



BUSINESS CHAPTER SACRAMENTO STATE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

December 2010

Alumni Spotlight— Clayton Blakely

By Deanna Daly

Business Chapter

Over 1000 Members Strong

Mission—A network of business professionals working together to support the continued improvement of the Alumni Association, the College of Business and Sacramento State; to promote individual member achievement and career advancement; and to make a positive impact in the communities where our members work and live.

Clayton Blakely has a long history working with the premier monthly business publication in California's Capitol region, Comstock's Magazine. Clayton began working at Comstock's in 1990 while still completing his Bachelors degree at Sacramento State's College of Business with a Marketing concentration and a minor in Psychology. He was introduced to the publisher by a mutual acquaintance who previously wrote for the magazine. At the time, he was also working days and evenings in a couple of the area's upscale restaurants to put himself through college, and saw joining Comstock's as an opportunity to develop some "real world" experience related to his field of study. Clayton began as a junior level account executive for the magazine and, when he graduated the next year, was offered a full time position. His initial responsibility was developing new business for the magazine, principally advertising sales, but grew over the years as he was promoted to Director of Business Development and then Vice President/Director of Business Development.

His responsibilities continue to remain focused on new business development but have expanded over the years to include other marketing, management and business development functions, including:

- ★ Conceive, plan, and manage special client appreciation events including Theatre Nights with Comstock's
- ★ Conceive and develop special awards programs which have included Vanguard Awards and Most Admired Companies Awards
- ★ Train, mentor, motivate and develop other account executives
- ★ Help to open up and expand specific industry groups including Construction, Commercial Real Estate, Architecture & Engineering, Facility Services, Banking, Accounting and others

- ★ Spearhead numerous special section and supplements over the years, including Regional supplements, New Homes Guide, The Annual BOMA/ACRE Office Guide, and numerous others
- ★ Develop of many of the magazine's marketing collateral pieces used for the sales team
- ★ Develop value-added incentive packages and promotions to increase business and strengthen client loyalty
- ★ Conduct ongoing competitive research and analysis; determine competitor strengths and weaknesses and evaluate Comstock's relative advantages to develop sales and marketing strategies and improve performance for clients
- ★ Develop ad concepts when needed by clients including writing/editing ad copy and "art-directing" ads to meet client objectives
- ★ Actively involved with the magazine's new media offerings, from website content to Facebook and other social media
- ★ Develop and manage key strategic partner relationships for the magazine, including with SACTO, ACRE (Association of Commercial Real Estate), BOMA (Building Owners & Managers Association), AIA, SMPS (Society for Marketing Professional Services), West Sacramento Chamber, Roseville Chamber and a number of nonprofit/charitable organizations

(Continued on page 2)

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www.SacStateBizChapter.org

And on LinkedIn.com

Visit website, "Search Groups," enter "Sacramento State Business Chapter"

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For contact information for
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ter website at
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Did you know?

You can obtain copies of
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our chapter website.
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Alumni Spotlight Cont.

In 2008, Clayton co-founded a net-
working organization specifically for profes-
sionals in commercial real estate, construction,
architecture and engineering and related indus-
tries serving those markets. The organization,
RECON Networking, has
grown to include more than
600 members, with mixers
every other month attracting
up to 300 or more attendees
representing key industry
leaders. RECON is a non-
profit organization, and
gives back to the community
through donations each year
to a designated charity (this
past year FirstTee of Sacra-
mento was the selected char-
ity). He currently serves as
treasurer and board member
of RECON Networking.
Clayton is also actively in-
volved or personally donates
to other non-profit organizations including
Make-A-Wish, Leukemia-Lymphoma Society,
West Sacramento Education Foundation,
Crocker Art Museum, West Sacramento Rotary
Club (prior board member), California Musical



Theatre Company, and Sac State Alumni Asso-
ciation ("Lifetime Membership"). Clayton's in-
terests and activities outside the business realm
include art, theatre, photography, travel, history,
architecture and design, film, and reading. His
goals for the future include
continued growth and ad-
vancement with Comstock's
Magazine and helping to
usher in the next generation
of publishing and media be-
yond print. He is also work-
ing to expand the RECON
Networking organization
beyond Sacramento with a
current chapter being planned
for the Bay Area to be
launched in 2011. He also
plans to focus more on his
photography, an interest that
grew at Sac State while tak-
ing courses by Sharmen
Goff. He has had a couple of
non-gallery exhibitions at local businesses for 2nd
Saturday and at a local Starbucks but plans to
have a gallery exhibition within the next year. He
also plans to continue to supporting local arts and
theatre.

