



# Michigan CFO Associates

The CFO for *Small Business*

## NEWSLETTER



### President's Message

We're having a great, albeit busy time at Michigan CFO Associates. There's lots happening as we continue to grow, so check out the "What's Happening" section. With the economy the way it is, and more layoffs happening every day, I get asked all the time if we need any help. We've brought on 3 new people this year, and hope to continue our growth as the year progresses. At the moment we aren't actively looking for anyone, but that can change quickly – so we're always open to talking with good people. *Feel free to forward our contact info if you know someone good who's looking.*

Likewise, we're always looking to work with new clients, big or small. So if you know of a company that's having a rough time, is facing difficult decisions, needs help with banking relationships, or would just like to have a sounding board to bounce ideas off, we always appreciate your referrals. **On average, our clients increased profitability by 46.6% in 2008 vs. 2007.** That's a pretty big number in good times, let alone during the worst economy in recent history. And we'd love to be a resource for any businesses that aren't achieving similar results.

On a personal note... have a look at the article on my recent Niagara adventure.

Best Regards

Todd Rammler, CMA, MSA  
President

*"The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable"*

-The late John Kenneth Galbraith

## What's Happening? Exciting News at Michigan CFO Associates!



### Walsh College Small Business Makeover Conference

The Business Leadership Institute (BLI) at Walsh College recently held its 3rd Annual Small Business Makeover Conference at the Novi campus. Hundreds of business owners and professionals attended the event which was sponsored by WWJ newsradio 950 (and others), including Michigan CFO Associates (see photo). This year, we kicked it up a notch and brought in a secret weapon -- the Chocolate Fountain. Between the fountain, and the incredible pies provided by one of the makeover winners, Achatz Handmade Pie Company, it was a sweet event, and provided great information to many small businesses in attendance. For more info on the Walsh BLI, copy and paste this link into your webbrowser:

<http://www.walshcollege.edu/?id=56&sid=1>

... continued on page 2

### Detroit News article

Michigan CFO Associates was featured in a recent Detroit News article highlighting the unique service we provide. Nancy Miller (one of our 'New Faces') and client Peter Basso Associates were photographed 'in action'! Copy and paste this link into your webbrowser to read the article.

<http://www.detnews.com/article/20090514/BIZ/905140353/Firms-boost-bottom-line-with-leased-controllers>

### Inside this Issue:

- **President's message**
- **What's Happening?**  
*Exciting news at Michigan CFO Associates*
- **Marketing Messages**  
*Don't commit verbal abuse*
- **Niagara in May**
- **Tech Tips**  
*Practical tools you can use everyday*

# More NEWS

## Research Commissioned

A few months ago, we commissioned a study by an outside research firm to compile some statistics on small businesses success indicators. The study is approximately 80% complete, and thus far, the statistics are eye-popping! The kinds of things that make you say "Wow. I didn't know THAT." We will be holding a few seminars to present the findings from the study, in the upcoming months. *If you would like to register for this unique opportunity, please use this link [www.michiganCFO.com/research](http://www.michiganCFO.com/research) to register.*

### New Faces at Michigan CFO Associates.

Unfortunately, not enough room in this edition of the newsletter to do it justice, so look for more info in the Summer newsletter or perhaps a special edition between now and then.

## Marketing Messages:

# Don't Commit Verbal Abuse

As part of our marketing plan, we keep an eye on the various job boards for CFO & Controller opportunities that might be a fit for our service. One of the recruiting ads I saw recently caught my attention for its gross violation of the KISS principle. I've been a big fan of the Dilbert comic strip by Scott Adams for quite a while, and this recruiting ad seemed like it MUST have been written by "the boss" from Dilbert.

Having never worked in a giant corporation, I only get occasional exposure to the barrage of buzzwords that fly through the halls of corporate America. And from what I've seen, I don't think I'd last more than a few days in that world without stringing myself up with the cord from my 10-Key.

So here's the ad that got my attention, which I believe was for a Director of Finance or something like that. I've read it a dozen times and I honestly have no idea what they do.

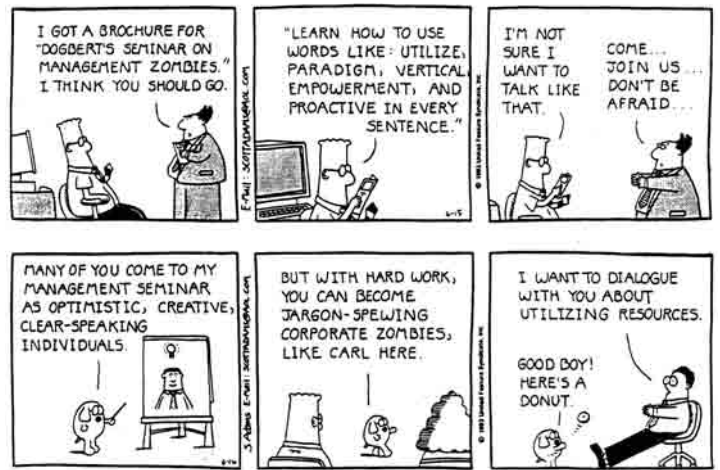
*"We are a built for purpose company with the sole focus of generating significant, sustainable improvements in revenue cycle outcomes sufficient to enhance our clients' ability to pursue their core mission: the delivery of high quality services to their communities. We pursue this mission by offering end-to-end managed services for revenue cycle operations and through the creation of productive, long term partnerships."*

Huuuhh???

