Official Newsletter of the Andersen Alumni Association

ANDERSEN ALUMNI™

Straight Thoughts, Straight Talk

"Serving Andersen Alumni Worldwide"

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Editorial

It has been said, "may you live in interesting times." I, for one, would take a little less interesting for the next few months! The world seems to be spinning a little out of control - from a never-ending global pandemic to a supply chain meltdown to fractured politics virtually everywhere. I hope we can all take a deep breath and relax for just a moment.

I have had the opportunity to travel in Guatemala for the last six weeks. The Guatemalans are not immune to all this craziness. Unfortunately, the pandemic has decimated the tourist business and it is still evidenced by most of the population wearing masks in public areas. What is missing is the anger and divisiveness associated with the pandemic so prevalent in the United States.

I have had many discussions with ex-pats and Guatemalans alike. The global ex-pat community (which is hardly a representative sample!) has a strong libertarian streak that says, "do what you want, just don't tell me what to do." The Guatemalans generally go with the flow but desire the opportunity to get the vaccine. I hope they are given the opportunity as soon as possible.

Living with such a diverse group of people reminds me how minor our differences are. It also is a stark reminder of the material blessings we have living in the United States. I hope we never take them for granted and will refocus our vast resources to helping one another in these interesting times.

I have two items to call to your attention:

1) We are kicking off a new relationship with the Private Director's Association so you will want to check out the below announcement and
2) We are in full swing with the Oral History Project. You may have received an email or postcard mailer for more Frequently asked questions go to https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6841706170051293184

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 and JOIN our LinkedIn network, and lastly you can FOLLOW us on LinkedIn as well.

Sincerely,
Kirk Hancock
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

Rebecca Garbrick	John Drabik	Laurence Capone	Ed Shaffer
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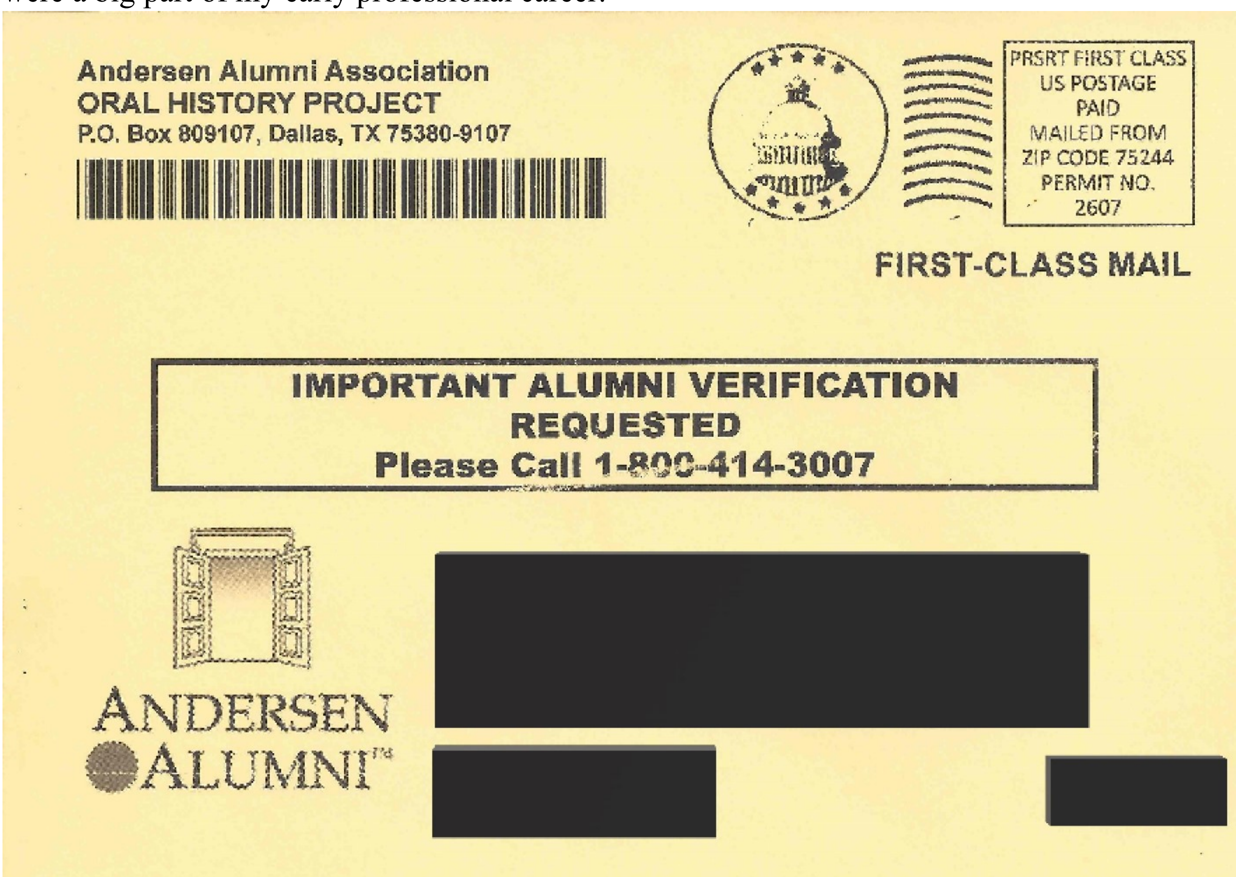
Karina Roiuk-Yu	Michael Garberding	Sara Nichols	Joseph Wagner
Paul Bullington	Amy Kuzdowicz	Mark Hess	Stephen Coughlin
Mark Bodenrader	Kathy Allanson	Barry Coates	Rita Linterno

Worth Every Minute… Arthur Andersen Alumni Oral History Project

By Laura Mills, *Andersen Alumnus*

A few weeks back I received a yellow post card asking me to update my contact information for the Andersen Alumni directory and to participate in the first oral history of the firm. I thought this sounds like an interesting undertaking and decided to set aside a few minutes to ring up the 1-800 number (**1-800-414-3007**). I did it…and it was an fun experience reflecting on memories of old friends, mentors and shared experiences that were a big part of my early professional career.



