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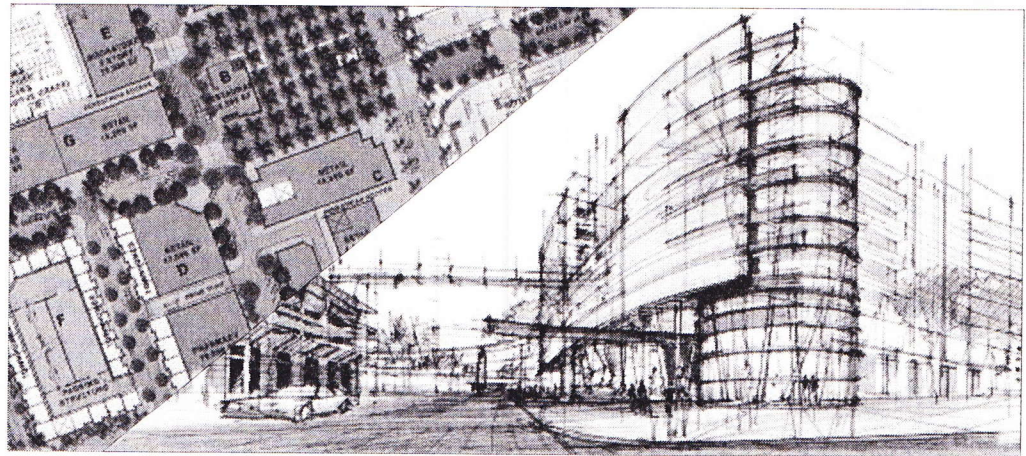
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SERVING ALL OF THE DESERT CITIES AND UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF RIVERSIDE COUNTY IN THE COACHELLA VALLEY

BIA Desert Chapter announces the Hofmann Company as the lead California Green Builder program participant

The Building Industry Association (BIA) Desert Chapter announced this week that The Hofmann Company will be the lead builder to create a project utilizing the California Green Builder (CGB) program in the Coachella Valley. The project, The Plantation at Polo, is a 770-unit master planned, gated community in Southwest Indio with a price point starting in the mid \$300,000's. First among the development's multiple product types, the Martana Collection includes four floor plans that range in size from 1,838 square feet to over

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To market, to market, with the Museum Market Plaza

By DR. STEPHENIE SLAHOR

For years, there hasn't been much change in downtown Palm Springs' retail sector, but John Wessman plans to transform that with Museum Market Plaza, a grand plan to revive not only the former "Fashion Plaza" that has stood virtually unused for a long time, but also downtown Palm Springs. Wessman's project was unveiled at a presentation last week, held before a standing room only crowd at the Hotel Zoso, a presentation that included Wessman and the various planners, architects and others already on board for the project.

The Museum Market Plaza will feature 275,000 square feet and 10 buildings that will range from 15 to 74 feet in height, averaging no more than 60 feet. Wessman anticipates that 80 tenants will call the place their retail home, but the project will be more than just stores. It will be an upscale, mixed-use development to include 53 percent open space, 30,000

square feet of office space, a 150-room hotel, 740 residential units ranging from 850 to 2500 square feet, and 80,000 square feet of public space. Six restaurants may be possible at the site, along with two-story retail establishments, a food store, and perhaps a movie theater. And, yes, there will be parking—650 slots above ground, and 1,475 underground.

The mountain view is important to Palm Springs' residents and visitors and Wessman promised that that there will be "view corridors," including one from Palm Canyon west to the Palm Springs Art Museum.

The project is expected to generate \$6 to \$8 million annually to the city coffers.

Nicole Criste, Terra Nova Planning, told the audience that Wessman's project must pass many environmental and specific plan approvals by the city, and must address layout, heights, circulation, noise, air quality, traffic and infrastructure. The plans will be "the guiding force" to

move the project from the drawing board to reality. By early summer, 2008, the initial hurdles should be passed, with everything ready for presentation to the Planning Commission and City Council in autumn of 2008.

