

SUPPLEMENT TO
SMARTBUSINESS



Ernst & Young Entrepreneur Of The Year[®]

2009



LYNELLE KIRBY
ULTA Salon, Cosmetics & Fragrance, Inc.



DOUG WAGGONER
Echo Global Logistics



TERRENCE DUFFY
CME Group



CRAIG DONOHUE
CME Group



ROBERT PASIN
Radio Flyer



DANIEL ARNOLD
Road Ranger LLC



IRA BOOTS
Berry Plastics Corp.



CHRIS DALTON
Acquity Group LLC



DAN MOCERI
Convergent Technologies LLC



GREG LERNIHAN
Convergent Technologies LLC



DR. RICHARD L. SANDOR
Chicago Climate Exchange

INVESTMENT/FINANCIAL SERVICES

FINALIST

JOHN RUTLEDGE
founder, president and CEO
Oxford Capital Group LLC



Money mover

How John Rutledge created a flexible financial firm

From a standing start, John Rutledge, founder, president and CEO of Oxford Capital Group LLC, has created a highly scalable and flexible business model.

That model allows him to remain lean at the corporate headquarters level while overseeing assets worth billions of dollars and employing thousands. It also allows him to lead, coordinate and employ hundreds of project-level people who work on his large-scale real estate developments without having to dramatically staff up at the corporate office. As a result, the efficiency, productivity and profitability per employee at Oxford are unusually high.

Rutledge has adapted his company for numerous opportunities as he developed momentum over the years. He started in Chicagoland, then expanded into a national footprint. He has continued to challenge himself and his team by taking on increasingly large-scale and complicated adaptive reuse projects, including converting high-rise office buildings and apartment buildings into hotels, as well as developing and investing across the spectrum, from the upper-midscale to luxury, branded to boutique and full-service to extended stay. In each case, he looks at the best way to optimize a piece of real estate, and he describes himself as commercially agnostic, priding himself on having no ego in terms of whether to develop or acquire a moderate or a higher-end product.

Oxford's projects have become renowned for their visionary creativity in seeing opportunity where others see only obstacles for success and for executing complicated, multidimensional projects, frequently where other people fear to tread. Oxford has also gone green, opening its first LEED-certified hotel in Chicago.

Rutledge's team is also known for its keen aesthetic eye and sense of detail, the quality level of the final physical product, and ultimately, for the service its guests experience from all of the operating team members and associates. He also believes that he and his team should be tough on the issues but soft on the people. <<

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Oxford Capital Group LLC, www.oxford-capital.com

MANUFACTURING

WINNER

ROBERT PASIN
president and CEO
Radio Flyer



Rolling along

How Robert Pasin reinvigorated the classic Radio Flyer brand

In 1997, Robert Pasin received his MBA, and in the same year, as the youngest member of his family, he became president of Radio Flyer, the company founded by his grandfather.

At the time, the company was not growing; it was marginally profitable and was facing many challenges to its continued survival. When he took over, he immediately began to ask many of the key questions that would result in the reinvention of the business. He began the challenging process of "changing everything" while working to preserve the positive aspects of the company's 80-year-old culture.

Pasin saw that the company needed to change its approach from "What can we make in this factory to cover overhead?" to "What do consumers want and expect from Radio Flyer?"

The result was an overhaul of the way the company does business. Radio Flyer started partnering with outside design firms to develop new products and selected external factories in the United States and China to manufacture products that the company had not produced before, including tricycles, plastic wagons and scooters. The company shut its factory down and discontinued all manufacturing operations.

In addition, it opened an open sourcing office in China, and expanded its R&D team from two engineers to a team of 30 industrial designers and engineers.

In the time since Pasin took over, the company's sales have gone from flat to increasing by more than three times. Earnings have gone from marginal to solidly profitable, with earnings growing at a faster rate than sales.

Overall, the company has been transformed from a sleepy little factory that makes shiny red wagons to a world-class, brand-driven consumer products company and has gone from merely surviving to thriving. <<

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Radio Flyer, www.radioflyer.com

MANUFACTURING

FINALIST

LISA JOHNSON
co-founder, president and CEO
Gourmet Kitchens Inc.



FINALIST

FARZAD SHAHSAVARANI
co-founder and COO
Gourmet Kitchens Inc.



Culinary evolution

How Lisa Johnson and Farzad Shahsavarani grew GKI by adapting to business trends

Lisa Johnson and Farzad Shahsavarani know the importance of a flexible business plan. In 1987, they opened a healthy fast-food restaurant, Two-Minute Gourmet, in downtown Chicago. But when it was unable to deliver sales via foot traffic, the company quickly focused on developing a new model that focused on catering business meetings.

They closed the restaurant in 1989 to pursue corporate catering, founding Gourmet Kitchens Inc. and marketing their business as Last Minute Gourmet. When sales hit a plateau a decade later, it was time for another transformation, and in 2001, Johnson and Shahsavarani began making fresh foods for retail chains. They jettisoned the catering business in 2004, and their new focus has created a thriving company that employs more than 300 people.

GKI has experienced double-digit growth since it began catering to retail chains, thanks to the pair's innovative and optimistic management style. They are always working to stay ahead of the curve and have traveled around the world to see what product, packaging and machinery trends are working in Europe and Asia. This has helped the company realize consumer needs much faster than its competitors, bringing trends to market as they arise.

Another point of differentiation for GKI is innovative packaging. Because Johnson and Shahsavarani are committed to using ingredients without artificial additives, they are constantly looking for innovative ways to extend the shelf life of their products. Shahsavarani designed and patented the "Just Toss It" salad bowl, named one of the best new products of 2006 because of its dual atmosphere design that separates the salad greens from the salad dressing and toppers, increasing shelf life and improving product quality. <<

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Gourmet Kitchens Inc., www.lastminutegourmet.com