I can't encourage you enough to participate in the Andersen Oral History project. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the guided interview. Once updating your contact information, it is on to the interactive interview asking you to respond to questions like "what made Arthur Andersen unique?", "what do you value most from your time at Andersen?", "who are some of the people that made your time at Arthur Andersen so memorable and what was their impact on you?". Overall, what are some of the stories, experiences that stand out for you. Without question, mine perhaps like many of you was the people and "are" the people today. I have friends around the globe that I speak with or connect with over social media on a weekly basis. The relationships developed at Arthur Andersen and the common experiences that bind us together have been invaluable to my professional and personal life.

Think Straight, Talk Straight

the Oral History Project

of

Arthur Andersen

Stories as told by our Alumni

Take a minute to dial that 1-800 number (**1-800-414-3007**) and join your former colleagues in a first of its kind…oral history.

Cybercrime with Zero Trust

By Jason Norred, *Senior Director, Security Solutions II, Inc., friend of Andersen Alumni*
Connect with the Author on ***LinkedIn***

A majority of cybercrime CAN be prevented. The threat landscape and attackers continue to evolve to take advantage of users and organizations that are changing due to consumer pressure, digital transformation, supply chain constraints, remote workforce, and more. Our security model must evolve to align with the shifting landscape of business operations.

In the recent article from IBM, "Zero Trust: Follow a Model, Not a Tool," the concept of a zero-trust model is introduced and discussed as a security model instead of as a tool or technology. At its simplest definition, a zero-trust model can be described as "Zero trust ensures verification and authorization for every device, every application and every user gaining access to every resource." This definition can be further expanded to state EVERY time. This model of zero-trust can help prevent cybercrime by requiring verification and authorization of every resource every time.

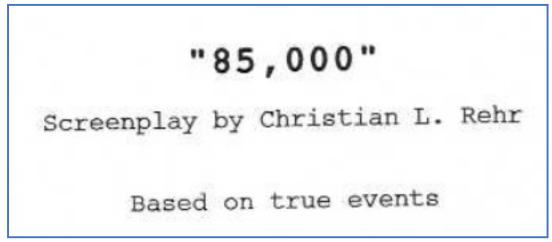
Moving from a security model focused on traditional castle walls and moats around the perimeter to a model of a fluid perimeter (or no perimeter) is not trivial, but if the model is adopted, it can be built over time. It's a mindset shift versus a technology shift.

Solutions II also helps you avoid complications through a secure framework for change called the Adaptable Data Center® (ADC) that simplifies the complexity while decreasing technical debt with IT investments. The ADC framework takes security into consideration and all of your priorities and creates an actionable roadmap to take you from your current state to your future state. This can be a game-changer not only in your security approach to 2021 but in all of your IT priorities.

For more information, visit us here for the full IBM article on Zero Trust.

85,000" THE MOVIE UPDATE

By Larry Katzen, *Former Andersen Partner*


"85,000"

Screenplay by Christian L. Rehr

Based on true events

After working on this project for 5 years and with the help of movie writer, Chris Rehr, we have now finalized the movie script "85,000." During these past 5 years, Chris and I researched the real story of what happened and who made the decision to indict Arthur Andersen. The story has never been told before. The script is a human-interest story about the power of the government and how it disrupted the lives of 85,000 people in 84 countries around the world. During the last few years, we have met with groups of Andersen Alum in Chicago, Dallas, Phoenix, Los Angeles, St. Louis and San Francisco to see who would be interested in supporting this project. There are a number of people who previously expressed an interest, but before we move forward, we first wanted to make sure there was interest on the part of Hollywood. We have since shared this story with some of the leading movie producers in Hollywood and after a pause due to Hollywood being closed because of Covid, we now have one famous producer who has expressed an interested in making this film. Larry Katzen will be meeting with him in the near future to see about getting the project started. More will be shared in the months to come.

If anyone would like to learn more about this project or would be willing to consider participating, please feel free to contact Larryrkatzen@icloud.com.

It takes a village: The story of how Andersen Alumni Tony DiBenedetto's evolution resulted in Think Big for Kids

Reprint Permission *This article originally appeared in the August 6, 2021 issue of [Tampa Bay Business & Wealth]*

Growing up, Tony DiBenedetto experienced firsthand what the common phrase "it takes a village" really means.

At a young age, DiBenedetto found himself, essentially, caring for himself. When others his age were planning for homecoming he was couchsurfing, grateful for a place to sleep.

He was, what he describes, a little "rough around the edges." Understandably so.

Thanks to some notable people who entered at different stages in his life, he says that the community was his family.

It's fairly easy to draw the conclusion that DiBenedetto's most recent passion project, Think Big for Kids, is something born from his own experience and a way to come to terms with some of his own traumas.

Think Big for Kids is a nonprofit that helps underprivileged youth discover untapped potential through three programming pillars: career exploration, mentoring and job readiness and job placement.

The former CEO of Tribridge, a major technology company in Tampa which sold in 2017 for $165 million, now has more time for giving back and he has big plans to expand the reach of the mission with Think Big for Kids going national, launching in Dallas, Atlanta and Chicago this fall.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN BROOKLYN

DiBenedetto was born to parents who weren't even truly adults themselves at the time. He says his mother had an addiction to drugs and his father wasn't around.

He was raised, mostly, by his grandparents in Brooklyn, New York during his early life and he had a particularly close bond with his grandmother.

"My grandmother was a traditional, Italian grandmother," DiBenedetto says. "She was the heart and soul of the whole family. I always feel when someone says to me 'you have a good heart,' that is from my grandmother."

It's important to note, this was not the trendy, hipster-filled Brooklyn that might come to mind today. It was enveloped in crime and drugs.

