

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:

Environmentally friendly development seems like a good idea. Is there really such a thing?



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A: Yes. Green development coupled with green building practices contribute to a cleaner, healthier and more beautiful environment. That leads to a better, more sustainable lifestyle and improved quality of life. It can also mean reduced costs for consumers and most certainly means less stress on the environment. There are many factors to consider, but the two key elements are: the cost associated with the environmental component and the advantages to the owner.

The cost is a consideration when weighing various alternatives: solar versus traditional lighting, native landscaping versus exotics, and many others that may or may not be obvious. Green technologies may cost a little more up front but pay for themselves in the long run.

The reduced monthly costs from environmentally friendly development lead to an overall lower mortgage payment for the consumer, making the up-front cost more manageable. When green development is coupled with redevelopment, the community benefits as well.



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

Management & Leadership

Q:

What steps should an organization take to ensure that it is effectively executing?



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A: Organizational effectiveness can be accomplished by inspiring team members to develop quarterly goals as well as encouraging personal responsibility for the execution of them. Here are four steps that can help:

- Have each team member spend one or two hours per quarter developing an individual plan that reflects the company's goals.
- Encourage every team member and team leader to review progress toward quarterly goals on a regular basis.
- Evaluate each individual's plan at the end of each quarter. The process of formally comparing what was planned with what was delivered helps team members grow.
- Build a measurement-oriented culture, one that realizes learning is rooted in measuring or observing results. The key to learning if your organization's innovations are working is through monitoring the results.

Commitment to these steps will ensure that your organization is executing effectively.



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

Employee Health Benefits

Q:

I am the president of a corporation with 100 employees and am considering self-funding my company's health benefits. What are its advantages over fully insured health benefits and is it an option for a smaller business like mine?



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A: The greatest advantage is the potential to rein in rising health care costs. According to a 2005 Kaiser Family Foundation study, for eight years running, health care costs have risen less for self-funded companies than for the fully insured. And yes, even businesses with as few as 25 employees can effectively self-fund. The top reasons to self-fund include:

You can save because you pay only for actual claims, not a fixed premium regardless of actual claims.

You receive detailed reports that help manage the plan, and you can limit your maximum liability by selecting individual and aggregate stop-loss insurance.

The plan can be designed to fully comply with the federal ERISA statute and is exempt from state-mandated benefit requirements. So if you are a multi-state employer, you can offer consistent benefits to employees across your company.



Call Tracy for more information about self-funding and employee benefits.

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Contact Robyn Milder at 813.873.8225 or rmilder@bizjournals.com for more information.