Tax Tips for 2010

By Linda Geery, Gilbert & Associates

One of the largest expenses you have is the
income tax you pay. If you continually pay
more than necessary, you diminish your ability
to build your wealth to accomplish important
financial goals. The only effective way to cut
your taxes is to do regular tax planning. Al-
ways consider the tax consequences of any
transaction before the fact; seek professional
assistance any time dollar amounts are signifi-
cant. To help you identify tax saving opportu-
nities we've compiled the following list of tax
tips:

**Review your deductions toward the
end of each year.** If you're close to the cutoff
point between itemizing or taking the standard
deduction, consider the advantage of bunching
your deductible expenses every other year.
You can then alternate between itemizing on
year and taking the standard deduction the next,
saving tax dollars by doing so.

Be tax-wise if you borrow money.
Also, review and restructure your existing debt
so the money you pay towards debt service is at
the most favorable tax terms.

Get an early refund for a disaster.
If your area is ever declared a disaster area as

result of a flood, tornado, hurricane, or the like,
you may take the unreimbursed loss that year or
on the prior year's tax return. Filing an amended
return for the prior year could give you a refund to
help pay expenses resulting from the disaster.

**If you're saving for a child's college
education,** do so in a tax-advantaged way. Look
at all the available options and choose what is
likely to give you the most money for college at
the least tax cost. Among the choices to investi-
gate are Section 529 plans, education savings ac-
counts, and education savings bonds.

**Maximize your use of education tax
credits and deductions.** The Hope and lifetime
learning credits are valuable tax-savers, but the
rules are complex. You may need some guidance
to obtain maximum savings.

**Don't lose your mortgage points de-
duction.** When you refinance a mortgage, you're
required to deduct the points over the life of the
loan. But if you refinance again or sell the home,
you can write off the remaining undeducted
amount in that year.

**Check your exposure to the alternative
minimum tax (AMT)** as a part of your tax plan-
ning. Because the AMT exemption amount is not

indexed for inflation, this tax is hitting more middle income taxpayers. You may need to consider moves to lessen the AMT's impact on you.

Maximize dependency deductions. If you are helping to support an elderly parent, your college-age child, or others, know the requirements that will give you a dependency exemption. Don't let poor planning or paying for the wrong expenses cost you a tax-cutting dependency exemption.

Don't aggravate your tax bill with penalty charges. If you are required to make estimated tax payments, be certain that you are paying the minimum required. In most cases, that's 100% of your prior year's tax liability.

Find out what requirements you must meet to be able to sell your home without paying tax on up to \$500,000 of profit if you are married, \$250,000 if you're single.

Take a tax deduction for bad debts. If you lent money and it's beginning to look as though the loan is uncollectible, take steps to provide evidence of your attempts to collect. These steps will help substantiate a bad debt deduction on your tax return.

Consider tax-exempt investments as a means of cutting your income tax. There is an easy way to compare the yield on tax-exempt investments (such as municipal bonds) with the after-tax yield from taxable investments. Subtract your top tax bracket from 100 and divide the tax-exempt interest rate by that number. The result is the equivalent taxable return.

Sell an option instead of the property. If you are selling property but want no more income in the current year, consider selling an option to purchase. The amount you receive for the option will be taxable in the year the option is exercised rather than in the current year.

Take advantage of lower long-term capital gains tax rates. You can cut your tax bill significantly by holding an appreciated investment long enough to qualify for long-term rather than short-term tax treatment.

If you plan to sell a piece of investment real estate and replace it with other investment property, you should look into a tax-deferred exchange.

Give appreciated property to charity rather than cash. You'll generally get a charitable deduction for the property's market value without having to pay capital gains tax on the appreciation. Get details before you give, however, because other restrictions could apply.

