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**2007**

**SBA SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS**

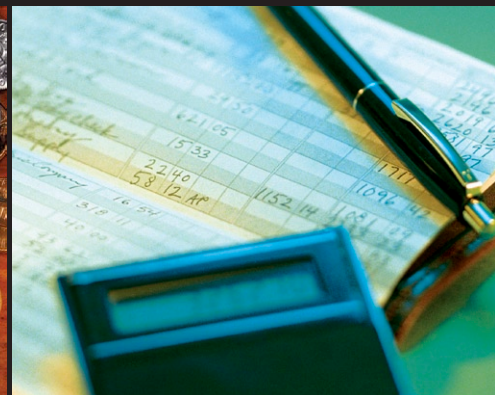
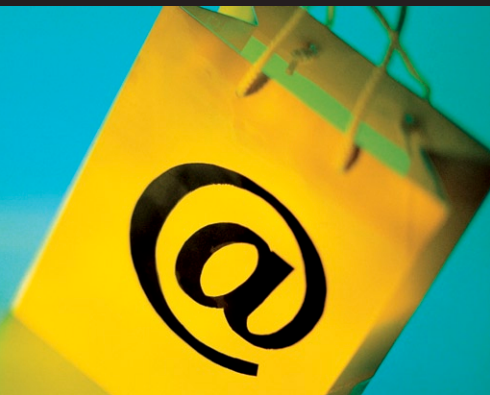
# Business Resource Guide '07

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**IN BUSINESS** Las Vegas  
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# From the Editor

Dear readers,

Each year, the U.S. Small Business Administration honors business owners across the 50 states with its SBA awards program. Nevada is no different.

In this publication, we profile this year's honorees. These 11 winners are full of amazing stories. They know just how tough running a small business can be. These small business owners will tell you about the hours of hard work and the blood, sweat and tears that go into being successful.

This year's winner of the Nevada Small Business Person of the Year is Tammy Mathews. She owns Puppy Enterprises Dog Salon & Bakery and the Small Town Dog Vacation Villas. She was recently honored during SBA's national Small Business Week Expo in Washington, D.C.

In this section, you'll also find several stories related to starting and running a successful small business – tips such as marketing and branding, lending options, employee benefits and selecting a location.

You'll also find a resource directory in this section. It's a compilation of contact information for various chambers of commerce, government agencies, organizations and assistance centers for small business owners. We hope you'll find these phone numbers and Web sites useful.



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**Tammy Mathews was selected as Nevada's 2007 Small Business Person of the Year.**





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# From the Sponsor

**Dear In Business Las Vegas readers,**

**I**t is my honor as the local EMBARQ business markets executive to congratulate the 2007 Small Business Award winners. I also want to acknowledge all of the small business owners who have contributed to the dynamic growth of the Las Vegas community. Small businesses are the heart of commerce in Las Vegas and America. The entrepreneurial spirit of small business owners drives innovation and excellence throughout the business community.

EMBARQ clearly understands what small business owners require from their business communications partner. They want a company that can provide quality consultation on the optimal voice and data network designs to meet their specific business needs. In order to improve the support we offer our small business customers, EMBARQ has recently increased the number of technical engineering resources in the Las Vegas area. I truly feel what makes EMBARQ different is our ability to offer highly skilled employees who can consult with our customers to ensure they have the right communication systems in place to accomplish their business objectives. We provide customers with secure, high quality, voice and data networks, augmented by some of the best equipment on the market today. We provide this at a price level that allows them freedom to utilize their cash flow to grow their business.

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Again, I wish each of you the very best and continued success in your business endeavors.

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**2007**

**SBA SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**NEVADA SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR**



**Tammy Mathews • Owner**

**Puppy Enterprises Dog Salon  
& Bakery / Small Town Dog Vacation Villas**





# Puppy Love

**I**t's a dog's world, and no one knows that better than Tammy Mathews.

The owner of Puppy Enterprises Dog Salon & Bakery and Small Town Dog Vacation Villas, both in Summerlin, is enjoying generous helpings of success from her dog-focused businesses, which she runs with her husband, Philip.

Mathews has much to be proud of in the two short years she has been in the dog business. With the help of a \$50,000 Small Business Administration loan from Bank of Commerce, she started her dog salon and bakery in January 2003, then saw

first-year revenues climb to \$220,000; and second-year revenues hit \$350,000. Last year, the dog villas were added to the mix, and have done \$125,000 in sales for the first six months.

For the next year, Mathews projects her dog salon and bakery to do between \$500,000 and \$600,000 and Small Town Dog Vacation Villas to pull in between \$350,000 and \$400,000.

"This is absolutely ludicrous. There are businesses open 10 or 15 years that aren't doing sales like that," she said. "I have high expectations. I have trouble waiting to build. I'm like 'why aren't there a

STORY BY BRIAN SODOMA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK COLETOS



hundred people in here?’ I push and push. I can’t do stagnant. It’s not how I’m built.”

Her idea to go into the puppy business came from an experience with her own Yorkshire terrier, named Chewbacca after the Star Wars character. Chewy is a moody canine, as Mathews describes him, and some days can look down right blue.

One day, Mathews made him a bowl of chicken soup. Chewy loved it, and from that day forth Mathews became a dog chef of sorts. She started Dog Gone Global, an Internet company that specializes in everything of the culinary unordinary for dogs. Some of the offerings include: ziti and muttballs, beef nachos, puppy fortune cookies, stogies, and even wufenlager for the beer connoisseur pup.

After certifying the recipes through nutritional experts, Dog Gone Global proved to only be the beginning for Mathews. When she opened Puppy Enterprises Dog Salon and Bakery, she worked 20-hour days, doing the books and handling all aspects of the business, while cooking and baking the recipes at home after business hours. Mathews also took her drive to do something different to other retail offerings at Puppy Enterprises. Halloween and Christmas costumes are a hit at the shop. “I have the craziest costumes, Cruella De Vil, rabbis, you name it,” the enthusiastic owner added.

What’s interesting about Mathews’ business choice is that she actually grew up being afraid of dogs. It was her husband’s urging to get Chewbacca that changed her life course forever.

“My mom was bitten when she was young, so I was raised with the fear. I still have a little fear of big dogs. ... After so many years you can read a lot in a dog’s face,” she said.

Armed with enthusiasm and very creative ideas, the search for a business start-up loan posed some initial challenges. After attending an information seminar for small business start-ups at a large bank, her business plan was turned down for financing in only two days.

“It was a real blow. We kind of got sucked in,” she added. “We went to one of these seminars, got caught up in all the rah, rah, rah and then were turned down.”

