and succinct summary – it is vitally important, but often overlooked. Reflect on the possible causes of any reluctance to hire you and consider these five actionable ideas:

Five Practical Ideas for Turning Age into an Asset

1. **Do Your Homework.** Utilize the Wall Street Journal, your local business journal, Google, LinkedIn, ZoomInfo and old fashioned networking to understand what “pain point” a company is facing. This research will enable you to tailor experiences and successes in a compelling way that will make you more attractive to a prospective employer if they are facing problems you have dealt with previously.
2. **Offer to Mentor the Next Generation.** Half of the U.S. workforce will exit in the next 15 years as the Baby Boomers and older Gen Xers retire. This means Gen Y will rise at an ever increasing rate into leadership roles. Are they prepared? The majority of companies would say no. Your experience can be a tremendous asset to an organization concerned about developing this younger generation. Present yourself as a mentor and coach who will help prepare them to lead?
3. **Alter Expectations.** In this challenging economy, it may be difficult (not impossible) to maintain title and salary while looking for a new opportunity. Are you at a place in life where a smaller title and less income are possible? This is difficult for anyone to consider, but weigh this decision against being unemployed for a year while holding out for the “right” job. It is better to consider going down this path early in the job search rather than later. You can always supplement your income by doing something else you love.

4. **Work for Yourself.** Why not start your own business or become a consultant for hire? You have experience that a number of companies would find interesting. Develop a basic LLC or divide your time among a few companies as a contractor to help them tackle important projects. Candidates rarely think to suggest this in an interview, but with benefits costs skyrocketing and employee headcount a concern, more companies are turning to consultants and part-time employees to tackle their challenges. Word to the wise: Don't expect the employer to offer this option; you will need to bring it up. They may be looking for a long-term fit for the role, but you might be the perfect person to temporarily bridge the gap...and show you are deserving of the job.
5. **Remain Relevant and Fight Stereotypes.** There has long been an assumption that people over a certain age are not social media savvy and don't know how to network. In my experience, becoming proficient at LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter is not difficult. The key is recognizing that you want to build an attractive personal brand and these tools can help you do that and get your message out to the right people. LinkedIn is especially helpful in the business community. For more information on how to use LinkedIn effectively, read my article: "[Practical LinkedIn 3.0](#)."

Some Brief Do's and Don'ts

As you embark on this journey of finding a new role at this stage of your life, there are some basic dos and don'ts which are important to remember:

- **Do** pay it forward and offer to help others as you are seeking help.
- **Do** your homework. Talk to as many people as possible who have been down the path you want to travel. Learn all you can and use this knowledge to develop a creative approach to your search.
- **Do** the math. You need to talk a lot of people in your search. Set goals for reaching out to at least 10 people a day and having coffee/lunch with a viable networking contact each day as well.
- **Do** remain upbeat and positive. Exude confidence and believe in your value!
- **Don't** burn out your network. Be respectful of their time and ask for help in a way that is easy for them. They want to help, but you may not be the most important thing on their to-do list. For tips on utilizing your network effectively, read my article, "[The Unconnected Leader](#)."
- **Don't** wait for your next job to fall in your lap. You have to be highly visible within your markets, as uncomfortable as it may be for some, meeting new people and uncovering opportunities that make sense for you.
- **Don't** be bitter or give up and certainly don't blame others. I have seen people fall into this victim mentality for years and it is never helpful. It turns off the very

- people who might be able to help you. Channel the negative energy you are wasting into trying new approaches to your search.
- **Don't** be inflexible. Keep an open mind and be creative when discussing a new role and compensation.

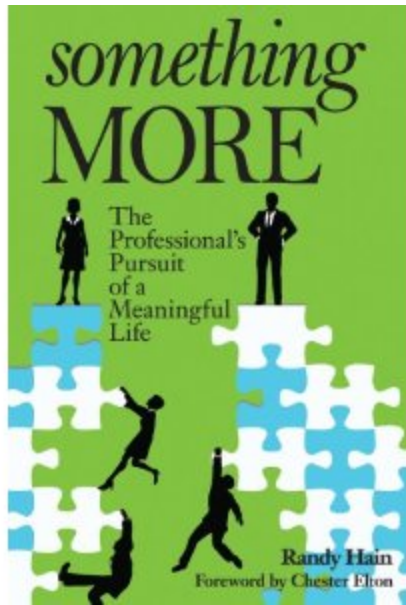
This subject is vast, but my sincere hope is the few insights shared here will provide older job seekers with encouragement, direction and perhaps a few new ideas. Job seekers of any age can often experience a loss of self-esteem and self-confidence which can be debilitating. I hope employers will reach out to this experienced and valuable group of professionals in creative ways to harness the positive contributions they are eager to make to your organizations.

Despite high unemployment now and over the next few years, our labor force will shrink as the sizable Baby Boomer population leaves the workforce to be replaced by the smaller generations X and Y. This presents a unique opportunity for older employees and companies to find common ground and identify the best ways to work together.

Something More: *The Professional's Pursuit of a Meaningful Life* *New Book Release by Andersen Fan and Advocate Randy Hain...*

In his capacity as Managing Partner of Bell Oaks Executive Search, a national executive recruiting firm, Randy Hain has long admired the talented Andersen Alums his firm has worked with as clients and placed as candidates. I have spent time with Randy and know him to be a person of great integrity and a talented writer. For these reasons and for his support of Andersen, I am excited to announce that his third book, **Something More: *The Professional's Pursuit of a Meaningful Life*** (Foreword by NY Times best-selling author Chester Elton), will be available on March 1st, 2013. This book addresses an unmet need among the countless professionals I encounter each year who are looking for more out of life than simply their work. I encourage you to take a look at "Something More" and let others in our network know about this amazing book.

