

## SUNBELT – Who We Are

SUNBELT Business Advisors LLC is the largest office network of business brokers in the world. Whether you are looking to buy or sell a business, we have the resources to help you reach your goals. With hundreds of offices worldwide, and the most skilled brokers in the industry, SUNBELT Network has behind it the marketing savvy and worldwide exposure that you can only get when you list your business for sale with us. And if you are looking to buy a business or buy a franchise, no other business brokerage company can offer the selection and quality of businesses that SUNBELT brokers can provide.

So when you decide to buy or sell a business, don't look any further than our highly-trained network of SUNBELT professionals.



**The Largest Business Brokerage Network in the World.  
Rated #1 in Category by Entrepreneur Magazine in 2004.  
Over 1200 professionals in hundreds of offices worldwide.**



# THE SUNBELT TIMES

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News for Business Owners Around the World – From Sunbelt Business Brokers Around the World

## Disaster-Proofing Your Business

Over the past two decades businesses across the board got hit with disasters. The 1993 World Trade Center bombings, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the September 11, 2001 terrorists attacks on the twin towers all had crippling affects on the business community. The unforeseen natural disasters of hurricanes Ivan and Katrina battered businesses across the Gulf Coast as those areas struggle to rebuild and get back to business-as-usual.

In response to the constant threat of terrorism and other catastrophes, the department of Homeland Security has created a website loaded with advice on business damage control. The site address: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) offers various links to educate the public on creating and maintaining an emergency preparedness plans.

The opening page has links for emergency preparedness planning for families, businesses and even a soon to be activated link for kids.

Under the business links the site includes a listing of PDF downloads of brochures including one for employees on individual and family emergency preparedness, a sample business emergency preparedness plan and another that gives an estimate of the costs for disaster-proofing your business. If your building has been rendered uninhabitable or destroyed, there are steps you can take to stay up and running.

In this case, it is recommended you put together a continuity of operations plan, or COOP. Business owners should consider alternate locations to carry out their operations. Perhaps you could establish a back up facility at home.

If that's not feasible, you could consider partnering with other businesses and come up with a mutual agreement to allow use of each other's facilities if one of you is put out of commission by an emergency.

Adequately preparing your staff is another

important component to responding to a crisis. Getting the entire company involved and recruiting personnel to serve as key contacts or for other duties, such as CPR, during a crisis could mean the difference between life and death, both for your employees and for your business.

Equity Technologies of Mobile, Ala. has long had disaster plans in place to counter the threat of hurricanes according to a testimonial on the site. A recent review and analysis of its entire emergency process revealed that the single most crucial operational factor during an emergency for it is communication with the outside world.

The research resulted in Equity Technologies investing in purchasing generators to power the phone system during utility outages and arranging for co-workers to set it up within seven minutes. Not only does the company keep an emergency plan and procedure in place, it also has committed to reviewing it each year at the start of hurricane season.

Cathy Anderson-Giles, president and CEO of the 72-employee company, said, "Being prepared means being ready for any kind of emergency, be it hurricane, utility disruption or man-made disaster." Bouncing back quickly after a disaster strikes also entails taking stock of how your company functions, including your business network.

The site suggests identifying all your suppliers, shippers, and other businesses you interact with on a daily basis. After identifying those critical suppliers to your business, it's important to build an emergency contact list of other companies who can fill in the gap if one of your vendors has to cease operations.

## Do You Know?

- There is a major correlation between national economic growth and the level of entrepreneurial activity in prior years, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) a non-profit academic research consortium first formed in 1999.
- China holds 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the world's population and is the largest manufacturer of the world's textiles, toys, consumer electronics, and appliance goods.
- In 2005, Wal-Mart's posted sales in one day that were \$1.42 billion, which is more than the gross domestic products of 36 countries. The store chain employs 1.6 million associates in over 5,100 stores. Each week, more than 138 million customers visit a Wal-Mart around the world.



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## Perseverance Pays Off Big . . . For Fitness Center Owner

Everyone's familiar with the tongue-in-cheek adage that says if at first you don't succeed...try, try, again. A worn out cliché, but it really rings true for Gary Heavin, an entrepreneur who lived it. In 1992, he dropped out of med-school because he could no longer afford to attend. Then he took over a failing health club in Houston, Texas and turned it into a profitable venture. After building it into a franchise with 17 locations, the bottom dropped out and he lost it all.

Determined to succeed, he examined what worked about the former business and the things that didn't. He applied the lessons learned to a new enterprise dedicated exclusively to women's health and nutrition. He and his wife Diane, who has a passion for exercise and experience as an advertising executive, opened the first outlet in 1992. Have you guessed the franchise yet?

The Heavins were the founders of Curves, one of the fastest growing franchises for several years running. According to the Curves web site, the Guinness Book of World Records listed it as "The Worlds Largest Fitness Center Franchise."

They started franchising in 1995 and by the end of the first year 50 Curves fitness centers opened. In the nine years since then, the chain has had phenomenal growth. At the end of 2005, Entrepreneur magazine reported 9,128 Curves currently in operation, which includes 713 in Canada and another 667 in various other foreign countries, including the United Kingdom, Brazil, Germany, Spain and even an outlet in Iceland.

In Entrepreneur Magazine's 2005 list of top 500 franchises it was named the second best overall franchise behind number one Subway and took the number one slot for the magazine's listing of fastest growing franchises that year. This year, the franchise fell one spot in the ranking to the number three best overall franchise behind Subway and a new number two, Quiznos and its growth pace slowed down earning Curves the fifth place slot for growth pace in 2006.

