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# PRESIDENT'S RESOURCE ORGANIZATION

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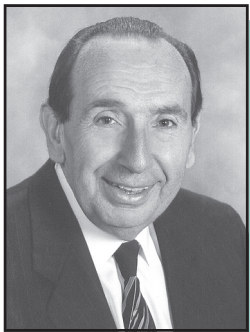
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VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1

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## PRO's Prose

*By Ray Silverstein,  
Founder and President*

Who was it that said, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it?"

I think it must have been the dinosaurs. With that kind of thinking, you're destined for extinction.

The world is spinning ever faster. The business landscape changes overnight. Those who can't change with it will be left behind.

Don't want to go the way of the saber-toothed tiger? Not to worry: for those who keep up, the future is bright. And you're already well positioned to evolve.

In joining PRO, you demonstrated that you're eager to learn and grow. You're a nimble thinker—and you've surrounded yourself with like thinkers who will help you plan for the future.

It's time for a change—yours, mine, ours. When you belong to PRO, you're never alone. There's strength in numbers...let's do it together.

*Ray*

## Put on Your Running Shoes... Globalization is Coming!

"Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up.  
It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed.  
Every morning, a lion wakes up.  
It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death.  
It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle.  
When the sun comes up, you better start running."  
—African proverb<sup>1</sup>

**C**hicken Little ran, too; he ran around yelling that the sky was falling. The sky isn't falling, but there's trouble on the horizon. In fact, the whole world is becoming one big, flat horizon. We're perched on a giant pancake!

The business playing field is being leveled—not locally, not nationally, but on a global basis. We're already seeing it in big business: jobs are being outsourced; entire operations are relocating offshore. Geography is no longer a barrier to business.

Sooner or later, small business will feel it, too.

What's caused this tectonic shift? Events in the last 25 to 30 years. Like the fall of the Berlin Wall, which unveiled the land beyond. The rise of the Internet, which made global communication so easy. Not to mention the explosion of technologies—digital, mobile, virtual—which lets us conduct business 24/7.

So, how do you stay ahead of the lion? By staying alert, pouncing on new opportunities, and employing strategies like these:

- Concentrate on your competencies. Identify what your company is good at and maximize it.
- Collaborate with others. Identify your weaknesses and partner with those



*continued page 2...*

<sup>1</sup> As appearing in Thomas Friedman's "The World is Flat," Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, April 2005.



## Coming Soon to Your Local Bookstore: YOU!

Imagine if we could bottle the collective wisdom that springs from PRO meetings. Wouldn't those ideas be invaluable to other entrepreneurs? Someone should write a book!

Well, someone has. Ray Silverstein's new book, "All of Us Are Smarter than One of Us," was picked up for publication by Sourcebooks, one of America's leading independent book publishers.

And you all are the heroes. The book highlights some of the challenges, solutions, and inspiration PRO members have shared over the years. Needless to say, it's bursting with drama, pathos, suspense, and humor!

We will keep you posted on the progress of the book's publication. In the meantime, a heartfelt thank you—we literally couldn't have done it without you. ♦

*continued from page 1...*

who can supply the missing pieces. In his book "The World is Flat," Thomas Friedman asserts that horizontal collaboration is the new key to survival.

- Use change champions to move your company forward. Your staff consists of leaders and followers. Get the leaders to buy into change, and the pack will follow.
- Get the Internet on your side. One of its benefits is that it lets little guys look BIG. Ramp up your internet presence to create the illusion of strength and power.

There is no finish line in this new world order. But this race won't be won on speed alone. Choose the right path, and you'll come out ahead. ♦



# HARRIS™

## Let's Roar for PRO-Sponsor Harris!

Did you know that Harris is one of PRO's original—and most enthusiastic—sponsors?

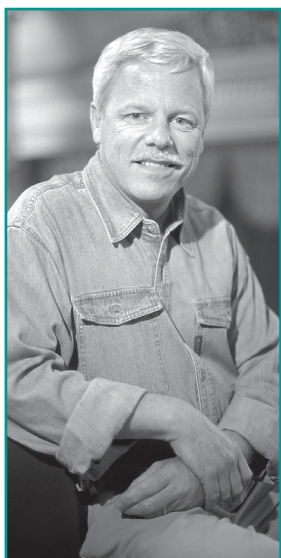
Committed to helping small businesses succeed, Harris Bank has lent us its fearsome "lion power" over the years. Right now, Harris Bank is co-sponsoring PRO Executive Briefings scheduled in Hinsdale, Naperville, Orland Park and Joliet.

According to Jonathan Rohde, Harris Bank Senior Vice President for small business, "Harris Bank is highly committed to supporting the small business community."

"Our partnership with PRO gives us first-hand insight into the needs of entrepreneurs, so we can better serve our clients." ♦

## It's aPROpos!





## PROfile

### T.C. Furlong, T.C. Furlong, Inc.

Like the Wizard of Oz, PRO-member T.C. Furlong is the man behind the curtain—the one pulling the levers that make the magic happen.

But T.C.'s brand of magic is quite specialized: his Lake Forest based company creates sound systems for many of the area's most exciting performance events. His client list includes Aretha Franklin, Ringo Starr, Lyle Lovett, Oprah—even Donald Trump.