Mathews eventually found support from Bank of Commerce, but after committing to opening her boarding facility she faced difficulties finding a location that would lease to her. “That was worse than getting the money. Everybody thinks of malls



“ I’d like to become the puppy madam. I could match up dogs. There’s always someone looking for a stud for a dog. ... The more people think it’s outrageous, the more likely it’ll be the idea I follow. ”

where you always have that smelly pet store,” she said. “Nobody would rent to me once they knew what type of business I was putting in there.”

But she eventually found a landlord at 950 Durango Drive. Mathews says about 95 percent of her business comes from referrals for both of her shops. “I learned a long time ago that Las Vegas isn’t necessarily the best for customer service. I find that as long as people can leave happy, I’ll be fine,” she said.

With the attention and success she has received, Mathews faces the challenge of

staying competitive with a unique concept while large chains work to copy her ideas.

“The big chains are trying to get into my business. Pet Smart opened a boarding center nearby. But even with respect to grooming, if you’re looking for a more refined cut, more along the lines of a show cut, you come to me. ... I’m not trying to sell (bulk) dog food,” she said.

While Mathews credits her success to hard work and a solid partnership with her husband, she also thanks her last employer, an insurance company that years ago transferred her to the valley for its Las Vegas operations, only to fire her a short time later.

“I was devastated and it sort of forced me to think outside the box,” she said.

Mathews is now eyeing expansion plans for her unique boarding concept, Dog Vacation Villas (which she affectionately refers to as “Cheers” for dogs) and hopes to take it outside of the state. But even beyond her unique take on boarding, Mathews is also looking for other different and creative ways to help dog owners.

“I’d like to become the puppy madam,” Mathews said, with a laugh and more than a hint of seriousness. “I could match up dogs. There’s always someone looking for a stud for a dog. ... The more people think it’s outrageous, the more likely it’ll be the idea I follow.”



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## U.S. International Trading Corp.

**L**as Vegas economic development officials love Panch Prasad. He is the prototype for the type of business that the Valley has been marketing to for years — the California business owner who has been looking to cut costs and is considering moving out of state.

In 2003, Prasad took the Nevada bait of lower taxes and moved his company, U.S. International Trading Corp., from Riverside, Calif. He says it was the best move he ever made, as he dropped his business costs by 20 to 30 percent. International Trading is a cosmetics company that specializes in providing natural, or “green,” formulations to consumers around the world. Some of its top proprietary formulations include brands: Bellance, DuBarry and Mill Creek, and other popular names like Helene Curtis and Allercrème.

But U.S. International Trading has also created another distinction for itself among small businesses in the Silver State. Currently, about 30 percent of the company’s \$3.5 million in annual sales are exports. That number is about to climb sharply, said Prasad, as he is in the process of signing agreements with Hong Kong and Korean-based entities that will allow his exporting business to explode. Someday, he estimates almost 100 percent of sales will be exports.

“Our export business is about to grow, big time,” he said. “With these [new deals] we’ll be able to sell on national television networks too.”

“Our export business is about to grow, big time,” he said. “With these [new deals] we’ll be able to sell on national television networks too.”

### SMALL BUSINESS EXPORTER OF THE YEAR



**Panch Prasad**  
CEO

works too.”

A native of India, Prasad formed his company in 1989 when he started purchasing cosmetic brands to sell in the U.S. and around the world. In the late 1990s, he focused on going green with his brands, and created the Bellance formulations as well. Today, he has a 40,000 square foot corporate office/distribution center in the valley.

“One of the things I have always noticed is there are a lot of product lines available in the market, but there wasn’t any product which really addressed the consumer concerns with safety and being clean, environmentally,” he said.

Prasad also praises the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Export-Import Bank (EXIM) for offering guidance with his business and lines of credit.

“We’ve benefited quite a bit from that program. I felt like they helped me find the right tools [to succeed]. They’ve really put me in the right direction. If the market is there for a brand, it’s just a matter of finding the right customers for it,” he said.

— By Brian Sodoma

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## TIP #1

### Marketing and branding

As any business owner knows, marketing and branding — or the absence of them — can make or break a great idea. Solveig Thorsrud, owner of The Firm, a marketing and public relations company that has served Valley clients for more than a decade, recently shared a few keys to marketing and branding success.

**Determine your audience:** “It may sound really obvious, but there are a lot of people out there who say ‘my company is for everyone,’” Thorsrud said. “That’s not the case. You need to look at what makes you stand out from your competitors.”

**Develop a marketing plan and budget:** Thorsrud says taking an honest look at your company is key here. The common acronym SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) applies. With opportunities, sometimes business owners who are very involved with the day-to-day running of their company may not see them, and an outside view may be needed. “It depends on your budget, but bringing in someone from the outside can always help to find opportunities,” she said.

**Hire a professional, buy a book:** Thorsrud recognizes the importance of a budget. And if you’re on a tight one, she said there are a ton of great marketing and advertising books that can help.

**Be consistent:** Everything from your employee to your customer experience, to your logo and the way your company is seen by the public is involved here. “So many times people may not realize what they are saying about their company and how that message may be different from the way it’s being marketed. You have to think of all points of contact with your customers and how your company is being represented,” she said.

**Don’t stop:** Too many times people come out of the gates hot then fade with their marketing efforts. “It has to be a balanced effort with marketing, advertising and public relations,” she said. “If you don’t have a budget, public relations can really help a lot. You can establish yourself as an expert. ... There’s Internet blogging, Websites, MySpace pages. If you can write, you can do it.”

**Think branding through, be patient:** “Branding takes a really long time. It took Nike like 15 years for people to recognize that logo,” she added. “As far as naming too, you have to do something that can fit into the customer’s memory and that recalls the attributes of your company. ... It’s a fun process. But it doesn’t happen overnight.”

**Secure a domain name:** Perhaps the most overlooked and forgotten marketing detail, said Thorsrud. A great name, idea and business can be stopped cold if someone else has your Website name already pinned down.

**Don’t forget your employees:** We all get annoyed with the guy talking up how cool his new job is. But chances are better that we’ll visit his company when considerable props are given. Added Thorsrud: “They [employees] can be one of your biggest brand champions.”

— By Brian Sodoma



Solveig Thorsrud

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# American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Nevada

**H**elping one Native American person at a time become self-reliant is Debra Sillik's goal.

As executive director of the American Indian

Chamber of Commerce of Nevada, Sillik has played a

major role in doing just that.

"We only do three things," she said. "We do education, employment and self-employment opportunities. With the belief being if



**Debra Sillik**  
Executive Director

**MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR**

we can help one individual better their lives they wouldn't need social services."

