

Takin' Care of Business

Business Forums International, (BFI) an exclusive networking think-tank and business development incubator for top-level professional services providers is like the “country club that nobody knows about,” quipped BFI CEO Michael Peloquin.

The brain-child of Tracy Albert, a director of investment for an international investment bank, BFI launched its first chapter in 1997 in Los Angeles. The organization is strictly about building long-range business relationships among like-minded professionals and providing an environment that cultivates trust among these individuals, said Peloquin. Ultimately, it is hoped that once that trust is established, members will do business with one another or assist one another with referrals that are worthwhile pursuits commensurate with their experience.

But, like a high-end country club, not just anyone can join. Although it's not a secret society, getting in does require some rites of passage. For starters, membership is limited to those who have proven their mettle in business and meet or exceed the minimum salary requirement set by BFI. The rationale behind this mandate, noted Peloquin, is to ensure that “everyone is on a level playing field” and meeting amongst their peers in business.

Attendance to one of its meetings is by invitation only and potential members must be referred by a chapter member. The organization also recruits only those whose work falls within specific professional service categories, such as accounting, law, banking, financial services and real estate. Each chapter has two representatives from each of its ten categories, said Peloquin, and once those slots are filled, no new members can join.

Although personal success can get one invited to a meeting with the movers and shakers of BFI, it doesn't guarantee membership. Anyone invited to join must be committed to attend at least eight of the twelve meetings held each year, and seek to serve the interests of the group before themselves. The group considers the dynamic and personality of the individual, along with his motivation for wanting to join. “If a person is coming in just to take, chances are we aren't going to be a good fit for them,” said Peloquin.

Current members of BFI include VIPs from national and world renowned companies such as: Bank of America, Staubach Real Estate, Bowne Financial Printing and Deloitte and Touche to name a few.

Despite its strict membership qualifications, BFI has steadily grown since 1997 and chapters have sprung up in 21 cities. Ten of these are in California. The remaining 11 chapters reside in large cities across the nation, including: Las Vegas, Denver, Dallas, Houston, Minneapolis, Chicago, Atlanta, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

The New York chapter is the newest addition to BFI's network, which just opened its chapter in 2006. In the coming months, BFI plans to expand in the United States and take its first steps toward going global. “We have plans to expand our business into Europe. This fall we're looking at launching in France and possibly the United Kingdom,” said Peloquin, adding that “we're hoping to go from 21 chapters to 85 on a worldwide basis.”

For more information on the BFI, log on to businessforumsinternational.com.

Do You Know?

- There are only four MBA's in the top 50 of the Forbes 400 list of companies. In fact, you don't even hit the first MBA until number 22, which is Phil Knight, CEO of Nike.
- As of December 2005, one percent of the world's 650 million corporate e-mail accounts were plugged into hardware and software that forwards incoming messages to a mobile device. According to ZDnet, about 3.65 million of them use a BlackBerry. Of those e-mail accounts, it is estimated 126 million employees use Microsoft Outlook on desktop.
- Starbucks Corp. spends more on health insurance for its employees than on coffee beans. Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz said Starbucks expects to spend about \$200 million this year for health care for its 80,000 U.S. employees, more than the total amount it spends on green coffee from Africa, Indonesia and other countries.
- The first computer “bug” was a real bug. In 1947, engineers were running a test of the multiplier and adder on the Harvard Mark 1 system. They noticed something was wrong. The problem? A moth had set up residence in Panel F, Relay # 70 of the machine. The moth was trapped, removed and taped into the computer's logbook with the words: “first actual case of a bug being found.”
- There are hundreds of SUNBELT Business Advisors Offices around the World.

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 the most important FAQ's about selling your business call your local Sunbelt Business Advisor or log on to:

Survey says MBA salaries on the RISE

Newly minted MBAs are commanding significantly heftier salaries in 2006 than their counterparts did last year, according to research conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council, (GMAC) a nonprofit education organization and think-tank.

This year, according to the GMAC's survey, the average new MBA with a job offer in hand will earn \$92,360 their first year, up 4.2 percent from the \$88,626 graduates in 2005 received. To further sweeten the deal, two-thirds of job offers come with signing bonuses that average \$17,603, slightly up from last year. GMAC researchers attribute the surge in MBA salaries to a healthy recruiting environment built on strong employer confidence in the economy.

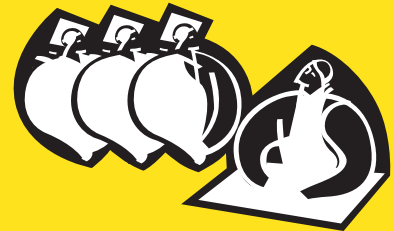
The GMAC findings resulted from a survey of 6,139 students at 147 business schools worldwide. A third of the respondents are citizens of countries other than the United States, according to GMAC researchers.

In addition to earning bigger paychecks, more MBAs are landing jobs while still attending school, continuing a multi-

year upward trend. Fifty-two percent of respondents to the 2006 GMAC graduate survey indicated they received or accepted job offers before graduation, compared with 50 percent in 2005, 42 percent in 2004 and 36 percent in 2003.

On the whole, the survey found MBA graduates are interested in the types of jobs employers are looking to fill. For example, nearly half of respondents said they hope to land a mid-level position—the type of role for which recruiters say they are most likely to be hiring.

The majority of new MBAs said they are interested in working in the finance and accounting industry, followed by products/services and consulting sectors. Respondents were least likely to choose the energy/utilities industry as an area of interest.



<http://www.sunbeltnetwork.com/sellers/faq.jsp> • Learn The Difference: Talk With A SUNBELT Advisor.

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.

www.sunbeltnetwork.com



**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.**