This may be a great opportunity with a great company – maybe. But you sure can't tell from this horrible misuse of language.

## Walsh College Certification Night

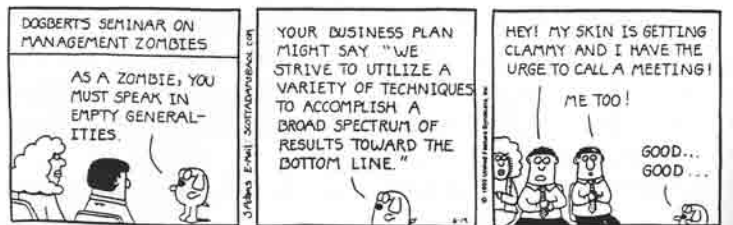
A few weeks ago, Walsh College and the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) held a certification night to highlight the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) designation, which is an alternative to the CPA certification. Todd was one of four panel members that each spoke on how their respective certifications have impacted their careers. It was a great opportunity for students to ask questions and get information, particularly on the CMA certification process.



Unfortunately this type of language often leaks into various marketing or promotional pieces that businesses put together. People who otherwise communicate very clearly start writing a marketing piece and suddenly feel like they have to sound smarter, more professional, more important, more impressive. But that often leads to a bunch of meaningless words and vague ideas that say nothing tangible and leave people scratching their heads, or worse yet, pitching the information in the trash.

Professional copywriters will often suggest you write to a 3rd grade reading level, because confused prospects will not act. If they can't understand it, they probably aren't going to buy it.

So before you send out that next marketing piece or re-design your website, have a 3rd grader read the rough draft. If they look at you like you're speaking a foreign language, it may be time to pause and dialogue about your core mission. That, or just rewrite it in plain English.



# Niagara in May ...'who could ask for more?'

A few months ago, my wife suggested that we go to Niagara Falls for Mother's Day weekend – and leave the kids at home. As you know, Mother's Day weekend is in early May. And Niagara Falls is in Canada. And Canada is cold.

I wasn't too crazy about the idea to begin with, then she upped the ante with "Let's stay at a Bed & Breakfast". Oye. Not a big fan of moving into the house of strangers, asking them to cook me breakfast, and then eating it with more strangers. So I started my assault on her idea: If we're going to Niagara, shouldn't we take the kids? Who knows what's going to happen with the weather in early May in Canada. It wouldn't surprise me if it snowed! Don't you want to see YOUR mother on Mother's Day??

I threw every logical reason why this was a bad idea at her, and she fought them all off like Luke Skywalker fought Darth Vader. My attacks of logic were repelled with Jedi-like reflexes; her defense was impenetrable by my logical assault.

So I gave in.

As you can see from the top photo, the weather was terrific, it wasn't too busy, and we had a great time.

Hopefully she will not suggest we go to Texas in August for our summer vacation. ☺



Erica, enjoying time away from the kids



I don't really know why I took this picture of the "Copa"... it just seemed like I had to. Try to guess what song was stuck in my head for the rest of the weekend?

Photo left: Todd in a tunnel behind the falls.. looking manly.

## Tech Tips

**Office 2007 PDF maker.** I recently bit the bullet and installed Office 2007. The installation was virtually painless, although I learned that my Adobe PDF creator icon was lost in the process. A friend pointed me to the Office 2007 PDF maker, a free add in available from Microsoft's website. It installs quickly, is available in all the Office programs, and creates PDF's lightning fast. I highly recommend it. Copy this link into your browser to download:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=f1fc413c-6d89-4f15-991b-63b07ba5f2e5&displaylang=en>

**YouSend It.** This is a great tool for sending large files that may get hung up in email due to size restrictions. You set up a free account, upload your large file, then an email is sent to the recipient and they can go and download the file for a certain number of days. Again, very easy setup and a handy tool if you deal with large files.

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

**LogMeIn.com.** If you need to remote connect to another computer – at home or at work – this is a very simple and free tool to accomplish that. I got it set up in almost no time and without the usual blood boiling anger that accompanies so many technology changes in my life. A very good product, at an unbeatable price.

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

*Practical tools you can use EVERYDAY*



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