Sillik effectively revived the 10-year-old group after a period of inactivity. The group's first luncheon under her leadership was held in September 2005. Since then, the group has continued to hold monthly networking and educational luncheons, as well as a job fair, a Native American trade show for business

owners who are enrolled members of tribes and the Golden Eagle Feather Awards banquet.

The group now has 100 members and Sillik said she is confident the group will have a strong future.

"We're going to continue growing one person at a time," she said. "I'm striving to do the best to serve Native Americans."

But, she also said the Native American population is often overlooked and that growing the organization and getting buy-in from the business community hasn't been as easy as she initially thought it would be.

"Native Americans are the least served among all populations," she said. "I advocate for them. It's tough advocating for these folks. It's not been as well received as I had hoped. [But] we have some sponsors and backers who truly believe in what we're doing. I have a strong board. They've been accepted and appreciated by the native community."

She said the American Indian Chamber of Commerce counts as supporters several large corporations as well as political leaders like U.S. Sen. Harry Reid. Sillik participates regularly with Small Business Administration partners.

Sillik has more than 20 years experience in assisting economically disadvantaged people with employment and self-employment opportunities. Before moving to Las Vegas in 2004, Sillik worked on a contract basis for the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the White Mountain Apache Tribe providing computerized office skills training.

"I did training and job development for tribes there in Southeastern Arizona," she said. "I helped people get off of welfare. There's no greater success than when a mother stops you in Wal-Mart and thanks you and says, 'Look at this cart. I paid for it.'"

—By Alana Roberts

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**Gloria Gunn** • IS Manager, Casino Lighting and Sign

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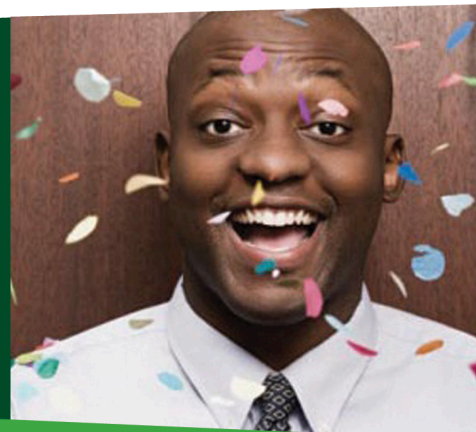
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## TIP #2

### Lending options

If starting or growing a business is your goal, you're going to need money. If you aren't already independently wealthy or don't have a source of funding lined up, finding a lender should be your next step.

How do you find the right one to meet your needs? And, once you have a lender lined up, what type of lending options can you choose from?

John Gentile, vice president of Desert Community Bank, which serves small to medium-sized businesses in the Las Vegas Valley, said clients have many lenders to choose from. He said experience with small business lending and quality of service are things entrepreneurs should look for when choosing a lender.

He said entrepreneurs should be ready to win the banker over.

"The first thing any type of new business needs to do is to put together a detailed business plan," he said. "No matter where they go, the bank is going to be looking at the business plan as the selling point of making the loan (decision). Next, is finding a bank that will look at the business plan and take a chance on them."

Ravi Chandra, Southern Nevada small business district manager for Wells Fargo, added that finding a banker who is willing to walk the client through the lending process is important.

"You should find a banker who is willing to talk about your business plan and offer products and services that match your business [needs]," he said.

If a business has been in operation fewer than three years, U.S. Small Business Administration lending options might be best, Gentile said. If that is the case, the entrepreneur should choose a lender that is knowledgeable about SBA lending.

Other lending options are conventional loans, commercial real estate loans, lines of credit, business credit cards, construction loans, owner-occupied building loans and equipment lease financing.

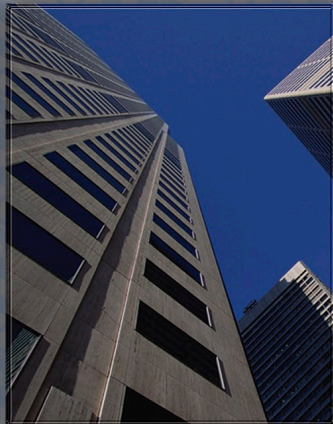
Besides a business plan, lending decisions are usually based on things like collateral, personal or business credit history, experience in the industry the business operates in and longevity of the company.

- By Alana Roberts



Ravi Chandra

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## CSMConsultants

**M**ost business owners would agree that growth is their ultimate goal.

Linda Branch has achieved just that with her micro business CSMConsultants.

The company has evolved from a home-based business that she started in her bedroom to one that now occupies office space.

### MICROENTERPRISE BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Branch started CSMConsultants with less than \$20,000, a combination of her savings and a micro loan she obtained from the Nevada Microenterprise Initiative. She added that she has also benefited from the counseling services the organization provides.

CSMConsultants now employs two people and Branch plans to hire more. Further, the company has grown from \$4,000 in sales in its first year to \$52,000 in 2006, and has a projection to earn \$250,000 this year.

The company has also evolved the service

it offers. CSMConsultants began by offering customer service and team building training to other businesses. The company now offers management consulting and continuing education training for health care and human service professionals.

"Initially, my idea was to do it as a customer service training/team building company," she said. "It evolved into a lot more than that. [Now] I think the biggest part of our business is the management consulting, which is the coaching."

She said her plan for growth includes launching an online continuing education service.

Branch, a former social services manager for Sierra Health Services, said the opening of her company was the result of a long time dream.

"It's something I've wanted to do for a long time," she said. "It had been a part of my longer-term plan."

Branch has a bachelor's degree in social work and a master's degree in organizational management. She also has nine

years experience as a social worker. Her background in social work has helped to shape the direction the company has taken.

"I wanted to take pieces of my background and apply it to the business," she said.

Her company's services have changed in response to demand in the marketplace.

"I started out doing a lot of networking and getting to know a lot of people in the valley," she said. "You get to know what the needs are by making those connections."

She said word of mouth advertising has helped her business to grow.

"Most of my business is through referrals," she said. "Once people understand what your real skills are, they don't have a problem referring you. That's how the business started to grow."