"When you're a kid, you're in the situation you're in. You don't know any differently," he says, acknowledging his working-class childhood.

A domestic violence incident at the family's home, when DiBenedetto was about 8, led to the family relocating to Fort Lauderdale. About four years following the move to Florida, DiBenedetto was rocked by the death of his grandmother. Recalling the memory visibly makes DiBenedetto emotional.

"My grandmother was my mom," he says. "To be honest with you, up to that point, I would have said I had a great childhood. We were poor and my grandfather did odd jobs, even after we moved to Fort Lauderdale. We got our hair cut at Kmart, wore crappy clothes and, at times, we were on welfare and food stamps. I was just never embarrassed by it."

DiBenedetto's grandmother was the glue that held the family together and after she died, drug deals and other dangerous activities quickly became the norm at home. It was clear his grandfather, and other relatives, weren't capable of parenting.

From the age of 12 into young adulthood, DiBenedetto lived with more than a dozen different people. One person was named "John." DiBenedetto leaves his last name out purposely to protect his privacy.

It was the summer between seventh and eighth grades.

"I agreed to cook for him, so my early cooking interests, besides my grandmother teaching me how, was cooking for him as my rent," he says. "It wasn't an ultimatum. But it was good because he gave me a responsibility."

"He told me, 'You don't have to be like your family,'" DiBenedetto recalls. "He also said, 'Look, you're a really smart kid. You're good at math. You should get into computers.'"

At the time, there were no computers in schools. It was 1977.

"The whole school knew I had no one at home looking out for me. I was a ward of the community, instead of the state. The principal knew, the guidance counselors knew. But I got good grades, I took tough classes and they let me not have a guardian. I would check myself into school. I answered for myself at a really young age. In a weird way, it was a great skill," he says.

He lived with a lot of different people. Even in households that spoke Spanish and German, just to name a few.

"It shaped my ability to get along with pretty much any person and also being able to communicate with people differently," he says. "I genuinely like people and I think it's from living in all of these different places."

Nearing the end of high school, DiBenedetto had a major moment that directly ties into his passion behind Think Big for Kids.

The high school awarded him multiple awards and scholarships, most of them small tokens of his achievements. But the big one was a scholarship from a local high school booster to attend Cornell University to play baseball.

He notes, while he never did end up attending Cornell, it was the intent behind the gesture that impacted him profoundly.

"That night, I vividly remember saying to myself, 'wow look at what all these people have done for me. I must make sure to pay it back.' It was an impactful night," he says.

THE ROAD TO TAMPA

Entering his young adult years, DiBenedetto decided to go to Florida State University, a much more affordable option than out-of-state Cornell.

When he arrived, and was set to start taking classes, he learned that his scholarship fell through.

"So, I started working, which was a great thing," he says. "I worked in the disabled student lab. My first week on campus I met a guy named Jeff Douglas, an African American guy, a quadriplegic. He was an unbelievable influence on me…he taught me a ton about people."

It was hard to feel sorry for himself, and his own challenges, in the presence of someone like Douglas, DiBenedetto recalls.

"I remember feeling like there's nothing that's in my way," he says.

DiBenedetto also met Pearl, another mother figure, who is still present in his life today.

"As much as there was all this abandonment from my family, I had people in the community pick me up along the way," he says.

After college, DiBenedetto began working for Arthur Andersen, formerly one of the "Big 5" accounting firms, in the Tampa office. At a relatively young age of 32, he was named partner at the firm.

"But the whole time, wanting to start a company was nagging at me," he says.

He did just that. He opened a pizza and bagel place in South Tampa.

"It was one of those moments where you realize you don't know [expletive]," he says with a laugh. "I went and studied with this guy in Brooklyn to learn how to make a Brooklyn bagel. It's all about the water. It's always about the water."

He ran that place for about a year, while working at Arthur Andersen.

"I learned two things out of that [experience]. One, you can always nail cost in any business. You can predict that. But the revenue, I was off by magnitudes," he says. "The second thing I learned was about hiring people."

He refers to the challenges in finding dependable people who you can rely on. The nights when a delivery worker didn't show up meant DiBenedetto was running food to homes, only to have to be up and wearing his Arthur Andersen suit again in the morning.

He was killing himself, and it wasn't worth it.

The next monumental moment he brings up is meeting Tom Wallace, managing partner at Florida Funders.

KISSING THE RING

DiBenedetto refers to Wallace as the "godfather of technology."

He explains this fateful meeting with Wallace as going to kiss the ring and asking for money.

"I'm 32, and Tom knew me pretty well, but you know, it was a [gutsy] ask," DiBenedetto says.

To hear him tell the story, it does sound like a scene from Goodfellas. Smoky restaurant, gentlemen gathered to discuss business, and make deals over bourbon and cigars.

"He reads the business plan and he's like, 'Look, I don't know anything about Internet or CRM [customer relationship management].' CRM wasn't a popular term then, like it is today, it was 1997 or early 1998," DiBenedetto says. "Then he says, 'But I really believe in you.' He takes out his checkbook and writes me a check for $300,000."

That was the birth of Tribridge, which DiBenedetto established along with his two partners Brian Deming and Mike Herdegen.

In the first year of business, the company did $2 million in revenue and $300,000 in profit.

When the company sold in 2017, the company had grown to $175 million in revenue.

"There's a certain element of just pure, stupid confidence," DiBenedetto says of the journey of Tribridge. "I learned something about myself running the company. I didn't know how empathetic I am. I started feeling in a way I didn't imagine because I was responsible for [all these people]."

A PASSION PROJECT

These days, DiBenedetto spends about half of his time mentoring, and coaching, other CEOs and on boards, and the other half on Think Big for Kids.

"I'm probably working just as much as I was before, but it feels like I'm not working at all," he says.

Think Big for Kids was a natural progression from the work DiBenedetto was already doing with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay.

