

PRESS RELEASE

Contact:

John M. Collard, Chief Executive Officer

For Immediate Release

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Building Value In Small Business and Avoiding Trouble On The Horizon. Presented by Maryland Chamber of Commerce.

Annapolis, Maryland, July 21, 2008 -- The Maryland Chamber of Commerce presents *Building Value In Small Business & Avoiding Trouble On The Horizon* on September 17, 2008, at the Westin Baltimore Washington Airport. This is the first in a new series of education and networking events aimed at small business leaders and corporate executives in Maryland. The event will highlight a panel of experts discussing value-building and trouble-avoiding strategies beginning at 8:00 AM, followed by breakout roundtable discussions with individual experts.

Business leaders are facing changing economic forces: from competing in a global marketplace, to constrained capital during an expanding credit crisis, to higher raw material costs due to ever increasing oil prices, the job of managing gets tougher. These changes are placing new challenges on business leaders who want to grow a profitable business that creates value. The future will bring more changes from congress, irrespective of which party wins the election. While credit is harder to come by, there are alternatives to fulfill capital needs. This forum will provide strategies to guide a company through these minefields.

The Maryland Chamber's Business Development Council has brought together some of the leading experts in the fields of turnaround management, private equity investing, business development, marketing, public relations, management consulting, accounting, business law, and investment banking to provide tactics to increase value and avoid trouble in dynamic conditions. Our

panel of experts will help you learn to achieve business growth and avoid pitfalls during tough economic times. Our expert panelists will examine the elements of successful growth, and the warning signs that your business is in trouble, from a variety of perspectives. This is a must-attend for those who want to maximize their returns on investment.

The panel is being formed and moderated by Mr. John M. Collard, Chairman, Strategic Management Partners, Inc., a turnaround manager and private equity investor. John is Past Chairman of the Turnaround Management Association and SMP is the 2007 recipient of the Maryland Small Business of the Year and the Governor's Citation.

The panel experts consist of: Mr. C. Edward Hartman, III, Managing Partner, Hartman & Egeli, Attorney at Law. Ms. Diane Devaney, President, Devaney & Associates, a marketing, advertising and public relations, business development firm. Mr. Tom Heseltine, Partner, Clifton Gunderson, certified public accountants and business consultants. Ms. AnnMarie Schovee, Managing Director Investment Banking, M&T Bank.

Company owners and investors realize value when they bring in advisors to guide a company that is underperforming. When a company is in trouble a different set of leadership skills is required to place the company back on a profitable path. Many private equity and hedge fund investors are seeking the help of turnaround experts, and many are adding this talent to their senior management roles. Regardless of who employs the turnaround manager, their unique expertise is often required to be successful in this market.

Mr. John M. Collard, Chairman, Strategic Management Partners, Inc. said; "During the last five years, while interest rates were down, lenders relaxed their borrowing covenants to generate their business based more upon volume than on interest rate. Companies were allowed to borrow their way out of trouble, instead of fixing systemic operational problems in the business. The credit crisis

forced this source of funds to evaporate, causing leaders to face the real problems within the company, or liquidate. The free ride is over. Lenders still have funds to lend, and investors have funds to buy, but only for companies with sound structure and practices in place.” “You must build companies that future buyers want to invest in.”

Ms. Kathleen T. Snyder, President and Chief Executive Officer, Maryland Chamber of Commerce said; “Maryland is a small business state, and the Maryland Chamber is excited to launch a new series of events focused on delivering resources, timely information and educational opportunities to small business owners. Our goal is to provide high-level networking opportunities and insightful strategies and tactics small business owners can put immediately to work growing their bottom lines. Given the state of the economy, we think our September 17th event on thriving during tough economic times is a timely way to kick off the series.”

According to Secretary David W. Edgerley of Maryland’s Department of Business & Economic Development, “This program supports DBED’s mission to promote positive growth and continued good health among Maryland businesses. Conference participants will receive expert guidance in maximizing returns on investment and will develop strategies for ensuring a competitive edge in today’s ever-changing marketplace.”

Who Should Attend?

Business Owners who want to increase the value of their holdings
C-Level Executives from small and mid-size business
Business leaders managing a troubled company
Directors serving on boards or in advisory capacity
Business Development Executives
Strategic Planning Executives
Merger & Acquisition Executives
Lenders to small and mid-size business
Investors in small and mid-size business
Business Advisors

What Will You Learn?

Strategies to employ when building corporate value
How to create real value in small and mid-size companies
What Buyers and Investors look for before they invest
Why it is important to focus on exit strategies
What are the Early Warning Signs of Trouble?
How to hold leaders and managers accountable
The views from both an Owner's and Buyer's perspective
How to guide the business to avoid trouble
Roles of the Board, Advisory Boards, and Advisors
Importance of Incentive Plans and Monitoring Results

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Reference:

Strategic Management Partners, Inc. (www.StrategicMgtPartners.com)
Hartman & Egeli (www.HartmanEgeli.com)
Devaney & Associates (www.Devaney.net)
Clifton Gunderson (www.CliftonCPA.com)
M&T Bank, Investment Banking (www.mtb.com)
Press Release .pdf version (<http://members.aol.com/Strategist/mccsep17.pdf>)
Turnaround Management Association (www.turnaround.org)

Host:

Maryland Chamber of Commerce (www.mdchamber.org) 410-269-0642
Event Agenda/Speakers: (<http://mdchamber.org/september17>)

Venue:

Westin Baltimore Washington Airport (www.Westin.com/bwi) (443) 577-2300
1110 Old Elkridge Landing Road, Baltimore (Linthicum), Maryland 21090

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Date:

September 17, 2008
7:30 AM to 8:15 AM Registration, Networking, Breakfast
8:15 AM to 9:30 AM Panel Discussion
9:30 AM to 9:50 AM Roundtable Discussion Forums