—By Alana Roberts



**Linda Branch**  
President/Owner

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### American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Nevada

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[www.aiccn.org](http://www.aiccn.org)

### Asian Chamber of Commerce

(702) 737-4300  
[www.lvacc.com](http://www.lvacc.com)

### Boulder City Chamber of Commerce

(702) 293-2034  
[www.bouldercitychamber.com](http://www.bouldercitychamber.com)

### Henderson Chamber of Commerce

(702) 565-8951  
[www.hendersonchamber.com](http://www.hendersonchamber.com)

### Internet Chamber of Commerce

(702) 914-0100  
[www.lvicc.com](http://www.lvicc.com)

### Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce

(702) 735-1616  
[www.lvchamber.com](http://www.lvchamber.com)

### Latin Chamber of Commerce

(702) 385-7367  
[www.lasvegslatincc.com](http://www.lasvegslatincc.com)

### North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce

(702) 642-9595  
[www.nlvchamber.org](http://www.nlvchamber.org)

### Sin City Chamber of Commerce

(702) 450-7222  
[www.sincitychamberofcommerce.com](http://www.sincitychamberofcommerce.com)

### Las Vegas Urban Chamber of Commerce

(702) 648-6222  
[www.urbanchamberlv.org](http://www.urbanchamberlv.org)

### Women's Chamber of Commerce of Nevada

(702) 733-3955  
[www.womenschamberofnevada.org](http://www.womenschamberofnevada.org)

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

### Bureau of Labor Statistics

(202) 691-5200  
[www.stats.bls.gov](http://www.stats.bls.gov)

### City of Henderson – Business License

(702) 267-1730  
[www.cityofhenderson.com/buslicense/php/buslicensebody.php](http://www.cityofhenderson.com/buslicense/php/buslicensebody.php)

### Clark County Assessor's office

(702) 455-3882  
[www.co.clark.nv.us/assessor](http://www.co.clark.nv.us/assessor)

### Clark County Business License

(702) 455-4252  
[www.co.clark.nv.us/business\\_license](http://www.co.clark.nv.us/business_license)

### Community Development Program Centers of Nevada

(702) 873-8882  
[www.expand2nevada.com/atoz/bus\\_entrepreneurial/](http://www.expand2nevada.com/atoz/bus_entrepreneurial/)

### Economic Development of Western Nevada

[www.edawn.org](http://www.edawn.org)  
(775) 829-3700

### Federal Grant Resources

(702) 388-6611 (SBA Nevada District office)  
[www.sba.gov/expanding/grants.html](http://www.sba.gov/expanding/grants.html)

### Henderson Business Resource Center

(702) 992-7200  
[www.hendersonbizcenter.com](http://www.hendersonbizcenter.com)

### Henderson Economic Development Office

(702) 267-1650  
[www.hendersonmeansbusiness.com](http://www.hendersonmeansbusiness.com)

### Internal Revenue Service

(702) 868-5005  
[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

### Las Vegas Business Services Division

(702) 229-6281  
[www.lasvegasnevada.gov](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov)

### Las Vegas Office of Business Development

(702) 229-6551  
[www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Government/7480.htm](http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/Government/7480.htm)

### Las Vegas U.S. Export Assistance Center

(U.S. Commercial Service, Department of Commerce)  
(702) 388-6694  
[www.buyusa.gov/nevada/lasvegas.html](http://www.buyusa.gov/nevada/lasvegas.html)

### Nevada Commission on Economic Development

(702) 486-2700  
[www.expand2nevada.com](http://www.expand2nevada.com)

### Nevada Department of Business and Industry

(702) 486-2750  
[www.dbi.state.nv.us](http://www.dbi.state.nv.us)

### Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation

(775) 684-3800  
[www.detr.state.nv.us](http://www.detr.state.nv.us)

### Nevada Department Employment, Training & Rehabilitation / Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

(702) 486-5230  
[www.detr.state.nv.us/rehab/reh\\_vorh.htm](http://www.detr.state.nv.us/rehab/reh_vorh.htm)

### Nevada Department of Taxation

(702) 486-2300  
[www.tax.state.nv.us](http://www.tax.state.nv.us)

### Nevada Department of Transportation

(775)-888-7000  
[www.nevadadot.com](http://www.nevadadot.com)

### Nevada Division of Insurance

(702) 486-4009  
[www.doi.state.nv.us](http://www.doi.state.nv.us)

### Nevada Division of Industrial Relations

Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
(702) 486-9020  
[www.dirweb.state.nv.us/OSHA/oshes.htm](http://www.dirweb.state.nv.us/OSHA/oshes.htm)

### Nevada Division of Industrial Relations

Safety Consultation and Training  
(702) 486-9140  
[www.4safenv.state.nv.us/helpful.htm](http://www.4safenv.state.nv.us/helpful.htm)

### Nevada Gaming Control Board

(702) 486-2000  
[www.gaming.nv.gov](http://www.gaming.nv.gov)

### Nevada JobConnect Henderson office

(702) 486-0300  
[www.nevadajobconnect.com](http://www.nevadajobconnect.com)

### Nevada JobConnect Las Vegas office

(702) 486-0100  
[www.nevadajobconnect.com](http://www.nevadajobconnect.com)

### Nevada JobConnect North Las Vegas office

(702) 486-0200  
[www.nevadajobconnect.com](http://www.nevadajobconnect.com)

### Nevada JobConnect Southern Nevada Rural office

(775) 537-2323  
[www.nevadajobconnect.com](http://www.nevadajobconnect.com)

### Nevada Office of the Labor Commissioner

(702) 486-0300  
[www.laborcommissioner.com](http://www.laborcommissioner.com)

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**Nevada Secretary of State**

(702) 486-2880

[www.sos.state.nv.us](http://www.sos.state.nv.us)

**Nevada State Contractors Board**

(702) 486-1100

[www.nscb.state.nv.us](http://www.nscb.state.nv.us)

**North Las Vegas Economic Development Division**

(702) 633-1523

[www.cityofnorthlasvegas.com](http://www.cityofnorthlasvegas.com)

**Nevada Procurement Outreach Program**

(702) 486-2716

[www.nvoutreachcenter.com](http://www.nvoutreachcenter.com)

**Rural Nevada Development Corporation**

(Headquarters in Ely)

(775) 289-8519

[www.mdcnv.org](http://www.mdcnv.org)

**Rural Nevada Development Corporation**

(Pahrump office)

(775) 751-1947

[www.mdcnv.org](http://www.mdcnv.org)

**Small Business Administration Business Law**

[www.business.gov/topics/business\\_laws](http://www.business.gov/topics/business_laws)

**SBA Small Disadvantaged Business**

(202) 619-1850

[www.sba.gov/sdb](http://www.sba.gov/sdb)

**SBA Nevada District Office**

(702) 388-6611

[www.sba.gov/nv](http://www.sba.gov/nv)

**SBA Office of Advocacy, Regional Advocate**

(602) 745-7237

[www.sba.gov/advo/regional.html#RIX](http://www.sba.gov/advo/regional.html#RIX)