Here is a link to the book's Amazon page where it is available for pre-order at a substantial discount: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/0764822470>



A description from the Amazon page for “Something More”:

A Road Map for a More Meaningful Life

Randy Hain's third book offers a much needed guide to any business professional seeking more from life than work alone. Through his over two decades experience in interviewing and working with other business professionals, Hain captures the best of what he has learned and observed about how to pursue a life filled with meaning in this book. In addition, Hain has interviewed over a dozen professional men and women from around the country in the book who are actively pursuing their own lives filled with meaning. Their combined and eclectic experiences greatly enrich "Something More" and offer the reader an authentic guide filled with practical wisdom which will connect with almost any interested reader.

After exploring our motivations for the choices we make and the obstacles which get in the way, Hain addresses work/life balance, recalibrating our thinking, serving others, job satisfaction, using our gifts, authenticity, the role of crisis, courage and the role of faith from a broad and ecumenical perspective. This multi-faceted approach will help the reader embark on the path to a more meaningful life headed in the right direction and armed with the tools they need for the journey. The thought-provoking discussion questions at the end of each chapter will challenge the reader's perceptions and encourage different thinking about the path of their lives.

"Something More" is ideal for any business person from new college graduate to retiree. The book is accessible, practical, authentic and filled with wisdom. Anyone seeking more out of life than simply their job will find the book helpful, engaging and inspirational.

Selected recommendations for “Something More”:

"From one of the nation's most respected job-search executives comes a profoundly moving and practical book, full of how-tos and interviews with real people struggling with life's big question: how do I lead a happy and meaningful life? Getting it right is never easy, but this book certainly will give you a much greater chance of success."

- Adrian Gostick, New York Times bestselling author of *The Carrot Principle* and *All In*

"Randy Hain embodies living an authentic life. He is a role model and mentor to me both personally and professionally. *Something More: A Professional's Pursuit of a Meaningful Life* made me inspired by reading it. This book is packed with fascinating stories and is the quintessential guide for anyone seeking a more meaningful life."

- Dr. Tim Elmore, author of *Artificial Maturity*, speaker and president of GrowingLeaders.com

"Work without meaning and direction is drudgery and torture. Work with meaning and direction is a gift to you and to those you work with and for. "Something More" is the road map not to just a better job or career but to a more meaningful and purposeful life. If you are looking to be excited and engaged about your work at the office and at home, this is your guide. This book will change your life!"

- Chester Elton, NYT Best-selling author and consultant on workplace engagement & culture

"About four decades ago the cultural search began in our society for 'true happiness'. The next target was 'personal freedom'. That was followed by a wish for 'having it all'. Finally we were told that we should seek 'greater fulfillment'. Interestingly, none of those pursuits ever became fully realized because, as Randy Hain has shown us, the inherent virtue in all of them relies greatly on an individual's examination of self and in a determination to properly order our spiritual, personal and professional endeavors. *Something More* guides the way..."

Andersen Alumni Benefits

For the most up to date listing of Alumni Benefits consider “Following” Andersen Alumni on Linked IN  and look up Products and Services

Lenovo

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Lenovo to provide discounted savings on Lenovo Product Purchases.

The one NEW YEARS resolution that you will want to keep! Replace your old PC with a new Lenovo PC. Save 10% off ThinkPad Edge E430, E530, 15% off ThinkPad L430, L530, 20% off Consumer A Series Tablets, K, Q, and H Series Desktops and C Series All In One's, 25% off S2110, U Series, Z Series use eCoupon **USXJAN2013** at checkout and save! Go to <http://www.lenovo.com/andersen>

Liberty Mutual

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Liberty Mutual, the nation's fifth-largest auto and home insurer. Through Liberty Mutual's Group Savings Plus® program, Andersen alumni may save up to 10 percent on their auto insurance and 5 percent on their home, condo or renters insurance*. That can be hundreds of dollars back in your pocket. Plus Liberty Mutual offers their customers who have both auto and home policies an attractive added multi-policy discount.

In addition to discounts, Group Savings Plus® offers Andersen Alumni:

- The freedom to purchase insurance the way you want: through a personal sales representative at more than 400 offices countrywide, a toll-free telesales center, or online.
- Convenient payment by automatic checking account deduction or direct billing to your home
- 24-hour toll-free claims service
- 24-hour emergency roadside assistance
- 24-hour homeowner emergency repair service
- Outstanding customer service from a local office, or from Liberty Mutual's J.D. Powers and Associates-certified call centers.

To find out how much you can save, call 1-800-835-0894 or Click on www.libertymutual.com/andersen

Office Depot

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Office Depot to provide discounted savings on Office Depot Product Purchases.

http://www.officedepot.com/?cm_mmc=Affiliates_-a8kTmEI8bEw_-3_-27778_1

Pure Web Development

Did you know that 84% of Americans have cell phones? Huge numbers now use mobile phones to get online instead of desktop computers and by 2012 smart phones are set to outpace sales of desktop computers. Currently all major American carriers are providing 3G and in some instances 4G connections at speeds up to 12Mbps.

The way we access the internet is evolving and it is vital that your web presence and the way you present your products/services/information online adjusts with it. Now is a perfect time to get your website into the hands of these new internet users or maybe just enhance it with a custom application for use on the iPhone or Android phones.

Contact us today and find out if your website is mobile ready and what it would take to get it there. Special pricing will be extended to all Andersen Alumni members!

Phone 404-921-0090 or email: sales@purewebdevelopment.com

Social Media: Association's LinkedIn Group (Join) and 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 Linked in 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 fan page simply click on the following:

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

