

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Alabama Retail Association Announces Officers and Directors for 2002
- The Strategy for Keeping Costs Down and Profits Up!
- Mark Your Calendar for The Alabama Retail Association Annual Washington Trip
- New Members

THE OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION OF THE
ALABAMA RETAIL
ASSOCIATION

*THE VOICE
of Retailing in Alabama*



ALABAMA RETAIL
ASSOCIATION

KITCHIN HAS DEFINED GOALS FOR TERM AS CHAIRMAN

As the newly elected Chairman of the Alabama Retail Association, Bud Kitchin, of Kitchin's in Anniston, has defined certain goals for the Association during his term. ARA Communications Director Alison Wingate recently sat down with Bud Kitchin to discuss his plans.



Q: I know that it is a very special honor for you to serve as Chairman of the Alabama Retail Association. Can you tell everyone why?

A: Some of my earliest memories of ARA were in the early seventies. The Association was without a director and as the president, my father had the task of finding the right individual to lead the retailers of the state.

The face of retail was changing fast and inflation was rampant. Charles McDonald was the first choice and what a tremendous difference our state and its retailers have seen. Our annual state conventions were a huge hit with the merchants and their families. I especially remember a joint convention with the Mississippi Retailers and what collaborative efforts can accomplish in the political arena. Also during this time, my father had become very active with an anti-shoplifting campaign in the high schools and the YMCA. ARA in partnership with local agencies worked hard to get the word out to the teenagers, "Five finger discounts did not pay." Bobby Goldsboro was even hired to sing an anti-shoplifting theme song in an attempt to reach the youth of that time.

Q: What are your goals for ARA and why?

A: As a board member that worked to establish a firm Mission Statement and Long Term Goals, it gives me the foundation and

direction for the next two years:

- Utilize technology to communicate better, faster and more economically with the members, the legislature and our peer associations.
- Offer expanded and profitable member services to enrich each member's return for his or her investment.
- Develop need-based educational programs and forums for idea exchanges. An educated retailer is a more profitable retailer.
- Continue to be a strong public policy force for the retail industry.
- And finally, to make RetailPAC one of the largest and well-funded PACs in Alabama.

All of these goals are important and can stand on their own, but imagine the impact we can make if we attain them all.

(Continued on page 3)



THE VOICE

THE VOICE OF
RETAILING IN ALABAMA
VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1
FIRST QUARTER

PUBLISHER:
CHARLES MCDONALD

EDITOR:
ALISON WINGATE

2002-2004 ARA OFFICERS

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Simply Fashion Stores, Ltd., Birmingham

CHAIRMAN:
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Kitchin's Department Stores, Anniston

VICE CHAIRMAN:
JERRY BEASLEY
Beasley Honda, Ozark

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Montgomery

VICE PRESIDENT:
RICHARD E. BROWN, JR.
Montgomery

TREASURER:
BOB QUERY
Montgomery

SECRETARY:
VIRGIE TODD
Montgomery

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JHF Holdings, Inc., Birmingham

TRUSTEES:
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Beasley Honda, Ozark
DARRELL BOURNE
Ragland Bros. Retail Cos., Inc., Huntsville

DAN EDGAR
Edgar's Foodland, Inc., Eutaw

BUD SKINNER
Jubilee Seafood, Montgomery

JIMMY SMITH
Jimmy Smith Jewelers, Decatur

WILLIAM "BILL" WAGNER
The Athlete's Foot, Tuscaloosa

FUND ADMINISTRATOR:
RICHARD E. BROWN, JR.
Montgomery

THE VOICE is the official publication of the Alabama Retail Association, 7265 Halcyon Summit Drive, Montgomery, Alabama 36117. Telephone (334) 263-5757; FAX (334) 262-3991.

THE VOICE is published four times a year, quarterly. Views and conclusions expressed in articles herein are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the editors or officers of the Alabama Retail Association. Opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Alabama Retail Association.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to THE VOICE, P. O. Box 240669, Montgomery, Alabama 36124.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

CHARLES MCDONALD

Happy New Year! I hope this publication finds you busy. I know the cooler temperatures were just what retailers needed.

Although it seems as though they never left, the Alabama Legislature is back in town for the 2002 Regular Session. After the hard-fought FOURTH Special Session held in December, many legislators are tired and anxious to get back to their districts, and we hope that means we will have a short and quiet session. We do have several items we are working to pass, and we will keep you updated through *The Capitol Retail Report*.

All legislative seats are up for re-election, and primaries will be held on June 4. Alabama RetailPAC will begin making contributions to our good friends in less than a month, and we sure could use your help. Please consider sending a contribution to our PAC. You may call or e-mail us if you would like to be invoiced, or you can make a pledge on-line at our web site. Just click on the RetailPAC logo on the homepage. It is important to promote good government

and candidates who support Alabama's most valuable industry.