**SBA Women's Business Center**

(702) 734-3555

[www.onlinewbc.gov](http://www.onlinewbc.gov)

**Social Security Administration**

(702) 248-8717

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**Southern Nevada Workforce Investment Board**

(702) 638-8750

[www.snwib.org](http://www.snwib.org)

**U.S. Business Advisor**

[www.business.gov](http://www.business.gov)

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services**

(800) 375-5283

[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

**U.S. Copyright Office**

(202) 707-5959

[www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)

**U.S. Department of Labor**

(866) 487-2365

[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

**U.S. General Services Administration**

(Office of Small Business Utilization)

(202) 501-1021

[www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov)

**U.S. Patent and Trademark Office**

800-786-9199

[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

## SMALL BUSINESS INFORMATION RESOURCES

**American Express Small Business**

(800) 492-3344

[www.home.americanexpress.com/home/smallbusiness.shtml](http://www.home.americanexpress.com/home/smallbusiness.shtml)

**Bureau of National Affairs Inc.**

(800) 372-1033

[www.bna.com](http://www.bna.com)

**Business Owners' IdeaCafe**

[www.IdeaCafe.com](http://www.IdeaCafe.com)

**Entrepreneur's Mind**

[www.benlore.com](http://www.benlore.com)

Entrepreneur magazine

[www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com)

**Ewing M. Kauffman Foundation**

(816) 932-1000

[www.eventuring.org](http://www.eventuring.org)

**Fast Company Magazine**

[www.fastcompany.com/homepage](http://www.fastcompany.com/homepage)

**Inc. Magazine**

[www.inc.com](http://www.inc.com)

**Learn The Net**

[www.learnthenet.com](http://www.learnthenet.com)

**Microsoft Small Business Center**

[www.microsoft.com/smallbusiness/hub.mspix](http://www.microsoft.com/smallbusiness/hub.mspix)

**Rhondaworks**

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[www.rhondaworks.com](http://www.rhondaworks.com)

**Small Business Taxes & Management**

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**National Federation of Independent Business**

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[www.nfib.com/page/homeNV](http://www.nfib.com/page/homeNV)

**Nevada Development Authority**

(702) 791-0000  
[www.nevadadevelopment.org](http://www.nevadadevelopment.org)

**Nevada Microenterprise Initiative**

(702) 734-3555  
[www.4microbiz.org](http://www.4microbiz.org)

**Nevada Minority Business Council**

(702) 894-4477  
[www.nvmcpc.com](http://www.nvmcpc.com)

**Nevada Small Business Development Center**

(702) 895-0852  
[www.nsbdc.org](http://www.nsbdc.org)

**Safety Assistance Service**

(part of NSBDC)  
(702) 866-5985  
[www.unlv.edu/centers/nsbdcas/](http://www.unlv.edu/centers/nsbdcas/)

**Service Corps of Retired Executives, Henderson**

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(702) 388-6104  
[www.scorelv.org](http://www.scorelv.org)

**Service Corps of Retired Executives, North Las Vegas**

(inside North Las Vegas Chamber)  
(702) 642-9595  
[www.scorelv.org](http://www.scorelv.org)

**Service Corps of Retired Executives, Pahrump**

(775) 727-9471  
[www.scorelv.org](http://www.scorelv.org)

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

Center for Entrepreneurship  
(702) 895-3362  
[www.business.unlv.edu](http://www.business.unlv.edu)

## SMALL BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

**American Business Women's Association**

(800) 228-0007  
[www.abwa.org](http://www.abwa.org)

**Better Business Bureau of Southern Nevada**

(702) 320-4500

[www.vegasbbb.org](http://www.vegasbbb.org)

**Entrepreneurs Organization**

(703) 519-6700  
[www.eonetwork.org](http://www.eonetwork.org)

**International Franchise Association**

(202) 628-8000  
[www.franchise.org](http://www.franchise.org)

**IRS Small Business and Self Employed One-Stop Resource**

[www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html)

**Moms In Business Network, Las Vegas chapter**

(702) 310-3202  
[www.mibn.org](http://www.mibn.org)

**National Association of Women Business Owners****Southern Nevada Chapter**

(702) 571-0462  
[www.nawbo.org](http://www.nawbo.org)

**Singapore Association of Nevada**

[www.singaporenevada.org](http://www.singaporenevada.org)

**Southern Nevada Human Resources Association**

(702) 362-0388  
[www.snhra.org](http://www.snhra.org)

**Vegas Young Professionals**

(702) 735-2196  
[www.vegasymp.com](http://www.vegasymp.com)

**Women's Business Enterprise National Council**

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[www.webenc.org](http://www.webenc.org)



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## Casa Don Juan restaurant

**W**ith six years of experience operating a lunch truck in California, Maria and Raul Gil came to Las Vegas more than 10 years ago looking for an opportunity to expand their food service business.

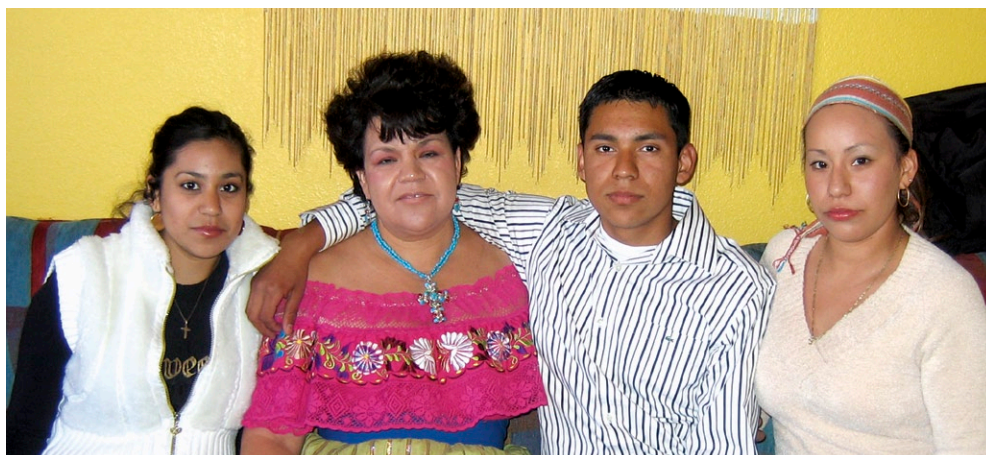
"We saw there weren't that many Mexican restaurants [in Las Vegas]," said Maria Gil, the matriarch of the family.

She said the family came to Las Vegas as a stop along the way to Utah. Other family members who already lived here convinced them to stay.