For about 10 years, he spent time raising funds to set up computer labs, visiting clubs and sharing his story.

It was another epiphany moment that jarred the concept for taking his work a step further with creating his own nonprofit organization. He was at a club, giving his prepared story, trying to inspire a room full of teenagers who probably would have been anywhere else in the world, if they could.

"I thought I was doing great. It was like a moment of truth. I looked up and noticed I was only connecting with a small percent of the group. It was the kids with the good grades," he recalls, noting, he felt an instant headache come on. "I stopped in the middle and said, 'I'm not going to talk anymore.' So, I started asking questions. 'How many of you are going to college after high school? How many of you know what the SATs are?' And out of the 400 kids, I was getting three or five hands going up. And I realized, I had only been helping the upper part of the population at that time—those that didn't necessarily need my help as much as others."

DiBenedetto left that meeting feeling like a failure. But he let it be the catalyst for a whole new approach to reaching underrepresented, or underprivileged, youths before they gave up on a world that seemed to move by without them.

He realized, he had to get to them sooner.

"A lot of the stuff we were doing was starting with high school kids. It was a little late," he says. "I started talking to kids differently and I realized we needed to start in the sixth grade [with outreach]."

DiBenedetto met with Chris Letsos, who used to run the Boys and Girls Club of Tampa Bay to pitch his comprehensive program that would work with kids from sixth grade through to their first job. DiBenedetto offered to fund the entire program himself.

"He lit up," DiBenedetto says. Letsos told him that, at that time, the Boys and Girls Club was trying to change its focus more on building careers, but they weren't sure how to go about accomplishing that goal.

"I told him, 'Look, I can break all the rules and work outside the system," DiBenedetto says.

After a meeting with Jim Clark, the CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of America, DiBenedetto was given the green light to implement pilot programs to test his plan.

The first two Tampa schools to implement the Think Big for Kids program was Davis Middle School and Webb Middle School.

DiBenedetto called two other local business owners to get them on board with the plan. Brian Murphy of Reliaquest and Jody Haneke of Haneke Design.

"I thought they had the right heart for it," DiBenedetto says. "They both said yes, which was awesome because it gave me a little bit of confidence, like OK, there's something here."

The organization really found its stride when DiBenedetto called up Amy Alley, previously the CEO of the Tampa Bay Technology Forum, to lead Think Big for Kids as the executive director.

"When she came on board, it really took off. We went from 10 clubs to all the clubs in Hillsborough and all of the clubs in Pinellas," he says.

Now, the Think Big for Kids programs are going national with a presence in Dallas, Atlanta and Chicago.

"It's only been four years since we got through those two pilot programs, and only 2½ years since Amy came on board … we're already serving 2000 kids," he says.

"We got through COVID great," he says. "I'm shocked by how many people have resonated with helping our kids"

A full-circle moment, for certain, for DiBenedetto and his story. ♦

Tony's Favorite Things

BASEBALL: A favorite memory of DiBenedetto's is doing a fantasy camp in Yankee Stadium in 2008.

COOKING: During the quarantine of 2020, he created menus for his family and has saved them to this day.

TRAVEL: He owns a home in Vail, Colo., and spends a lot of time there with his family hiking and unwinding.

It's Budget Season: Are You Planning for Business Transformation?

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

For most manufacturing companies, the end of summer and the arrival of fall usually marks the start of planning for the upcoming year. This is always a great opportunity to start thinking about the investments your company needs to make to stay competitive and grow — whether that's buying new software, adding more people, or streamlining operations.

Whatever your plans, it's natural to want to cost out some of those concrete investments and get them on the books as soon as possible. But while that may seem like the most proactive approach, it can lead to some unintended consequences.

At Syte, we know from decades of working with family-owned manufacturing companies that large-scale initiatives can't be rushed. They require analysis and planning to pave the way for success.

In this post, I'd like to offer you some time-tested advice on budget planning for large change initiatives. Read on to learn how a focus on planning and analysis up front will save you time *and* money later — and set you up for long term success.

Business Transformation Is More Than a Budget Line Item

Budget planning is a good time to spark a conversation with your leadership team about where the business needs to go, and what it will take to get there.

That's why we developed our four-part Business Transformation Framework to help our clients plan and implement the solutions they need to get to that next level. It's a methodology we use to meet you and your business where you are, and then map out what steps you need to take (and which investments you need to make) to get to where you want to go.

And when it comes to planning your budget for some of these bigger ticket items, I think our approach offers a few important advantages.

A Gradual Approach Makes Implementation Easier

I like to think of our Business Transformation Framework as a "crawl, walk, run" approach. Before you can hit the ground running with any new solution or organizational initiative, you need to have the right foundation in place.

In practice, that means taking an honest look at where you are in terms of business processes and workflows, human capacity, and technology.

When you take the time to do a thorough business process assessment — *ahead* of deciding what you may or may not need to grow the business — you're introducing more predictability into the overall plan. Once you have a handle on how your organization is currently managing its day-to-day operations and the roles and technologies that keep things going, you'll be in a much better position to determine what you need to change, and plan accordingly.

And if you're already in a position where you're comfortable proceeding with solution selection and implementation, you can use your knowledge of the organization's current operations to plan a smooth transition in a way that minimizes disruption.

The bottom line is that taking a gradual approach to change, with proper planning up front, is easier on your organization *and* your budget.

When You Save Time, You Save Money

Another key advantage our clients get with our Business Transformation methodology is the amount of effort — and money — it saves on the back end.

In their enthusiasm to embrace new technologies in pursuit of a growth strategy, many manufacturing organizations plunge head-first into solution selection — only to run into problems during implementation.

We can usually trace this back to an incomplete understanding of current workflows and capacities. Implementing a solution that doesn't align with the current reality immediately creates friction: Software has to be customized on the fly to accommodate existing workflows, or team members are asked to redesign their processes to fit with new software capabilities (or limitations). Sometimes, neither approach does the trick.