While franchisees opening under the Curves name are in business for themselves, they are not by themselves. The corporate office, located in Waco, Texas, does a lot to minimize risk for its franchise owners. For example, Ray and Michele Hornsby and Karol Morgan, owners of a Curves in Dadeville, AL, said that before partnering with them, corporate examined the demographics and did a market analysis of the location to ensure the market they were entering could make a profit. During the grand opening, corporate will even send a trainer to coach the owners and teach them the secrets of a successful Curves center.



## 1 out of every 8

pounds in England is spent at Tesco's, the largest supermarket in the UK. Tesco claims 12.3% of the total retail market in the UK. It has been on a rampage since 1995, when it overtook Sainsbury to become the UK's largest supermarket. Tesco was founded in 1924.

## Why Sunbelt?

We are able to provide intermediary services between a Buyer and Seller of businesses in all price ranges and industries. Our broker professionals can give you the crucial confidentiality you need throughout the buying process and national network exposure you need to bring the right buyer to you.

The Sunbelt name has the reputation to support the sale of your business from initial listing all the way through closure. Our awards support our achievements. Our advertising supports our growth, and our client satisfaction keeps us at the forefront of the business brokerage industry.

For FAQ's about selling your business call your local Sunbelt Business Advisor (back page) or log on to:  
<http://www.sunbeltnetwork.com/sellers/faq.jsp>

## Another Satisfied Client!

"I discovered that all roads led to Sunbelt Business Brokers."

Larry O-Brian

## Apple sold 14

million iPods in the 4th qtr. of 2005 - the equivalent of more than 100 iPods/minute for 3 months straight, day and night! In all, Apple has sold 42 million iPods as of January 11, 2006, and Apple's stock has more than doubled in the past 6 months.

## Fraud IQ Test True or False

It's safer to carry and use credit cards than checks. *True.* Identity thieves have told DA investigators that it's much easier to counterfeit checks than credit cards. Credit card issuers are more likely to monitor your accounts and notify you of potential fraud than other financial institutions.

As long as you don't send any money or buy any products, playing sweepstakes is harmless entertainment. *False.* When you play sweepstakes, your name is frequently put on marketing lists bought and sold by other direct marketers. Eventually, your name can end up on criminal telemarketing lists.

Once signed, legal contracts like Quit Claim Deeds, can be very difficult or even impossible to reverse. *True.* Never sign a document you have not read and thoroughly understood. Never be rushed into signing. Stand your ground and seek 2 or 3 other opinions from a lawyer, banker, or clergy.

Giving Powers of Attorney to someone is always risky. *False.* DA cases involving theft by perpetrators with Powers of Attorney have victims who have NOT planned for their future care. Instead, these victims were often targeted and preyed upon by perpetrators who took advantage of their trust and isolation. The victims did not thoughtfully decide who was the best person to be their POA, nor let others know of their decisions. The best way to prevent POA fraud is to deliberately direct your future care, bank, and financial statements.

## China and India Lead Global Growth in 2006

According to a recently released United Nations annual report on the global economy, the overall world economy is projected to expand by about three percent in 2006. It had a similar pace in 2005 and has dropped from the historically high growth rate of four percent in 2004.

China, India and other developing nations in Southeast Asia are expected to surge ahead.

One of the authors of the report, U.N. Economist Shamika Sirimanne reported that Asian economies are growing at twice the worldwide rate. Overall, the economies of East and South East Asia will expand by 6.5 percent. While this is a steady decline from the projections of 2004, it represents what analysts call a "maturing of the global economic recovery."

The U.S. economy is expected to enlarge by 3.1 percent in 2006. In Europe, growth is projected to be a lackluster 2.1 percent.

"Growing at 6.5 percent, the (50) least developed countries are faring even better, reaching the fastest average

growth they have had for decades," the report said.

The gross domestic product development of China did slow down from last year by about one percentage point, but will remain robust at 8.3 percent.

The economies of Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan are also likely to be boosted by an improving economy in Japan, and by rising global demand for electronics, one of their major exports.

Although some economists suggest India is showing signs of "overheating," the country is expected to see progress in the range of six to seven percent this year.

The report suggests the greatest danger threatening stabilization of growth worldwide may lie in the systemic weakness inherent in huge and still-widening global financial imbalances. The report advises countries to take action to address these inequalities. For example, it urges the United States to reduce its fiscal deficit — which reportedly reached a record \$800 billion last year — and encourage savings among its people. It recommends that countries with surpluses promote investment and consumption.

## Go Global/Act Local

Greg Kells – Ottawa, Canada



(45 degrees latitude and 75 degrees longitude)



## It's About Relationships

Larry O'Brian was still a young man when he retired from his job at the 30-year mark. He'd held management positions in two different corporations. He told me, now it is time for something completely different. He had no idea what that might be. After testing the "other" opportunities, Larry decided he wanted to be responsible for his own success or failure. And when Larry set out to buy a business, Larry stated "I discovered that all roads led to Sunbelt Business Brokers." After test driving a couple of businesses, Larry decided on Image Professional Car Care – and after working alongside the previous owner for six weeks, Larry decided on the company. That is a variation of the "training and transition period" which is an integral part of what Sunbelt offers; where the owner stays on for a set time following the sale. Larry's parting words, "Sunbelt led me to exactly the right place."

Greg Kells is president of Sunbelt Business Brokers Inc. Canada with a staff of 15 in Ottawa and franchises across the country.