"My father's sister lives here," she said. "When I came to see them, she told me, 'Why are you going to Utah? Try here first.'"

Casa Don Juan has expanded from a

**JEFFREY BUTLAND  
FAMILY-OWNED  
BUSINESS OF THE YEAR**



The Gil family includes Raul (not pictured), wife Maria, and their three children.

small operation to a full-service restaurant. They are currently pursuing a Small Business Administration loan with Desert Community Bank to secure funding for an expansion and, possibly, open future new locations.

The Gil's children — Nancy, Denisse and Billy — also work in the restaurant, which employs more than 40 people. She said the

restaurant slowly built its clientele with good food and good service.

"When we first started, my husband worked in the kitchen and I was the waitress," she said. "Only a few people came [at first]. On a good day, we made \$40 to \$80 [in sales] per day."

The restaurant now earns more than \$6,000 a day in sales and earns \$200,000 in profits a year. Gil said word of mouth advertising has helped the business grow.

"We had a good business," she said. "People came and ate and they were happy. We don't do promotions. We don't have the money for it."

The restaurant's location on Main Street in downtown Las Vegas wasn't the nicest area at first. But, Maria Gil said her husband believed in the area's future.

The restaurant has since benefited from the city of Las Vegas' efforts to revitalize downtown. The area surrounding the restaurant has improved and Gil said events such as the First Friday arts walk attract a lot of customers.

In 2000, the Gils experienced a setback in trying to grow their business. Casa Don Juan caught fire and was completely destroyed. One of the restaurant's customers helped the family obtain a loan to rebuild and reopen an improved restaurant 18 months later.

The family now plans to expand Casa Don Juan, Gil said. "We have big plans. We're trying to build a bigger kitchen. We're trying to open a full bar and we're trying to do catering for big parties. We're trying to expand to have a 200-seat party room."

—By Alana Roberts

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## TIP #3

### Employee benefits

So you've established your business and it's growing. Now you need employees to help you continue your company's growth.

But how do you attract and retain good employees? Besides a competitive salary, a good benefits package is one way to do it.

"It's an important part of the employer-employee relationship," said David Dahan, chief executive officer of Orgill/Singer & Associates. "It's part of the wages. We call it the hidden paycheck. The benefits package has a value."

There are many types of benefits employers can provide. Some include health care insurance plans, health care savings accounts, disability insurance, life insurance and long-term care insurance.

Dahan said small business leaders should assess how much they and their employees can afford in order to provide the best benefits package. The cost of a health care benefits package is based on the demographics and medical profile of the employees.

"What is your budget, what is your employee force, what is their expectation, how much can they afford to contribute, and what level of benefits would be consistent with the culture of the environment?" he asked. "The way rates are determined is based on age, sex and the industry they're in."

Other benefits employers can provide are 401(k) plans, profit sharing plans, money purchase plans, simple IRAs (individual retirement accounts), SEP (simplified employee pension)-IRAs and defined benefit plans.

Bill Stafford, a retirement planning specialist for AXA Advisors, said there are several retirement plans that are geared for small businesses.

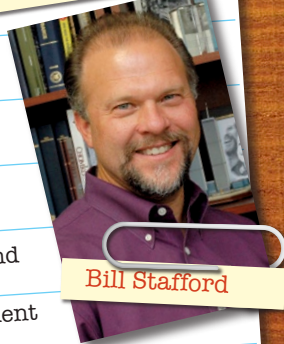
"A simple IRA is probably the way to go for a small company that wants to keep their costs down," he said.

Dahan and Stafford agree that employers should consult a financial planner or an insurance specialist to help them find the benefits package that best suits them.

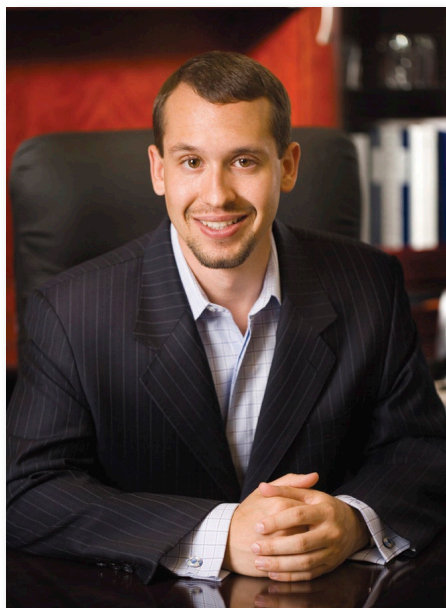
- By Alana Roberts



David Dahan



Bill Stafford



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CEO, Diamond Bay Investments

## A Great Honor. A Deserving Recipient.

I don't know what it takes to win Entrepreneur of the Year, but I'm certain you exemplify most of the criteria. If I had to hazard a guess, I'd say the ability to lead by example, inspire, motivate and achieve goals would be some of the requirements. It has been my pleasure to see all these exemplary qualities on a daily basis. I can't think of a more deserving recipient, Jordan, and I am fortunate to have witnessed the maturation of a true entrepreneurial spirit. Congratulations on this great honor.

Richard Frockt

## Business Bank of Nevada

**P**aul Workman is the banking industry's version of a nice-guy. Growing up in Baytown, Texas, just outside of Houston, Workman speaks candidly about the afternoons spent with friends and neighbors over a cup of iced tea, usually near a lake. It's this casual approach to life and ingrained southern hospitality that has helped Workman originate millions of dollars in small business loans in his 32-year career.

### FINANCIAL SERVICES CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

"Being from Texas, I just love to please people. ... We're just 'can-do' people," he said of his hometown

and upbringing.

Workman, who currently works as executive vice president and director of retail banking for Business Bank of Nevada, went to college for a journalism and public relations degree, but opted to go into banking after working as a teller, then moving up to management positions. Through the years, he has also become known as a go-to guy for small business advice.

Workman said he has achieved success in banking by providing clients with options, not financing rules, especially when it comes to SBA loans. "Instead of telling people the basics of an SBA loan, you have to step back and see if an SBA loan is the best thing for their needs."

A Valley resident since 1985, Workman is known for doing the financing homework for entrepreneurs, trying to match them with

the right lender. "People call me about many things. I had someone [recently] call me about building a high-rise building site. Our bank doesn't make loans on that. But I can still help place it for someone."

As for SBA loans, Workman encourages applicants to be patient with the agency. "I tell people to put themselves in their [the SBA's] moccasins for a minute. Sometimes it takes time to get what you need."