Before long, the project is behind schedule, and project costs start to rise as this unplanned-for work threatens to derail the initiative.

Our Business Transformation Framework is a time-saving approach. By meeting you where you're at and being intentional in the planning on how to move forward, we can help eliminate any back-pedaling during implementation. You're able to see what's coming (and what's likely to come up) instead of having to double-back to see where you might have missed something when you hit a roadblock.

Doing your planning up front saves you time *and* money in the long term.

Planning Puts the Horse Before the Cart

The old adage that "If you're failing to plan, you're planning to fail" might sound a bit cliché, but when it comes to large-scale projects that are tied to business growth … well, the shoe fits!

Big-ticket projects represent significant investments, so planning them into your budget is obviously critical. But knowing that your organization needs to change and knowing *what* needs to change — including how you'll get there — are very different things. Without a thorough assessment of where you are now (and any gaps and bottlenecks you need to address), any estimate of what you'll need to spend to get the business to a new level of growth may just be a costly shot in the dark.

Before you allocate funds to new software or higher headcount, consider building in budget capacity to analyze your current operations and identify a solution based on your goals and current state. With solid analysis and planning in place, you'll be able to safeguard the capital investments you're making and know that they're going to take your business where you want it to go.

An Investment in Planning Is an Investment in Growth

Investing in ERP solutions and business process optimization is an investment in business transformation. The good news is that you don't have to tackle it all at once. Taking a thoughtful, methodical approach is easier on your organization *and* your budget.

Are you starting your operations planning for next year? If you are, don't earmark a budget for ERP software just yet — talk to us first and we'll help you make a plan. You can schedule your complimentary consultation 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.

Thank You for Thanking Me

By Ed Maier, *Former Andersen Partner*

I had a recent experience with a service provider that I want to share with you. She helped me negotiate my way through a somewhat complicated service problem I had to deal with. When it was resolved, I simply thanked her for her help and service. She surprised me when she said: “You know Mr. Maier, I really appreciate your words of thanks. You have no idea how many people I deal with who seem to have forgotten those words as a part of our language.” Her comment gave me pause.

I had to stop and think. How many times in the past twenty-four hours did I have an interaction with another human being in which I could have said “Thank you” and didn’t. There were several. I also thought about some of the live television programs I watched that day and the newspaper and magazine articles I read. In many instances the reporter, speaker, commentator, or writer could have easily said “Thank you” to their listeners or readers. For some reason, they did not. Why is that I wondered? Well, I believe with all the vitriol being spewed across our airways, in print and in social media today, there is little room left for the simple courtesy of thanking another for their thoughts or assistance. After all, why should I thank someone for sharing their thoughts with me—whether I asked for them or not? Why should I bother thanking someone who offers a suggestion to help, especially if I don’t agree with the nature of the suggestion? Why should I thank someone for their good service if that is their job?

Each of us should make a more concerted effort to express thanks to others who help us in any way—even if we don’t like the nature of their suggestion or color of their stripes. If another offers us their thoughts or suggestions in a reasonable, open, and sincere manner, we should be thankful for the exchange. We should encourage others to provide us with their opinions and reactions to what we do and say, and we should thank them when they do. We should express gratitude whether or not we believe they have been helpful, or whether or not we agree with them. For example, wouldn’t it be nice to hear an exchange like the following? From Representative P. – “Thank you Senator C. for your ideas on this bill. I don’t completely agree with them but there are some points you make which bear further investigation. I will follow-up on them and get back to you.” And from Senator C.: “Thank you Representative P. I appreciate your willingness to take them under consideration and look forward to further dialogue with you on the subject.”

Here is a simple suggestion I have for you. The next time you interact with another person, find a way to thank them for that interaction. If it is the clerk in your local convenience store, greet them with a smile and thank them for helping you. If someone in your office has just made a mistake, remember that you have been in that position in the past. You appreciated it when a boss or a peer constructively criticized your work. So, thank them for their efforts and help them understand how to move forward in a positive way. If someone in your family has just done something that you think is “really stupid”, rein in your emotions, take a deep breath and explain your difference of opinion about their action in a rational, thoughtful manner. And thank them for being who they are and what they mean to you. At the end of your next Zoom call, take a moment to thank the presenter for organizing the call and putting together the material that was shared.

Try this as an easy way to help you implement this idea. Take a few minutes each morning or evening as you think about what you must do that day or the next. Make a list of five people you will interact with in that period of time. Think about how these people affect your life in a positive way. When you interact with them, no matter the outcome of the interaction, thank them for it.

I don't believe that the world will adopt a generous dose of gratitude soon. I don't expect my suggestion will heal the wounds of society. I do believe it will help you feel more positive about those around you. And I believe it will help them feel the same about you.

One of my favorite stories about thanking others is the Captain Charlie Plumb story. But it is rather lengthy, so I won't repeat it here. I referenced it in Chapter 21 of my book ("*Think Straight. Talk Straight")* which is still available on www.amazon.com.

