
PRESIDENT'S RESOURCE ORGANIZATION

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PRO's Prose

by Ray Silverstein, Founder and President

What single thing do you value most about PRO? If you're like most PRO members, the benefit you prize most highly is the opportunity to form relationships—and dialogues—with fellow entrepreneurs.

With that in mind, you'll be pleased to learn that our ranks are now swelled by a trio of esteemed Executive Sponsors (handpicked by yours truly), who offer us access to expert advice and resources in three distinct fields.

Let me introduce you to our new Partners in Progress:

- Harris Trust & Savings Bank, Chicago, IL
Contact: Scott McCallum
- Holleb & Coff Attorneys at Law, Chicago
Contact: Barbara Flom, Partner
- Resource Technology Associates, DesPlaines, IL
Contact: Jody Haas, President

Each of our Partners brings us tremendous expertise and knowledge. And since PRO is about giving information as well as receiving it, we will return the favor by providing them with a greater understanding of small business—allowing them to develop products and services truly designed to serve the needs of the small business market.

It's a real win/win relationship—and isn't that what you want from PRO?

Sincerely,



Profile:

CRAIG KANTER

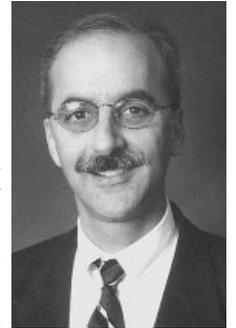
When you have five hundred or a thousand employees, insurance claims are inevitable . . . someone is going to get injured," according to Craig Kanter of Alper Services LLC. By providing a complete spectrum of insurance business and financial solutions, Alper Services helps businesses weather these claims in a fiscally responsible way.

Alper Services provides a team of experts that includes a loss control engineer, fire rate engineer, certified financial planner, claim attorney, occupational health nurse, and premium audit consultant. Their Team Members can chart a course for Clients through the sometimes tangled web of liability and claims management, setting up employee benefits and 401K programs.

The commercial insurance division analyzes Clients' needs, providing brokerage services and counseling on choosing insurance. "We deal with medium-sized companies, mostly five million to a billion in sales," notes Kanter. Team Members in the personal lines division provide advice on everything from investing assets to executive homeowner's and property insurance. What sets Alper apart from other consulting firms is their ability to finely tune each program to that Client's specific needs.

Alper was founded in 1966. Kanter joined the 50-person firm in 1985 and is now executive vice president. Knowing the ins and outs of business and federal regulations on insurance and providing solutions is only part of Alper's big-picture approach in helping their Clients. Providing long-term financial solutions is another.

Kanter says that insurance costs are dictated by two factors: what are your claims in the past and what will they be in the future? Controlling claims is the key to cost control.



PRO Chatter . . .

PRO members are on the move again. **Willie Fuchs**, of Fuchs Devries, has moved from Chicago to the northern suburbs. **Matt Zell**, of Prometheus Network Solutions, has relocated to substantially larger space in his current location. **Alan Sklar**, of Gleeson, Sklar, Sawyers & Cumpata, has moved his company downtown.

Congratulations to **Linda McCabe** and **Brian Swerdlow** on the sale of their companies. Linda has a new interest, Feminine Forum, and Brian is still in the saddle at his former company, EBS Public.

Marvin Ricklefs has retired and is heading for greener pastures on the golf course. His company, Thybar Corporation, is in the good hands of **Bill Evitt**, who was recently made president.

Another fast moving PRO member is **Casey Swistun** of Swistun Aluminum. He beat his last year's time in the Chicago Marathon by over one hour! And **Igor Boguslavsky**, of Belmont Trading, has purchased a company in Scotland.

Finally, congratulations to **Rob Aleksick** and his wife, of C.S. I. Technologies, on the birth of their second child.

PRO News:

We welcome our newest PRO franchise owners: Eric Sandberg is based in the Detroit area and feels his personal strengths are an innovative problem solving ability, creativity, organizational skills and a sense of humor...all of which will make him a great PRO facilitator. David Huntoon and Gerald McElroy are based in the Palm Springs, California area and are busy getting their groups underway.

Plan to attend the 2000 Sales & Marketing Awards Dinner on May 4th at the Fountain Blue Conference Center in Des Plaines, co-sponsored by PRO. The event is organized by the Sales & Marketing Executives of Chicago and the keynote speaker will be noted author, Harvey Mackay. The \$55 cost includes dinner and a copy of Mackay's book, "Pushing the Envelope: All the Way to the Top." For further information or to make a reservation, contact Ray Silverstein at 312-337-3658.



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Ray SilversteinPresident and Founder

Leadership is Breaking the Status Quo

by Ray Silverstein

"IT'S NOT COMPANIES THAT FAIL, IT'S THEIR LEADERS WHO FAIL," stated Warren Bennis, a business guru in the 1920s, and the statement is still true today.

In the current business environment, the role of the leader is more important than ever before. The rate of change in business and society is faster than any time in history. Several years ago at a PRO: President's Advisory Board meeting, a member asked, "Who is surfing the Net?" The majority of the people at the meeting asked, "What's the Net?" We have come a long way in a short period of time. Nowadays, the Internet and e-commerce are a way of life.

This is a quick example of the rate of change in our lives. Today, the small business owner must give more time to leadership. Nicolo Machiavelli observed, "Whoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the time." Just being a good technician won't cut it in the long term today.

Most people go into business because they are good at what they do. You may be a great computer programmer, salesman or whatever, but once in business, you need more than your own individual skills. In most cases, you don't have time to do just what you are good at. In order to survive and grow, it is necessary to become an observer and student of change.

Today, we see rapid change in distribution, products, service, technology and the attitudes of people. How does your business position itself to take advantage of these changes? Do you get in the world outside your business to learn and hear of changes and get input regarding the growth of trends?

The strategic direction of all businesses have a shorter time frame. I know of many small businesses that are reinventing themselves to take advantage of the market and to stay alive. As a small business owner, you have a responsibility to your employees, family and yourself to start thinking about change and thinking outside of your past experience.

The place to start is with yourself. The old rule, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" is not valid today. Your business can go from a well-oiled machine to a machine producing parts without a market or means to get to market. It is your job as a leader to be aware of change and reposition your company. Total quality management has a basic rule: improving performance never ends. Even if you are doing something well, you can always do it better. This requires constant change, an open mind and an awareness of the outside environment.

Seuss, in "Oh, the Places You'll Go," summed it up:

Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You're off to great places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself

any direction you choose.