Workman has found that even with his volunteering efforts with his church and organizations like Boy Scouts of America and SafeNest, he has found lasting business relationships. He attributes this fortune to the coming together with a group of like-minded people who have the same goal of helping people, or an organization.

"My dad always told me 'never do something only for money.' Whenever that happens you're going to get in trouble," he said. "He always knew that if you provide good service to people, you'll never go hungry, and that's what's happened for me."

—By Brian Sodoma



**Paul Workman**  
Executive vice president  
and director of retail  
banking

## George Salton

**G**eorge Salton is doing his part to include more service disabled veteran-owned business owners in federal government contracts.

As director of business operations for the 99th Contracting Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, Salton manages the procurement of goods and services for the base. In that role, he manages a staff of 65 civilian and military people who collectively award

### VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

about \$120 million in contracts each year.

"[Those goods and services] range from very high tech, on the edge of what the Air Force is all about things to those rather routine things like maintaining all the roads and grounds. The troops have to eat, they have to have medical care. We rely a lot on private industry to support the defense effort."

In 1999, a law was enacted that aims to increase to 3 percent federal contracts to service-disabled, veteran-owned businesses. Salton said veteran-owned businesses that can meet the needs and demands of the federal government deserve to be in-

cluded in its contracts.

"This is a group of people who give a lot for their nation," he said. "I think this is a great opportunity for them to continue to give in a meaningful way and still make contributions and be able to take care of themselves. It's a win-win all the way around."

But Salton said he noticed that service-disabled, veteran-owned businesses participated in less than 1 percent of Nellis' contracts in fiscal year 2004. So he decided to work on changing that.

He attended classes on how to get more veterans to participate in federal contracts,



**George Salton**  
Director of Business  
Operations  
99th Contracting  
Squadron  
Nellis Air Force Base

and later developed a training program for his staff. Salton said his staff began to reach out to veterans through networking and advertising efforts. He also said those outreach effort have included educating businesses about the requirements of contracting with Nellis Air Force Base.

"We made a focused effort to go to outreach [events] and talk to veterans," he said.

As a result of their efforts, Salton and his team have grown the amount of contracts with service disabled veterans from \$60,000 in fiscal year 2004 to a record high of nearly \$4.2 million in fiscal year 2007.

"[It's grown] in numbers as well as dollars," he said. "It wasn't like we got one guy who got a project for \$5 million. It was little by little finding them."

Additionally, Salton recently received the "Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service," which is the highest recognition granted a civilian within the Air Force. The basis for the award is exceptionally distinguished service and accomplishments having a significant Air Force-wide scope and impact covering a period of at least one year.

—By Alana Roberts



# Hernando Amaya Moreno

**H**ernando Amaya Moreno is, on many levels, the voice for Hispanics in Las Vegas. The associate editor for *El Tiempo Libre*, a weekly Spanish language publication owned by the *Las Vegas Review Journal*, he reports on issues that impact the Hispanic community.

Feeling the need to help Hispanics fulfill dreams of becoming business owners, he holds business workshops in partnership with the Latin Chamber of Commerce. He also provides resource information through articles he writes in *El Tiempo Libre*.

"The biggest problem we [Hispanics] have is financing," Amaya Moreno said. "... Sometimes people don't want to give them a loan."

Amaya Moreno came to Las Vegas in 2001, fleeing his native Colombia after death threats on his family forced him to leave. In the 1990s, he worked as a broadcast journalist for Colombia's national army, dispelling Colombian guerilla propaganda with daily and weekly news segments. But eventually, family safety took precedence over

career and he moved to the States.

Landing in America, Amaya Moreno hit the ground running. The one-time university journalism instructor saw that opportunities for Hispanics to grow and prosper as citizens and business owners in America was a matter of partnering with the right people and finding resources.

"...Some people try to take advantage of them [aspiring Hispanic business owners] and give them bad advice and take their money. That's why I try to make sure our paper has good information about who to go to [when starting a business]," he explained.

plained.

He said he sees more opportunities in the Valley for an expanded Spanish language media presence.

"I think there's a lot more that can be done to help our people... these entrepreneurs," he added.

—By Brian Sodoma



**Hernando Amaya Moreno**

**Associate Editor**  
*El Tiempo Libre*

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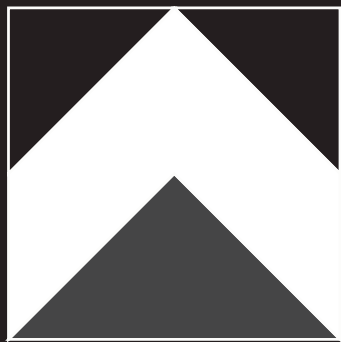


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## TIP #4

### Location, location location

That's not covered under my new lease?

The phones won't work until when?

These are just a couple of questions a business owner either opening up shop for the first time or moving an established business could encounter. But Frank Gatski, president of Gatski Commercial Real Estate Services, which manages more than 3 million square feet of space around the Valley, says there are a few things to keep in mind when looking for a new location.

- **Visibility and access:** Gatski says it's a common sense thing, but owners sometimes may not realize their business is impossible to see, or they may think location is not a big deal if their business doesn't rely on foot traffic. "People want to be able to get in and out easily," Gatski said. "Development in Las Vegas can get really tight. Parking is something you have to look at too."

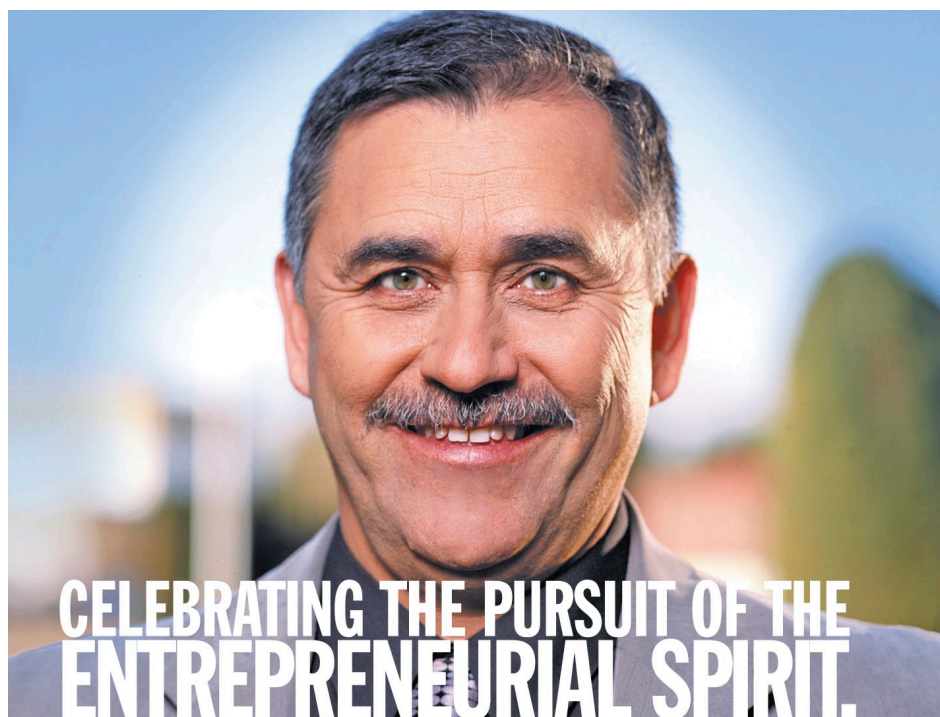
- **Know your lease:** It's all about having a good real estate agent and being smart enough to pass the lease along to a lawyer if in doubt about wording. The latter could be the best few hundred dollars a business owner spends, said Gatski. But if the broker's good and comes as a reference, he or she should catch any red flags such as who is responsible for what tenant improvements, rules of the property's common space (parking lots, sidewalks) and other details that may come as a surprise.