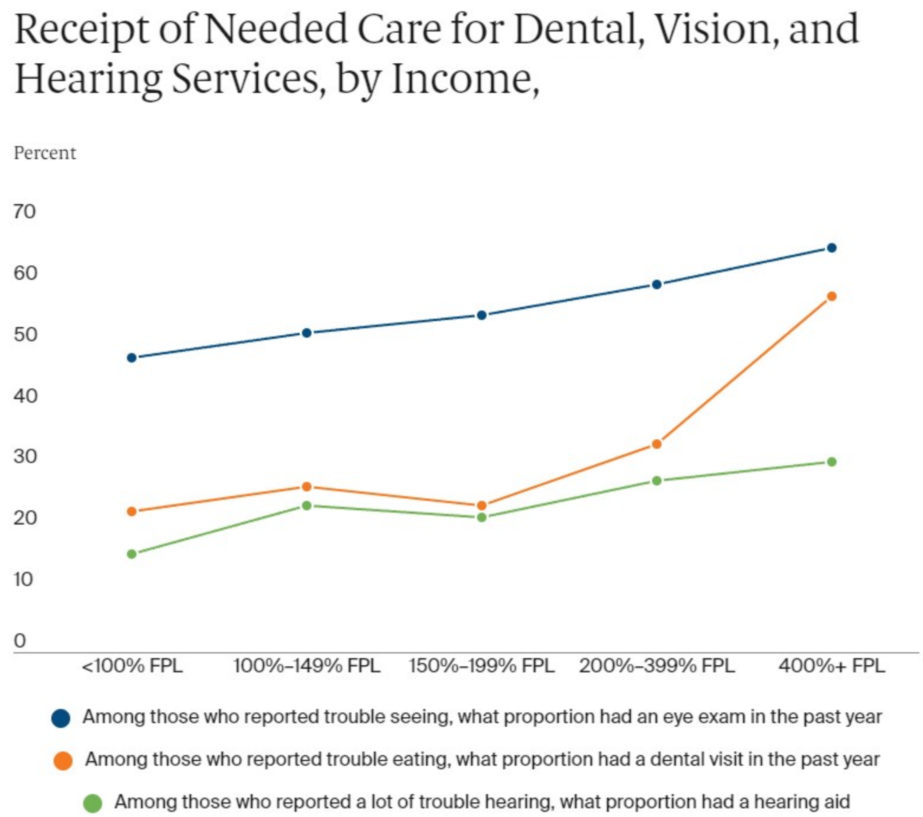
Gratitude is a powerful force. Use it appropriately and feel its power. Thank those who pack your parachute.

And thank you for reading my thoughts.

If you are 65 or older, are you leveraging the Medicare Medical Savings Accounts (MSA)?

By Greg O'Brien, *Andersen Alumni Supporter,*

Medicare continues to grow, and that growth is accompanied by potential alterations to the program. Of increased interest is the proposal to include dental, vision, and hearing aids, which has been analyzed and considered for many years. In addition, the federal government has been looking at allowing Medicare negotiating authority regarding prescription drug pricing; capping seniors' out-of-pocket expenses for prescriptions; and promoting a shift to long-term care in a patient's home vs. nursing home care. According to a 2018 survey, among Medicare beneficiaries, 75% of people who needed a hearing aid did not have one; 70% of people who had trouble eating due to their teeth's condition did not go to the dentist in the past year; and 43% of those who had trouble seeing did not have an eye exam in the past year. Lack of access was particularly acute for the disadvantaged. Of those with supplemental insurance that covered these services, 60% of their costs were still paid out-of-pocket.



Supplemental Medicare & Medicare Advantage Overview:

Medigap or Medicare **Supplemental Insurance** is private health insurance that *supplements* your Medicare coverage by helping you pay your share of out-of-pocket healthcare costs not covered by Part A (hospital) and Part B (medical). After you meet your deductible for the year, you typically pay 20% of the Medicare-Approved Amount for services. **Medicare Advantage** plans offer an *alternative* way to receive your Medicare benefits through a private, Medicare-approved insurance company. They must include all of your Original Medicare benefits, which includes Medicare Part A and Part B coverage (with the exception of hospice care), but may offer other benefits not included in Original Medicare.

Medicare Advantage plans will continue to offer a wide range of additional benefits in 2022, including eyewear, hearing aids, dental benefits (preventive & comprehensive), fitness benefits, worldwide emergency/urgent coverage, and more. Medicare Advantage plans have strict **enrollment periods**. If your doctor leaves the network, you don't have the benefits you want, or you don't like your plan for any other reason, you'll most likely need to wait until the next enrollment period to change your coverage. It's also important to know you may not be able to switch to a Medigap plan in the future without incurring penalties. Enrolling in Medigap should take place within the 6 months following your 65th birthday. Medigap insurance companies can often accept or reject your application based on your health, so if you have pre-existing conditions, you may not be able to purchase a Medigap plan later on down the road. Whether you enroll in a Medigap policy or a Medicare Advantage plan, you must continue paying your Part B premium. The premiums paid by Medicare beneficiaries cover about 25% of the program costs for Part B and Part D. The government pays the other 75%. (Medicare imposes surcharges on higher-income beneficiaries, known as IRMAA (Income Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, which has 5 earnings brackets.)

Projected Changes for 2022:

ITEM	2021	2022	Comment
Part A (Hospital) Deductible:	$1,484	**$1,556**	Medigap plans cover this
Part B (Medical) Deductible:	$203	**$217**	You pay per calendar year
Part B Base Monthly Premium:	$148.50	**$158.50**	Costs will continue to rise
Part D (Rx Plans) Deductible :	$1,484	**$1,556**	Applies to drugs in tiers 3-5
Medigap Plans (G/N) : ANNUAL PREMIUM INCREASE:t	5-7%	**6-8%**	Review options every 3-5 yrs

7 in 10 beneficiaries (71%) say that they didn't compare their coverage options during a recent open enrollment period..

Medicare Advantage PPO Plans: Expected to increase from 26.9 million ins 2021, to 29.5 million enrollees in 2022

There are 33 different Medicare Advantage plans to choose from, and 30 options for stand alone Part D prescription drug coverage (PDP).

Determining which Medicare insurance strategy is best for you and your loved ones takes knowledge, experience, and thoughtful analysis. If you would like to better understand your Medicare options, please contact Greg O'Brien, Managing Principal of Medicare Caddy, LLC.

Direct email: greg.obrien@medicarecaddy.com or **470-567-3763**

MEDICARE CADDY
"We Know the Course"

Stop Filtering

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

We spend so much time at work, yet the relationships are often quite fake. We've been told that at work we are to be professional, not personal. That's partially good advice. The goal is not to create traditional friend relationships. However, we're not supposed to be simplistically "professional" either. Too often that translates into relationships that are heavily filtered. They are distant, cold, transactional – and fake.

