

Michigan CFO Associates

The CFOs for *Small Business*

Newsletter

2

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating 5 Years!

President's Message



Todd Rammler

This May marks the 5 Year Anniversary of Michigan CFO Associates — frankly, it's a little hard to believe! Five years ago, I was faced with a career decision that fell right square into my lap. . . grab the opportunity for 'self employment' that was directly in front of me, or stay with the "safe" route, and get another CFO job. Obviously I chose the former; but it was not without a lot of over-analyzing and anxiety.

In hind-sight, it actually turned out to be the safer of the two choices. Few people could have predicted what happened in the auto-industry just 2 years later (2008), and the domino effect on jobs at all levels. Working with a diversified group of clients (instead of one employer) made the economic downturn *almost* a non-issue for us. Having been out of a job several times during my career, I know exactly what many folks were (and still are) going through. The only difference was this time there were *so many others out of work*, and very little in the way of jobs. I feel blessed and fortunate to have made that decision and gotten traction before the real difficult times arrived.

I remember during the first year in business that my goal was to get a full schedule of clients and at that point I would be able to catch my breath. That was the first hurdle. Today, that seems almost trivial; but at the time, it was very real. My, how your perspective can change!

Despite the economy, we've experienced steady growth over the past 5 years. It hasn't been without bumps, and it hasn't been easy. And getting to the next level will be even more difficult. But I'm confident we'll get there.

The vision of Michigan CFO Associates has changed over the past few years, with the growth we've experienced. I've shared this with some, but certainly not most of you. I'm not sure I'd call this a

"Vision Statement" (never been really big on contrived statements that go in a cheap picture frame), but here's what I believe it to be:

To create a professional services firm with a team of experienced & diverse CFOs specializing in Management Accounting, helping small business owners generate more profit & cash flow. Recognized by business owners and professional advisors as the first, obvious, and only choice for cost-effective CFO expertise.

This is what the next 5 years holds for us. It won't be easy, and it won't be quick. But I believe it will be worth it.

Thank you so much for your support, your business, your trust and your referrals over the past 5 years. We couldn't have done it alone!

Todd Rammler, CMA, MSA
President

P.S.—In the last newsletter ([Winter 2011](#)) I jokingly said the following:

"And while I'm in the minority, I hope the snow fall & cold temps continue until the very week that my golf league begins. Let's go from full winter to full spring in a week or less."

Well, the joke was on me, as it literally snowed the day before my golf league was scheduled to start. Here's my lawn as I left for work in the morning, un-amused by my own self-fulfilling prophecy. Needless to say, we cancelled the first week of golf. Curiously however, the Spring weather portion of my forecast seems to be unfulfilled. . .



My lawn, the day before our golf league starts

Inside This Issue:

President's Message:
Celebrating 5 Years!

What's Happening?

GLEQ

Catalyst

We're Hiring

Just For Fun:

Paraprosdokian Phrases

Selling What Your Customers WANT

What Clients Are Saying. . .

View past newsletters online!

www.michigancfo.com/about/newsletterarchive.html



What's Happening?

MIT Enterprise Forum Keynote. In April, Todd was the Keynote speaker and a panel participant for the MIT Enterprise Forum of the Great Lakes, presenting "**Managing Cash Flow**". In addition to the attendees in the room, the presentation was simulcast to approximately 10 other locations around Michigan where local chapters were meeting. We had a great night, and lengthy panel discussion including audience Q&A. If you would like to receive a copy of the presentation call our office at 586.580.3285 x202 and ask for Rachel Jones. Please visit <http://www.mitgreatlakes.org> for more info.

Catalyst Event. In May we were a sponsor for the Detroit Regional Chamber/Crain's Second Stage "Catalyst: Igniting Small Business Growth" event. Keynotes & workshops on a variety of subjects were presented for 2nd Stage companies. If you missed the event, you missed a great day of content, but you also missed out on two notable items at our booth; (1) **hand-dipped chocolate pretzels**; and (2) **\$1,000,000 in CASH** (see photo).



Rachel Jones, flanked by 2 middle aged guys in suits

We're Hiring! Do you know an exceptional CFO who is capable of both technical accounting AND relationship building/business development? If so, please feel free to get them in touch with us! We're looking to add 1-2 CFOs who are interested in developing a book of 4-6 clients each, with our assistance. Other independent "part-time CFOs" you may know of (but would never use, of course!) are welcome as well. For more information [click here](#).



Jeremy Sanger, Mike Semanco, Todd Rammler, and Pavan Muzumdar participate in a panel discussion.



Have you ever seen \$1M in CASH?!?!

Just For Fun!