Maggie Montez, of CB Richard Ellis, and Michael Braun of Wessman Development Company explained that the project comes at a time when Palm Springs is experiencing growth and demographic changes that will support a project of this magnitude. Not only do "snowbirds" make Palm Springs their winter home, the city also sees a growing number of "hybrid snowbirds," as Braun termed them—people with second homes here or who visit regularly for extended weekends, arriving on Thursday evenings and leaving Sunday evening or early Monday. Braun added that there is a "renaissance of downtown living" occurring in many American cities and

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Market Intelligence for the Coachella Valley
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You've fallen...and don't know how to get up

The key to surviving the downtimes

By MONICA WOFFORD

Leslie paid attention to the trends in the market. At one time she could almost stand on the side of the road with a sign that said "For Sale" and she could make her quota. Things were no longer that way and she, as well as others in her industry were now having to work much harder and much longer to make even the smallest sale. In fact, it seemed that many industries were feeling this trend and the morale, attitude, and action of employees all over was reflecting the apparent down economy. Everywhere she went people complained; sellers were fearful of trying to sell; buyers were fearful of making a big buy; and employees were hearing it from consumers daily. Yet, as was the case in Linda's office, all upper management focused on was the numbers. There was nothing being done about the extra hours she had put in or the extra follow through she had to do, or the downright struggle she faced in psyching herself up to come to work another day.

The truth is our economy has shifted. It has gone back to normal some would say. Others claim the GDP is still rising and job placements are up, both good things. But when your staff starts to feel the crunch and believe that things ARE bad, what do you think the impact on your organization will be? Employees who feel their job is on the line may give up caring what your business looks like. Employee surrounded by negative customers or rejection day in and day out may begin to believe all they hear and pass it on, accurately or otherwise.

The time is now to help those who feel they have fallen, to get up. Change the morale from "it's all going down" to "we can turn things around." Your efforts don't have to rhyme, but they may be the most important thing you do to save your company, your department and your employees from making a mad dash to the door for greener pastures. If you feel your team has fallen... and doesn't know how to get up, try these steps:

Rally the Troops

Much of what is begun as grapevine fodder in organizations is a function of miscommunication. One look or one memo can create an avalanche of damage control and attitude issues. Rally the troops and openly discuss what is going on with your business. What are the trends? What is affecting your business economically? Why are you changing a product line or lowering or raising prices? If they are a part of the process and have all the information they need to know, employees are much less likely to create their own answers to keep from feeling in the dark.

Refocus Training

Part of what helps an organization is training to keep up with the new skills needed and new advancements made. However,

training is a 51 billion dollar industry and much of what organizations offer is not what will fix the problem. For example, time management training will not help employees overcome the fear of continued rejection, which may be the real reason they are not meeting their cold calling quota. A refocused training plan that begins with a complete analysis of where the problems lie may incur a slightly higher investment up front, but will leave you with lasting results far after the downtimes have gone.

Get to Know Who They Really Are

Under stress, a key problem causing element when the media tells us the economy is going bad, people will reach for and use traits and behaviors that are not normally utilized. If an employee shows an attitude problem when the stress is high and change is frequent, but not when times are good, it is possible that mere raised awareness will alleviate the problem. In fact, one profile tool and 90 minutes in our business has been known to clear up days and hours of work in what could have become a huge HR issue. The awareness of what an employee does under stress will help you and that employee to be more rational and productive, at all times.

Bring in an Outside Source

If you have children then you have seen what happens when they ask you a question. You are just the parent and cannot possibly have any validity. Yet if the neighbor or a complete stranger provides the same answer you did to the same question, that outside, unfamiliar party seems to have real insight! The same is true in your organization. The voices of the familiar faces lose their value over time and when an outside source comes in and shares similar information in a different way, their credibility is automatically greater. Bring in a consultant, an advisor, or a trainer that you trust to diagnose and deliver a solution to the problems that you are facing in these times.

Re-Motivate Middle Management

No one seems to suffer more than those in the middle of any situation. Middle management, when times are tough, gets it from senior levels in asking for more numbers and better results. But, they also get it from the employee level in complaints, attrition, or personal issues that prevent performance. Give some thought to the middle managers in your ranks who could use a little kudos, a little team spirit, and a little pat on the back for frankly, being the glue that seems to hold

it all together.

Whether you believe times to be tough or just fine, the perception of those you work with is the reality they face every day. What you do in the downtimes shows character and strength and conviction of your beliefs. It is easy to be happy and upbeat when things are good, but who are you when the chips are down and how many people do you help to pick up in the process. They say when you make it through the tough stuff that it builds character, but you have to make it *through* it to see all the new character you now have.

About the Author

Monica Wofford brings more than 17 years of experience as a business consultant, trainer, and speaker to Monica Wofford International, Inc. Her Orlando based training firm provides one on one coaching, profile assessments and consulting on training problems to many Fortune 1000 companies. When asked what she does she often says "I save companies approximately \$2-5 million dollars in employee attrition costs over about six months." If that is what you need, contact Monica personally at www.monica-wofford.com or in her office at by dialing (866) 382-0121.

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