"Our goal is to remove the barriers between performers and listeners," says T.C. "If the sound is bad, it becomes a barrier to someone having a good experience."

Operating in a competitive field, T.C. grew his 32-year old business in a classic PRO-like manner: by courting underserved niches. Over the years, he has shifted his focus from theatrical audio...to corporate presentations...to, most recently, houses of worship. He recently provided a new sound system for Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, the mother ship of mega-churches.

And T.C. has another secret weapon: his own experience as a performance artist.

Flashback 1984: While we were *nyuck, nyuck, nyucking* to "The Curly Shuffle," T.C.—a member of the band Jump 'n the Saddle—was playing steel guitar on the legendary song, a tribute to the Three Stooges.

While the hit lives on in ring tones and parodies, T.C.'s performing days give him an invaluable insight. He knows firsthand how music should sound.

"There's chronic animosity between technicians and artists. We're the exception. We treat performers with absolute respect—that's another one of our service advantages."

T.C. values the support he receives from his fellow PRO members, as well as the chance to hear other opinions.

"I also value the regularity and structure—it forces me to step away from the day-to-day stuff and consider the big picture."

One way T.C. gets the most from PRO: he follows up each month's meeting with an afternoon of strategic planning, using the morning's dialogue as a springboard to brainstorming.

Sound like a good idea? Soitenly! ♦



# How's It Going? Our New Surveys Get The Scoop!

One of our members' favorite things is seeing how other entrepreneurs run their businesses. You never know what you may learn.

That's why PRO has launched a new series of surveys exploring a range of small business issues. How do other companies differentiate themselves? Compensate sales people? It's a great way to spot trends and see how you stack up.

Recently, we asked PRO members and associates "how's it going?" The results, as you can see, are positive.



52% of respondents say revenues are up, compared to last year at this time, and another 33% say revenues are about the same. Only 15% of us are experiencing a tougher year. That's good news.

Other significant figures: a whopping 47% of respondents are adding new products or services to their line-up, and 42% are increasing their marketing budgets to attract new business. You'll find all the details here. Interesting stuff, hmm?

We encourage you participate in our surveys, so you can be sure to receive the results. Better yet, if you have a burning question to ask your peers, pass it along—and we may just turn it into a survey topic. Knowledge is power! ♦

## Small Business Current Business and Marketing Status Survey

**1. Many small business executives are concerned about the current state of business. Please tell us if your business revenue, year to date, is up, down or about the same as last year.**

	Response Ratio
Up 10% or More	43%
Up Less Than 10%	9%
About The Same as Last Year	33%
Down Less Than 10%	4%
Down More Than 10%	11%

**2. Please tell us if your expectation of your business revenues for the remainder of the year for current levels will be:**

	Response Ratio
Up 10% or More	35%
Up Less Than 10%	26%
About The Same as Last Year	28%
Down Less Than 10%	4%
Down More Than 10%	7%

**3. From existing customers, are you expecting an increase or decrease in revenues?**

	Response Ratio
Up 10% or More	20%
Up Less Than 10%	24%
About The Same as Last Year	43%
Down Less Than 10%	7%
Down More Than 10%	7%

**4. What actions are you taking to increase revenues?**

	Response Ratio
Adding additional outside sales people	22%
Adding additional inside sales people	18%
Adding manufacturers' representatives	4%
Increasing promotional marketing budget (Lead Generation)	42%
Adding new products or services	47%
Granting customers longer payment terms	4%
Lowering prices or becoming more competitive on bids	9%
Raising prices	16%
Increasing staff or inventory to give faster service or order fulfillment	13%
Other - please describe	31%

**5. Please indicate where you expect to increase your marketing expenditure. Check as many as apply.**

	Response Ratio
Telemarketing	28%
Direct Mail - Print	40%
Web Site	53%
Email blast and Email newsletter	30%
Trade Shows	25%
Advertising - Magazines or newspapers	5%
Increased Yellow Pages	3%
Publicity	30%
Newsletter - Print	10%
Catalog - Print	10%
Customer entertainment - lunches, golf, tickets, etc.	38%

**6. Please indicate the importance you place on the following marketing/promotional activities.**

	Response Ratio				
	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	N/A
1. Telemarketing	22%	16%	18%	27%	18%
2. Direct Mail - Print	18%	22%	24%	24%	11%
3. Web Site	29%	20%	29%	16%	7%
4. Email blast and Email newsletter	11%	27%	30%	27%	5%
5. Trade Shows	16%	16%	20%	41%	7%
6. Advertising - Magazines or newspapers	5%	14%	36%	36%	9%
7. Yellow Pages	5%	12%	12%	49%	23%
8. Publicity - PR	22%	31%	20%	24%	2%
9. Newsletter - Print	5%	21%	23%	40%	12%
10. Catalog - Print	7%	12%	12%	30%	40%
11. Customer entertainment - lunches, golf, tickets, etc.	9%	27%	33%	20%	11%

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**7. How do you feel about the outlook for your business in 2008?**

	Response Ratio
Business will be much better	28%
Business will be somewhat better	39%
Business will be about the same	28%
Business will be somewhat down	2%
Business will be substantially down	2%