- **Know the rates:** Call around in the area you are looking to move to, talk to business owners and real estate agents, Gatski added. Don't just accept a rate and lease terms without knowing the market.

- **Move during down time:** This may mean weekends for some businesses; it may be slow season for others. But be clear on what it takes to move and be patient, said Gatski. "I hired a company to do the move and it was really money well-spent," he added about his company's recent move. "We moved over the weekend; by Monday we were open for business. Everything wasn't perfect as far as technology, but we could still do business."

- **Change of address forms:** Whether it's a first address or a new address, customers need to see it two or three times before it sinks in, Gatski said. Budget for two or three mailers well ahead of the move.

— By Brian Sodoma



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— Alejandro Alvarez,  
Entrepreneur & Developer



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## Diamond Bay Investments

**A**fter starting an aircraft brokerage firm at the age of 14, then selling it at 18, Jordan Wirsz was ready to do what he loved most — fly airplanes. But after only six months as a corporate pilot Wirsz realized that flying planes was not the right career for him.

### SBA YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

"It was a combination of ... entrepreneurial itch and [the realization]

that I just loved doing this as a hobby. Once I had to do it as a job, I couldn't enjoy it as much," the 24-year-old Wirsz said.

So Wirsz did some career soul searching and ultimately landed in Las Vegas, investing in real estate. Today, he owns and operates Diamond Bay Investments, managing deed-of-trust investments for clients around the world.

He's also set to become a published author. Over the past six years he's taken notes on his business ups and downs and will publish his book, "The Maverick Millionaire," in June.

Wirsz said that while he did not have a stable home environment growing up, he was fortunate to be surrounded with supportive and successful people.

"You really need... mentors," he said. A mentor himself, Wirsz is active in the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program, helping with annual fundraising.

"When I grew up, I had neighbors or friends, surrogates that made me a priority in their life... They taught me responsibility and hard work. Those people were by far

the biggest influence in my life," Wirsz said. "I'll be involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters for the rest of my life because I know it's so important to have that connection and be made a priority."

—By Brian Sodoma



**Jordan Wirsz**  
CEO

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## Gina Robison-Billups

**G**ina Robison-Billups knows all about challenges mothers face when starting a business.

The mother of two has years of experience juggling her children's needs with the demands of running a business. Her first stint in running a business took place shortly after she graduated from Loyola Marymount University. She found herself running her parents' home-based entertainment business after her step-

father was diagnosed with liver cancer.

She later started her own business, The Marketing & Business Development Corporation, which specialized in providing marketing and business strategy services to home-based and small businesses. While running the company, Robison-Billups said she realized there was no organization that specifically targeted women business owners so she decided to do something about it.

"With 64 million working mothers [in America] and there was no association for them; it was odd," she said.

So she started the Moms In Business Network in 2003 and later the International Association of Working Mothers.

"I realized there's a whole market for moms because their challenges in starting a business are much different than if a man starts a business," she said.

She also said statistics support her contention that women business owners face more disparities—like getting a loan. Societal pressure to be the primary caretaker causes some women take

time away from the workplace. That business world absence can be detrimental because they're cut off from networking and educational opportunities that can help in starting a business.

"They don't always have the connections," she said. "A lot of times bank loans are made because you have a great connection with the bank president."

The Moms In Business Network not only provides valuable networking opportunities for its 250 members, but also educational opportunities and funding opportunities through a grant.

The International Association of Working Mothers targets working mothers and has about 15,000 members worldwide.

Robison-Billups said she has higher goals for the groups.

"My goal is 1 million [members]," she said. "I figure if there's 64 million working mothers there should be at least 1 million [in the group]. I know that's a lofty goal, but they need us so I've got to get the word out."

More than four years ago she received technical assistance from Nevada Microenterprise Initiative.



**Gina Robison-Billups**

**Founder/President**

**Moms In Business  
Network**

**Founder**

**International Assoc. of  
Working Mothers**

—By Alana Roberts

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## Mary Beth Hartleb

**A**s the owner of four businesses, Mary Beth Hartleb understands what it's like to run a business.

Hartleb is owner/president of PRISM Human Resource Consulting Services. She also owns Market Your Job Search.com, Symphony Foods International and The Rosarito Beach House.com. She has 20 years experience in human resources, a master's degree



**Mary Beth Hartleb**

**Business  
Development Chair**  
**National Association  
of Women Business  
Owners, Southern  
Nevada**

in human resource management, and a law degree. She also holds the Senior Human Resource Professional designation from the Society for Human Resource Management.

As business development chair of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), Southern Nevada, she organized the group's first business expo, the Women Mean Business Expo held last October, which allowed members to showcase goods and services to corporation and government procurement representatives. That and invaluable networking opportunities.

"I know how difficult it is...The last thing you have at your disposal is a budget for advertising and marketing. NAWBO is geared toward that. We help through loan certification or events to get them exposure."

Last year, roughly 80 NAWBO members exhibited and about 400 people visited the expo. "It was a tremendous success," she said.

Hartleb also serves on the legislative appointed committees of the Business Development Advisory Council and the Regional Business Development Advisory Council. The groups encourage economic development for small, minority and women-owned businesses and disadvantaged businesses. They also encourage legislative reform on behalf of those businesses.

**WOMEN IN BUSINESS  
CHAMPION OF THE  
YEAR**

—By Alana Roberts



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