If you're selling mutual fund shares, consider using the specific identification method rather than the average cost method to determine your cost basis. This may allow you to fine-tune your tax planning by squeezing some extra gain

or loss out of the sale.

Check into all the tax credits for which you might qualify. Because some tax credits are reduced or eliminated entirely once your income reaches certain limits, be aware of the phase-out income thresholds for the credits that affect you. With some minor adjustments to your income and deductions, you might be able to salvage all or part of a valuable credit.

Make maximum contributions to tax-favored retirement accounts. Most retirement accounts give you the double benefit of a tax deduction for your contribution and tax-deferred growth with the account. Find the best retirement plan for your situation, and make the maximum allowable contribution each year.

Make your retirement plan contributions as early in the year as possible to maximize your tax-deferred earnings.

Consider a Roth IRA if you qualify for one. The beauty of a Roth is that your investment grows tax-free, and qualified withdrawals from a Roth will be completely tax free.

If you turned 70 ½ during the year, you have until December 31 to decide whether to take your first required IRA distribution. You can wait until April 1 of the following year to take your first distribution, but then you'll have to take two distributions that year. Unless you're still working, these rules apply to qualified retirement plans, too. They don't apply to Roth IRAs.

Rollover pension distributions. If you receive a lump-sum distribution from a qualified retirement plan, consider deferring taxation on the distribution by rolling it into an IRA or other qualified plan within 60 days.

Review the following checklist of often-missed deductions, credits, and elections to see where you can cut your taxes. Be aware that certain expenses are deductible only to the extent that they exceed 2% of your adjusted gross income (AGI), and medical expenses must exceed 7½% of your AGI. Also, itemized deductions are limited for higher-income taxpayers.

AT WORK

- Job hunting traveling and telephone expenses
- Employment agency fees
- Job counseling fees
- Resume preparation costs
- Child care costs while you work or go to school
- Union or professional association dues
- Special clothing worn on the job
- Small tools used at work
- Professional journals
- Job skill improvement classes, including travel to them
- Job-related moving expenses.

Keep in mind that good record keeping, organization and planning are important elements in minimizing tax liability!

Upcoming Business Chapter Events

Every Third Wednesday

Event: Business Chapter Board Meeting

Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

6:30 PM - Dinner & Mixer

7:30 PM - Board Meeting

Location: Rotating

Contact: Paul Finn

E-mail: Paul.F.Finn@usps.gov

Other Upcoming Events

Author Lecture Series: David Covin

Date: Wednesday, February 2

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: Library Gallery

Admission: Free

Resume Makeover

Date: Tuesday, February 8

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: University Union Ballroom

Admission: Free

Career Fair

Date: Saturday, February 16

Time: 10:0 AM - 2:00 PM

Location: University Union Ballroom

Admission: Free

Speed Interviews

Date: Wednesday, February 23

Time: 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: University Union Ballroom

Author Lecture Series: Rebecca Cluchin

Date: Wednesday, March 9

Time: 3:00 PM

Location: Library Gallery

Admission: Free

For more events information, visit www.SacStateAlumni.com.

Members On the Move

Every issue, we feature member updates. If you'd like to be in this section, please send your information to deannakdaly@gmail.com.

Jeanne M. Sibert, '98 B.S. Business Administration. After graduating from UOP's McGeorge School of Law in '01 and passing the California Bar Exam, she spent eight years as tax counsel with the Franchise Tax Board. In February '10, she returned to her passion, motivating individuals, families, and small businesses to take control of their surroundings and achieve their goals, from creating a monthly family budget to transforming an office into a success center.

To celebrate this move, she and her mother, MaryAnne Sullivan ('72 B.A. History), established Jeanne M. Sibert & MaryAnne Sullivan, LLC, combining our years of experience to provide our clients with comprehensive services, including organizing the home and office, downsizing, aging in place, housekeeping, and seminars on a variety of home economics and aging-related topics.

For more info, please visit their blogs and websites at: www.HowToClean.com; www.ClearPathHomekeeping.com; www.SimplifyAt65.com; www.HomeEcWithJeanne.com

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