Somewhere between personal and professional is a sweet spot. It is a place where we are professionals first, but also a little personal and human. That's where magic happens. It's where we see increased candor that leads to trust and rapport. In a team setting, these are key traits that support a feeling of commitment, a desire to growth, and an interest in innovation.

Thanks to our overreliance on professionalism, we problematically filter everything. We filter what we think. We filter what we say. We filter how we look. We filter how we behave. This can be viewed as a form of social intelligence. You see reasonable expectations around you and attempt to meet them, but… you often end up filtering the real you out of the picture. Plus, all that filtering is exhausting.

Authenticity is the superior choice. It's a form of honesty. It's about how you express yourself and interact with your environment. It includes being a bit more candid, personal, and vulnerable. That makes you real. It makes you human. As it turns out, humans crave honest connections with other humans, yet we resist this need every day.

I'll admit that getting real is not risk free. When you speak up, express yourself, and embrace authenticity, not everyone will like it. That is acceptable. Over time, on average, others will support a more authentic you. Not only do you seem more honest, but your authenticity also validates them, since they wish to be a little more real too.

Start now. Begin small to reduce the risk. Speak up for once when you usually bite your tongue. Wear those crazy shoes. Share a story about one of your most difficult learning moments. Ask someone a personal question and show interest in them beyond their role.

Be authentic. Be candid, personal, and vulnerable – and interested in these things from others. Do it for you. Do it for the team. Authenticity is free, freeing, and powerful – so stop filtering.

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.drdewett.com or connect with Todd on LinkedIn. He can be reached at todd@drdewett.com*

On the Take

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

Every now and then, the focus on just one word can invite you on a reflective journey. Especially when it's a 4-letter word! Recently, this was the case for me as I read a daily reflection on how – *and how often* – we use the word TAKE.

I had never really "taken" the time to think about this before. And long after I had put this original daily reflection aside, I couldn't stop thinking about this simple word and how I use it – or maybe, more importantly, how I misuse it. As is often the case, when I misuse something — consciously or subconsciously – it's inevitable that eventually it misuses me.

I kept thinking about *my take* on this.

As hours rolled into days, a plethora of examples of "take" kept coming to mind. Not ill-intended examples (although a few of those came to mind) but rather the innocent kind where we can pay the highest price – or perhaps miss the greatest opportunity. In full-disclosure, and with fair warning, once you start thinking of examples it will be hard to stop … unless of course, you take a break! How often have you said or heard:

- Take a vacation
- Take a photograph
- Take a nap
- Take a day off
- Take questions
- Take input
- Take a moment
- Take on something
- Take a stand
- Take the opportunity
- Take advantage of someone
- Take someone for granted
- And maybe most telling … take possession.

While it's one thing to think of examples, it is another to think of unintended implications – specifically how *taking* something, well, can *take* the joy away!

While I realize this seems conceptual, maybe it has very practical significance. Let's "take" the first example from the list above:

How often does someone "take" a vacation only to feel the stress of making the most of it in trying to "take" the most from the experience. It's no wonder that some people say they had to come home to rest-up after their vacation.

Our take can imply control-of or power-over.

The second example from the above list may be even more telling – taking a photograph. It's no wonder, in some cultures, why it's considered offensive to take a photo of someone. And taking it a step further, in some pre-modern cultures, taking a photograph of someone was considered the equivalent to stealing their soul.

When I see a great photographer at work, it doesn't seem to me that they are taking anything. As I watch them, it seems much more like they are *receiving* the image into their lens – and ultimately into their soul.

Our "taking" may also explain the root cause of some miscommunication. How often have you heard someone say: *Well, that's not how I took it!* Yep, there we go taking again.

I've always heard that it is better to give than receive. While there is some wonderful truth in that, this can shade a deeper truth … *it can be much harder to receive*.

What if we quit *taking* so much and just opened ourselves up for *receiving*? Could it be that gratitude and joy — and even more importantly, connection – would come from that? *Receive* the image in the lens of the camera. *Receive* each experience on a vacation. *Receive* the words in a conversation. Even in concept, you might start to find that "taking" feels like a grab.

Receiving feels like a flow.

While it may seem like a simple play on words, it has the possibility of compelling ramifications – in leadership, in teamwork, in collaboration, in relationships and, most importantly, in the deepening of our own individual and collective integrity.

If you think of examples long enough, you won't only know the difference – you will feel the difference. What if John Denver had changed just one word in *Take Me Home Country Road*. "*Bring Me Home*" may have moved this already inspiring song to a whole new level of invitation … to a sense of being received rather than taken. Those of you who love this song may be thinking: *You have just taken this a bit too far!!* That could be … or it could be that it might just *take* a bit of unlearning and relearning these familiar lyrics before it seems to fit. That is the uncomfortable journey of any transformation.

In the end, *receiving* rather than taking may very well open our eyes to see everything in life as a gift – a gift always to be received, yet never to be taken.

What's *your take* on this?

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!

How Many of These 10 LinkedIn Mistakes is Your Company Making?

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')*

One plus one equals two, right? Well, not in the LinkedIn world.

For the most part, LinkedIn members have been using the site to pursue their individual goals and objectives.

It's now time for the company to gather up the troops and bring all these individuals together—with their connections and their voices—and put forth a consistent company message. There is immense exponential value when the employees and company work together.

To help business leaders corral this potential value, I have written an eBook titled *10 LinkedIn Mistakes Companies Make—and How to Fix Them Before They Damage Your Company's Reputation*.

In this 15-page eBook, I address common mistakes, provide solutions, and give tips for using LinkedIn to grow revenues, find new employees and suppliers, and maintain a consistent brand in the ever-changing online world.

Download your copy of my eBook here.

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How many of these mistakes are you and your company making?

