

SUBURBAN BUSINESS

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Energy audits



An Arlington Heights company can evaluate your building and help reduce utility expenses. **Page 10**

Keeping Score

Business deals are often cemented on the golf course. Fortunately, the suburbs benefit from many indoor facilities that cater to corporate clients year round. **Page 29**

FOCUS

Manufacturing



As the economy continues to drag, many suburban manufacturers are showing signs of life. Some are hiring and seeing revenue gains. **Page 15**

Competing for suburban students

Local business schools work to generate interest in MBA programs

As the applications to graduate management education programs continue to paint a mixed picture, schools in the suburban footprint are looking at the best ways to attract students in a tough economy.

Building new campuses, offering even more flexible schedules and adding global dimensions are a sampling of ways business schools are looking to compete for the MBA student in the suburbs.

One of the more visible changes in the area is Lake Forest Graduate School of Management's move to a new campus a few weeks ago. After operating for 22 years inside the Motorola Galvin Center at 1295 E. Algonquin Road, the school has moved into Woodfield

KIM MIKUS

SUBURBAN BUSINESS EDITOR

Corners at 1300 E. Woodfield Road at the intersection of Meacham Road.

"Visibility was critical to us this time," said Director of Marketing Kathleen Colbert. "We were physically hidden before. We want to grow our presence."

The new building features four times the space as well as updated technology.

These improvements come at a time when overall interest in most MBA programs has been flat, according to a national study.

By the numbers

After years of growth, applications to full-time MBA programs have dropped slightly for this fall's class, according to the Graduate Management Admission Council.

The recent study found:

- Executive MBA programs are showing the most growth with 59 percent of these programs reporting an increase in the number of applications received, reversing a three-year decline. These are more popular with people who have a number of years of business experience under their belts.

- After reaching a cyclical peak in 2008, more full-time two-year MBA programs reported a downward

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Daily Herald

BIZ2BIZ

Weekly Suburban Briefing

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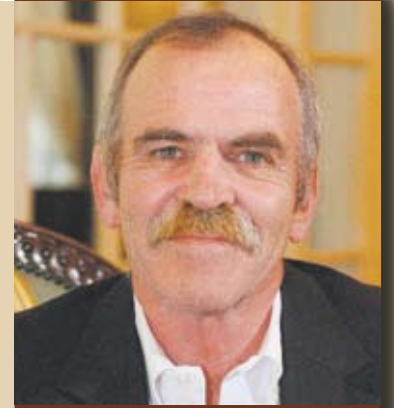
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Industry: Developer of safe, eco-friendly and effective odor elimination solutions

Number of employees: 50

Q: How has business been this past year?

A: "In a challenging business environment, with a high-end solution, OMI managed to grow its revenues 55 percent this year — growth that spans across all three divisions of the company."

Q: As a local small business, what has been your company's biggest obstacle during the recession?

A: "As a green, eco-friendly chemical company, I believe we are in a unique position due to our 20 years of building a diversified client base. Between our three specific business units (industrial, commercial and consumer) we are spread over 100 markets in more than 30 countries. We weathered the worst of the recession — from November 2008 to March 2009 — achieving minimal growth; but as the economy began its snail pace upward, we were able to outpace that growth. Also, we can attribute a bit of our success during the recession to being in the right place at the right time."

Q: What is one important tip you can give someone just starting a business?

A: "The single most important part of starting a business, any business, is cash flow. Every business idea takes time to find its spot in the marketplace and cash flow is necessary to have on hand during this waiting period. There is no successful business model ever created that does not maintain solid cash flow. This is an absolute necessity. As my banker, Janice Zimmerman, always says: 'Cash is cash and nothing else is.'"

Q: Who is your biggest/best customer?

A: "It's rare in business that your biggest customer goes hand-in-hand with your best customer. At OMI, we are fortunate that our biggest customers are also our best customers. On the industrial side, this is Exxon Mobile. Hertz corporate is our biggest and best commercial customer; and in the consumer realm, Bed Bath & Beyond remains our top partner. Our customer base spans from a mother shopping for a child

at Bed Bath & Beyond to an environmental engineer working at Exxon Mobile."

Q: Who has had the most influence in your life?

A: "There are many people who have played an important role in my life; but there are two people who have made a particularly significant impact. My father, John Coffey, who taught me loyalty, the importance of long-term relationships and the benefit of thinking through a problem rather than trying to go around it. Jim Uselton, my mentor, from whom I learned that you need to 'own your relationships,' take responsibility for your future and to sell as hard inside your company as well as outside the company."

Q: When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: "I wanted to be my father; but instead of settling for someone else's dreams as he did, I wanted to build my dream as he should have done. It was easier for me because I had him as my role model. I built my dream."

Q: What's your favorite restaurant to take a client to lunch? Why?

A: "McGonigal's for lunch in Barrington, close to our corporate office in Long Grove. I love Irish décor, a relaxing atmosphere, and a classy but at-home feeling. (It's) A place that has wonderful food and 'everybody knows your name.'"

Q: If you could put your name on any sports venue, which would you choose?

A: "The United Center. We are a sponsor of the Blackhawks (the team uses our products in their locker room and on equipment to remove odors) and therefore have seats. We bank with Harris and we have been invited to their wonderful club. Last season was amazing and I enjoyed the March to the Cup thoroughly! So renaming it The Coffey Center would be my choice."

Q: What was the first car you bought?

A: "An Audi station wagon, which I loved and only got rid of when the neighbors threatened me that I was lowering the value of their homes by leaving the car in the driveway. I loved that car!"

