

the
**PROUTY
PROJECT**

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"C" NOTE QUOTE:

"Stretching in small ways prepares us to take wider leaps. From there, it becomes far easier to heed the call of the bigger adventures and opportunities that present themselves in our lives. It also becomes easier to rise to our highest callings, which almost always lie beyond the threshold of daily convenience."

● If you know who said this quote, please send an e-mail to kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com or call 952.942.2922 by **Friday, April 30** – one guess per individual. If we have more than one correct answer, we throw those names into a hat and draw the winner of a \$100 gift card.

And last issue's winner is... **Ellie Bathe, High Five Promotional Marketing, Hopkins, Minnesota.**

Ellie knew that Ken Powell, CEO of General Mills, said the following: "A senior executive called me into his office and said, 'Look, it will stretch you in ways that aren't going to happen if you play it safe.' The experience convinced me that the best thing you can do to develop people is move them in ways that take them out of their comfort zone."

Congratulations Ellie! Ellie says, "Since Ken Powell is CEO of a food company, and it was his quote, I will donate the gift certificate to the food shelf at Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners in Wayzata."



**ERIK WEIHENMAYER: World-Class Adventurer
The first and only blind man to summit Mount Everest!**

You are invited to hear the riveting and inspiring story of Erik Weihenmayer. I saw Erik speak three years ago followed by the longest and loudest standing ovation I have ever experienced – with an audience of 1,500 people.



**Wednesday, May 12, 2010
Bearpath Golf & Country Club
Eden Prairie, MN**

7:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. Erik's Thoughts on Leadership
8:30 a.m. Book signing

\$115 per person

Bring your board, your management team, and your friends for this ultimate dose of inspiration!

All proceeds benefit No Barriers USA, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting innovative ideas and assistive technologies that help people with challenges live more active and adventurous lives.

I hope you can make it! Please register at www.nobarriersusa.org/get-involved/ to reserve your spots or call Nicole Deters Spader at 952-472-2400. Space is limited.

Keep stretching, and eliminate the barriers in Q2 2010,



● STRATEGIC PLANNING

CEO PROFILE: Bob Weiss, The Deacon of Beacon



jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com

Interview by
Jeff Prouty

We've had the honor and pleasure of working with Bob Weiss, Founder and CEO of Beacon Bank, for the past twenty years. From start-up in 1989 to a \$300 million bank today, it's been a wonderful journey together.



Bob Weiss

The strategic planning process – what we call the Beacon Model – has five key elements:

- 1) Quarterly breakfast meetings with Bob at Lunds Restaurant, 6:30 a.m. start.
- 2) Four-day annual offsite: Saturday – Tuesday.
- 3) Pre-read book every year for all retreat participants, ranging from *“The World is Flat”* to *“The Fred Factor.”*
- 4) Day one and two: all employees, board, and management. Day three: half-day with everyone, half-day with board and management only. Day four: management only.
- 5) Three-hour service segment (give back to the community) on day two.

I caught up with Bob recently and thought you'd enjoy the excerpts from our lively conversation:

What has been the most challenging aspect of being an entrepreneur?

Meeting payroll. I was probably five years into the business before I started sleeping better at night.

What would you do differently if you had to do it over again?

I would have grown slower, and not tried to be all things to all people. Like all businesses, we've made some hiring mistakes along the way. I preach about hiring “Tiggers” rather than “Eeyores.” To be successful, we need people with “can do” personalities, and positive mental attitudes every day.

What do you see as the magic of the Beacon strategic planning model?

The strategic planning process is all about the direction of the company. Every person in the company needs to know which direction the compass is pointing, and why. Every person in the company knows something that can improve.

If we don't involve everyone, we'll never know what's on their minds, and they need to understand what is on my mind. Strategic planning is a time to celebrate our successes, address our deficiencies, and create our gameplan.

Talk about some of the “zigs” you took when everyone else was “zagging.”

- We were one of the first banks in the community to change to a brand (Beacon) rather than “first” or “state” or “city name.”

- We opened a branch in Duluth, when most banks were opening more branches in the Twin Cities.
- We include every employee and every board member (80 total) in the annual strategic planning process, and quarterly accountability processes.
- We talk constantly about our three core values, the 3Rs – responsive, reliable, reassuring.
- We use the board extensively – there are no surprises.
- I took nine weeks (over three years) to participate in Harvard's OPM (Owners, Presidents, Management) Program.
- I send out a weekly PMA (Positive Mental Attitude) thought to the entire team, typically on Monday morning.

What advice do you have for other entrepreneurs, your future customers, so to speak?

Don't be in a hurry to succeed. Slow, methodical growth is the best way to sustain it. Have lots of educational tools in your toolbox. I'm always telling my daughters (ages 25 and 22), “Keep filling the toolbox.” Keep learning. You never know when you will need one of those educational tools.

You have been the President of the Minnesota Bankers Association, and you have served on the board of the American Bankers Association. What have been the big learnings?

It's all about politics, and politics is about showing up. If you don't show up, you don't have a voice. The voice comes in many ways – political contributions, visiting the politicians, and making sure they hear your voice.