1. Unprofessional or poor quality employee profile photos—or, worse yet, no photo at all

2. Sharing incorrect or inconsistent information about the company

3. Poor participation—all company employees are not on LinkedIn

4. Failing to keyword optimize employee profiles and company page

5. Sharing poor status updates—or failing to use this powerful tool

6. Not using LinkedIn to search for customers, employees, suppliers, strategic partners, etc.

7. Failing to monitor employees' profiles and activity as well as what's being said about the company through LinkedIn

8. Not joining or participating in LinkedIn groups—particularly significant industry groups and customers' industry groups

9. Underutilizing the features and tools available on the company page—or not even having a company page

10. Having a woefully inadequate corporate social media policy—or none at all

Advice for Firms looking to Hire Young Talent

By J. James O'Malley, *Andersen Alumnus and Managing Director and Executive Search Practice Leader at Felix Global*

I am often asked to explain why professional service firms; more specifically Accounting/Tax/ Advisory and Consulting firms still struggling to recruit young talent in 2021? And my answer is typically the following:

Firms are having a difficult time to recruit young talent because

(1) young talent has more options.

(2) The traditional employment value proposition of most firms is not appealing to young people (work your tail off and in 10-12 years you can be a partner, no thank you not interested….).

(3) Culturally, young people need frequent feedback, lots of training, praise, want to work with tools and technology etc. and traditional firms are not set up to provide this.

So, the next logical question that comes is How do we fix it? What do we believe to be the #1 factor firms can improve to better their recruiting efforts?

We think firms need to take the same approach they do with recruiting talent as they do their clients. It needs to be a priority. I have never had a partner tell me "I can't do this client meeting because I have to conduct this interview", but I have had partners - literally hundreds - cancel interviews with candidates for a client meeting or call. Why does one come before or is more valued that the other when frankly they should be equal!

Internships is a great way to get ahead of this problem as it allows firms to be more proactive. We are all for building a pipeline of candidates before the need to hire them occurs and that is what an internship program does. I think the future of campus recruiting will shift and firms will spend more time cultivating and curating their interns and less time on the event driven fall recruiting events that so many firms are investing so much time and energy and expense on. We have seen this become even more apparent during the Pandemic since we had to essentially shut down all on-campus interviewing and with the trend of even more e-learning in the future and less students attending classes on-campus, this shift is here to stay.

So, you might ask yourself what extent should firms cater to young talent? Where is the line between offering too much or too little? We think it is less about "catering" to young talent then it is adapting to and customizing what it is you're offering young talent. In much the same way that you are providing a methodology and solution to your clients but "tailored" in a way that fits their individual needs. Culture is a good example. All firms talk about it, but it has a different meaning for a young recruit than it does for a 20-year partner.

<u>About J. James O'Malley</u>
O'Malley leads Felix Global's Executive Search Practice and brings with him 30 years of talent acquisition solutions. In 2018, he co-founded a retained search firm focused on recruitment in the private equity, professional services and financial services sectors. Previously, he was a partner and executive search practice leader at TalentRISE, a recruitment solutions firm in Chicago. Prior to that, he was senior vice president in the human resource function of Fifth Third Bancorp. O'Malley has also worked for several professional service firms, including Arthur Andersen, Deloitte, Huron Consulting and Lante. He can be reached at jomalley@felixglobal.com

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.

Andersen Alumni Association and the Private Directors Association© Align to Drive Membership Value

Starting Oct. 15, 2021**,** PDA is providing a **20% discount on corporate or individual membership for Andersen Alumni Association members***

To take advantage of this discount, contact Paula Gardzelewski directly at **Paula@pcdassociation.org / 281.404.3725**

BENEFITS FOR ALL MEMBER TYPES

- Complete your **Private Company Governance Certificate** at no additional charge.
- Access to **board opportunities** to match board-ready PDA members with start-up and scale-up companies for fiduciary and advisory board roles via PDA's partnership with **Bolster**
- National network of peers engaged in events focused entirely on private company issues, both locally through our **21-chapter system**, as well as virtually via webinars and online resources.
- Monthly e-newsletter
- Complimentary subscriptions to "Directors & Boards" and "Private Company Director".

CORPORATE FULL BOARD MEMBERSHIP ONLY

- Complimentary **director or advisor search** with an enhanced posting approach, supporting faster process with highly qualified candidates.
- Complimentary in-boardroom **Ransomware Preparedness and Response session** (a $10,000 value) to PDA Corporate qualified members.
- Dedicated "**CISO on Call**"
- 30% discount on all additional **PDA University Director Education** products designed to enhance private company value through high functioning boards.

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

ALUMNI BENEFITS:

Message from LinkedIn – Update Feature
Reprint: Communication received by Andersen Alumni Association

Thank you for your continued dedication to your Groups! (Andersen Alumni Association Group Page)

Based on member feedback, we have invested in improving the ways that our members can engage in meaningful conversations within safe and healthy communities like yours.

In our latest update to Groups, members will be able to easily message anyone in the group without message limits and will have the flexibility to control which messages they accept or privately decline. Members will receive a notification about their message requests just like they would with a regular message and continue the conversation with a single click of "accept".

Thank you for your commitment to keeping your community safe and productive. To learn more about this update, visit our help center.

Sincerely,

The LinkedIn Team

NEW 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

Mortgage – Wintrust Mortgage
Andersen Alumni Association is has partnered with Jennifer Sobocienski, *(alumnus from our Andersen Chicago office)* Senior Mortgage Consultant, NMLS 755995, and Wintrust Mortgage, the 11th largest bank-owned retail mortgage originator in the country with more than 200 lending offices across the United States, to offer our members a preferred lending partner and mortgage benefit. This program offers a dedicated team of mortgage professionals to serve our members and provides a $500 Visa gift card after closing a residential loan with Jennifer at Wintrust Mortgage. For more information about the program and Jennifer's contact information visit www.wintrustmortgage.com/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 LinkedIin 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