A **paraprosdokian** is a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected in a way that causes the reader or listener to reframe or reinterpret the first part. It is frequently used for humorous or dramatic effect, sometimes producing an anticlimax "Paraprosdokian" comes from Greek "**παρά**-", meaning "despite" and "**προσδοκία**", meaning "expectation".

- ❖ Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.
- ❖ I want to die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather. Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car.
- ❖ Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
- ❖ The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on the list.
- ❖ Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- ❖ If I agreed with you we'd both be wrong.
- ❖ The early bird might get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- ❖ A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.
- ❖ Dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish.
- ❖ I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
- ❖ Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- ❖ Why do Americans choose from just two people to run for president and 50 for Miss America ?
- ❖ Always borrow money from a pessimist. He won't expect it back.
- ❖ To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
- ❖ Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

Selling What Your Customers Want

By Todd Rammler

Just when you thought you'd heard everything. . . an accountant is going to explain how to be a more effective salesperson.

One day last fall I was surveying my lawn and noticing that it wasn't looking all that great. Weeds were creeping in, it wasn't as green as it should've been, thin spots here and there. It was unsatisfactory.

Because I sell "outsourced" services, I also use outsourced services, whenever appropriate. Like I tell clients & prospects: You can waste a lot of time trying to be an expert in everything or trying to do it all yourself. Admittedly, this logic was not as effective when presented to my wife as the reason why I'm not going to be mowing the lawn. I had to break out the big guns to sell her: "There's going to be tan, shirtless, 20 year old guys circling the house every week."

Who says accountants can't sell.

Anyway. . . we have a lawn service as well as a fertilization service. Neither of them were doing a great job; both seemed content to do the bare minimum (an article for a future newsletter). But the unsatisfactory results had more to do with the fertilizer folks than the lawn mowing folks.

About this time, my well known fertilizer service called on a Saturday to sell me some more services (the one thing they do very well is try to sell you more stuff). So I told the salesman I was glad he called, because my lawn was not looking very good and I'd like to know what to do about it.

The sales person had coincidentally stopped by our house a few days earlier, so he knew what I was referring to. Unfortunately, he didn't know the solution. Instead, he gave me a laundry list of options that I could pick from: core aeration, de-thatching, bug preventer. . . on and on. We could get 5 applications a year, or 7 applications. It was a pretty long list of choices, and at the end of the list, I was supposed to pick the solution.

I said "**I want thick, green, healthy grass**".

So he then starts telling me all of the specifications and technical details for each item on the laundry list he rattled off earlier. "Stimulates root growth". "Prevents grub activity". "Allows the soil to breath". "Has high phosphorus & nitrogen content". Blah, blah, blah.

Me: "Salesman, I want thick, green, healthy grass. I don't know what I need; I know what I want. ***I'll sign up for whatever program you have that guarantees thick, green, healthy grass.***"

Sales man: "Well, we could aerate your lawn? *We're having a special on aeration right now.*"

"Oy."

Not surprisingly, I do not have thick, green healthy grass as of yet. So I may be looking for a new 'fertilizer guy' who understands what I'm after.

Incidentally, a terrific USP (Unique Selling Proposition) for any lawn service business owners that might be reading this: "Thick, Green, Healthy Grass or Your Money Back." I'd buy that.

It's often easy to see these issues with clarity in other people's businesses, but not always easy to see it in our own. But it's worth thinking about, asking customers about, and tinkering with.

What is it that your customers actually want? Is that what you're selling???

2nd Quarter Client Anniversaries!

We want to thank the following clients for their continued support and look forward to many more anniversaries to come!



"On behalf of the MIT Enterprise Forum of the Great Lakes I want to thank you for the keynote presentation at our Savvy Entrepreneur Series event on Cash-flow management.

We all enjoyed the material you presented and your approach to cash management is very relevant and valuable to new and seasoned entrepreneurs alike.

Your insight and experience in financial management specifically as it applied to audience members' questions was especially interesting and important to hear."

Pavan V. Muzumdar, CFA
Program Chair
MIT Enterprise Forum of the Great Lakes

Michigan CFO Associates

The CFO for *Small Business*

12900 Hall Road, Suite 455
Sterling Heights, MI 48313
586.580.3285



Newsletter ②

Michigan CFO Associates

The CFOs for *Small Business*

12900 Hall Rd, Suite 455 Sterling Heights, MI 48313
586.580.3285 x 201

www.michiganCFO.com / info@michiganCFO.com

OUTSOURCED CFO & CONTROLLER SERVICES INCLUDING:

- *TRENDSPOTTER™ Financial Statement Analysis*
- *Cost & Profit Margin Analysis*
- *Bank Financing Packaged & Negotiations*
- *Financial Projections*
- *Cash Planning & Management*