

# Just Ask the Expert

This general information is not intended to provide individual advice. Schedule an appointment with an expert to discuss your particular situation and needs. Questions sent to our experts may be answered in future "JUST ASK THE EXPERT" pages.

## Commercial Real Estate Development

**Q:**

Commutes to work are becoming longer and longer. What can be done to help?



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**A:** It seems like just yesterday that it was a 25-minute commute from New Port Richey to St. Petersburg. At the time, it seemed a reasonable trade off. A short commute for the ability to own a bigger house or lot or both.

An "acceptable" commute used to be 45 minutes, but when you add the cost of gas, and all the costs – in cash and time – it's proving too much. Today, a commute from New Port Richey to St. Petersburg is an hour or more. That means less time for family, exercise, and life.

The answer is to create mixed-use communities where people can live within walking distance to shops, offices, and schools. By increasing density, we can ensure more people are able to live close to where they work. Density allows us to utilize people-movers for short distances, sidewalks for walking and pedestrian-friendly, healthy lifestyles.



**Call Grady for a more detailed explanation, or for specific information on commercial real estate development.**

## Management & Leadership

**Q:**

Each year we set goals and hope that our company can achieve them. However, we often find that the goals we set do not lead to our desired results. How can we set goals that get our team heading in the right direction?



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**A:** It is challenging for organizations to move from determining goals to defining goals that lead the team to move in the right direction. It is important to formulate goals and initiatives that lead people to take action that's aligned with what is most important to the organization. To be complete, a goal must include:

- A desired result (for example, grow sales)
- A measure that indicates how to track progress relative to the desired result (for example, revenue growth per existing customer)
- A target that quantifies the measure (for example, 10%)
- A target date that indicates the deadline for achieving the target

There is no greater tool for improving the performance of an organization than setting well thought out goals - it's one of the most effective communication tools of leadership.



**Call Sean for a more detailed explanation, or for specific information on management & leadership.**

## Employee Health Benefits

**Q:**

I have read several industry statistics supporting the idea that consumer-driven health plans can save employers money, but do employers really reap the savings or does the insurance carrier pocket the savings?



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**A:** Yes, current industry data does support claims that consumer-driven health plans (CDHPs) can deliver short-term savings. A January 2006 report by Deloitte Consulting LLP's Human Capital Practice documents annual average increases of just 2.6 percent for CDHPs versus an average 8 percent for more traditional managed care plans. In a fully insured environment, however, if claims run low over a year's time, the insurance carrier pockets the savings difference between claims costs and premiums. When an employer self-funds its health benefits, on the other hand, it pays only for actual claims, plus administrative costs, rather than a fixed premium. So when the company's CDHP (or any plan) runs well, the employer pockets the savings, not the insurance carrier. Self-funding and CDHPs are not new concepts. Less examined, however, is the concept of combining a CDHP with self-funding for a more effective approach to controlling rising health care costs. The combination can lower average annual cost increases and plan utilization.



**For more information about self-funding, CDHC and employee benefits, please contact Tracy Carter at tracy.carter@gwl.com.**

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