In last year's strategic planning process, the team of 80 generated 57 questions for the CEO. I'll close by asking question #15. What do you like best about the Beacon team?

They get it. They are involved and engaged in strategic planning. By and large, they're happy, and I love each one of them for living our values.

Thanks, Bob, for all the good laughs, good work, and good referrals over the past two decades. I'm sure the next 20 will be as exciting as the last 20. And, as you always say, “remember to keep smiling.”

● ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Building a Championship-Caliber Business: The Minnesota Timberwolves

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Article by
Grayce Belvedere Young and Peter Bailey

CEO Forum at the Prouty Project

Reinventing a business is a challenging, yet often necessary, endeavor in any business climate. Add in a highly visible business in the public spotlight, top athletes, a lot of arm chair coaches, and a community with numerous entertainment choices, and you have a sense of what Chris Wright and the Minnesota Timberwolves are undertaking.

In January, Prouty hosted a CEO Forum featuring Chris Wright, President of the Minnesota Timberwolves; David Kahn, President of Basketball Operations; and Head Coach Kurt Rambis in a dialogue on reinventing the Timberwolves. The forum included an interactive discussion with 25 executives from our community and the Timberwolves executives. Chris, David, and Kurt all shared their perspectives on rebuilding the organization and we've captured a few highlights here.

Vision

Their vision is to build a remarkable, fan-friendly experience with the Timberwolves for current and future fans. This experience will set the Timberwolves for all Minnesotans. As they are creating this experience, the leadership team is engaging the public through dialogues to share their vision and solicit input on being the most fan-friendly team.

As Chris says, "Whether coming to the arena, watching a game on television, purchasing a ticket online, or meeting players and staff in the community, Timberwolves fans know that they are the sole focus of the organization's efforts." To support the "driveway to driveway" experience, Chris has established a company-wide priority around the following strategies:

- Have the best staff,
- Embrace a fans-first attitude,
- Embody the Timberwolves brand,
- Be an active member of the community, and
- Be good stewards of budgets.



Strategy and Team

The leadership team's rebuilding strategy centers on the players, individually and collectively. Transforming into a high caliber, winning team requires incredible talent, united together running towards the same "net." David and Kurt are filling the team with new young players that they will groom over many years. Kurt emphasized his motivation for joining the Timberwolves for just this opportunity – to grow a young team into a powerhouse.

They expounded on the exciting prospects and challenges of building a tremendously strong team. They shared their perspectives of having an incredibly talented player like Kevin Garnett for many years and, yet, having one star didn't accomplish their goal of winning an NBA championship as a team. Aside from the mechanics of playing professional basketball, learning to be a part of the Timberwolves team starts with a focus on the foundations of character – being on time to practice, having a "hungry" edge that doesn't overpower others, being respectful on and off the court, and recognizing that their visibility in the public eye impacts the entire Timberwolves brand.

Character

The first impression one has upon meeting Chris Wright is that his impeccable politeness and cultured manner seem more suited for the hallowed halls of the United Nations than center court. While Wright is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the team, more importantly, he is the man behind the message – he is the warm handshake connecting you with his organization. He is the "gentleman in the locker room," communicating each day the importance of conducting business in the community with character, integrity, and a sincere desire to win your loyalty to the team through unparalleled customer service and exceptional sports entertainment.

Rudyard Kipling once said, "*The strength of the pack is the wolf, the strength of the wolf is the pack.*" Chris Wright might add – The strength of the Timberwolves organization is their link to their fans.

Throughout the entire organization, Wright and his senior management team are creating a culture of success by developing each employee, as well as the Timberwolves players themselves, to be the best they can be on and off the court, to live into their motto, "*One Team – United We Run.*"



REFERRAL RECOGNITION

A very special **"thank you"** to the following individuals who introduced us to new clients in 2009! We always appreciate our clients and friends sending us new business referrals. We put each person's name in a hat, and drew **Rebecca Yanisch** as the winner of the \$1,000 donation to the charity of her choice! Rebecca has chosen the YWCA of Minneapolis. *Congratulations Rebecca — we wish all the best to this fine organization.*

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ywca

MINNEAPOLIS



Marcia Ballinger,
Keystone Search



Becki Becker,
Melaleuca, Inc.



Carl Blanz,
Oak Ridge Hotel &
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Jill Blashack Strahan,
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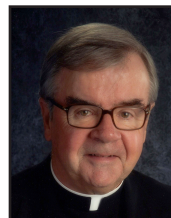
Mary Beth Lamb,
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Melissa Lindsay,
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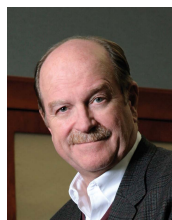
Father Michael
O'Connell,
Ascension Parish



Clover Schultz,
Minnesota Academy of
Physician Assistants



Gail Shore,
Shore to Shore
Communications



Bob Weiss,
Beacon Bank



Rebecca Yanisch,
Keystone Search

(no photo available):

Cynthia Bremer, Fulbright & Jaworski, LLP
Bill Hanneman, Natural Products, Inc.
Greg Heinemann, Denali Marketing
Holly Lamond, Cargill, Inc.
Jim Murphy, Museum of Lake Minnetonka

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THANKS!