We are also making plans for our Annual Washington Trip to be held April 25-28. Last year's trip incorporating families and children was a great success, and we plan to include them from now on. We will again plan to do lots of site seeing, take in a show, eat superb food, and most importantly, visit our Congressional Delegation. Activities will be planned for children. Watch the mail for more information, and mark your calendar!

Our next Board of Directors meeting will be held February 6, 2002 in Montgomery. Many candidates running for office will speak. ALL Alabama Retail Association members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Call the Association for more information.

I hope to see you there!



100 Years



Has your store been in business for one hundred years or more?

If so, let us know! The Alabama Retail Association will begin recognizing Centennial Retailers in conjunction with our Retailer of the Year Awards each Fall.

For more information, call Alison Wingate at that Association at 334-263-5757 or awingate@alabamaretail.org.

KITCHIN HAS DEFINED GOALS FOR TERM AS CHAIRMAN

(Continued from page 1)

Q: You recently changed the way Kitchin's does business. Can you explain it?

A: In July of 2001, we embarked on a new way to do business — a way to stand out among the competition. Kitchin's became a Weekend Warrior. Here's how it works: Kitchin's buying staff and merchandising associates will buy and stock the stores on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, then open to a whole new store full of Famous Name Brand merchandise Thursday through Sunday. There are just not enough hours in the week to buy, stock and give the great Customer Service our stores are known for giving. With this new concept, I predict we will revolutionize the way our customer shops. I personally will guarantee more bargains and lower prices than ever before!

The same staff buys, merchandises the stores and then waits on the customer. The buyers and management now have time to give the customer even more attention and lower prices as well. Saving the customer 50-75% off retail prices on current fashions is our #1 goal.

Q: You also use technology to promote your stores. How has this helped and do you think technology will continue to grow in retailing?

A: Kitchin's uses several current technologies to inform our customers of the new arrivals at our stores. First and probably most important is our Customer Contact Program. Our Sales Associates are asked to keep a Customer Contact book of their personal customers. The associate will record the brands and special requests of the customer and call them when the special merchandise arrives. Secondly, we use faxes to reach our customers that want us to fax them at their place of business.

Thirdly, we contact our customers through the Internet and email. We went live 3 years ago with our website, kitchins.com. The web is updated weekly with many of our new arrivals, but of course we can't mention the Famous Brand Names on the web like we can by direct fax and the phone. We must honor our long-standing tradition of keeping the

ALABAMA RETAIL ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2002

The Association is pleased to announce its newly elected Board of Directors and Officers for 2002-2004.

OFFICERS FOR THE COMING TERM ARE:

Chairman - Claude Kitchin IV, Kitchin's, Anniston

Vice Chairman - Jerry Beasley, Beasley Honda, Ozark

President - Charles McDonald, Montgomery

Treasurer - Robert Query, Consultant, Montgomery and

Secretary - Virgie Todd, Montgomery.

VICE CHAIRMEN INCLUDE:

Darrell Bourne, Ragland Brothers Retail Co., Inc., Huntsville

Ken Hubbard, Western Supermarkets, Birmingham

Melissa Parker Paul, Parker's Mens Wear, Enterprise.

DIRECTORS FOR THE ALABAMA RETAIL ASSOCIATION ARE:

Bob Akers, Davis Printing Co., Inc., Montgomery

Wogan Badcock, III, W. S. Badcock Corporation, Mulberry, FL

Chris Birdsong, Premiere Entertainment, LLC, Montgomery

Frank Blankenship, Sears, Roebuck and Company, Birmingham

R. Michael Conley, Bruno's, Inc., Birmingham

Bill Drinkard, Drinkard Development, Inc., Cullman

Mickey Gee, The Pants Store, Leeds

Michael Harbin, Jr., Harbin's/Stern Brothers, LLC, Montgomery

J. Bruce Jones, Alabama Power Company, Birmingham

Larry Jones, Associated Credit Bureaus of Alabama, Huntsville

Michael Jones, AUM, Montgomery

J. Ford Laumer, Auburn University, Auburn

Bill Long, J.C. Penney Company, Jasper

Darrell McGinnis, Farmers Furniture, Dublin, GA

Gene Ormond, The Home Depot, Atlanta, GA

Jeff Parker, Super Sav, Dadeville

Yancey Parker, Parker's Mens Wear, Enterprise

Nyya Parson, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Tuscaloosa

Irvine Porter, CVS/Pharmacy, Bessemer

Robert A. Robicheaux, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

Fred Roth, Kmart Corporation, Birmingham

Walter Scott, Saks, Inc., Birmingham

Jimmy Ray Smith, Jimmy Smith Jewelers, Decatur

Dennis Stewart, Piggly Wiggly Alabama, Bessemer

Bill Wagner, The Athlete's Foot, Tuscaloosa

Dianne Wammack, Cameras Brookwood, Birmingham

George Wilder, The Locker Room, Montgomery

John M. Wilson, Super Foods, Luverne.

DIRECTOR EMERITUS IS

Morris Mayer of Tuscaloosa.

DIRECTORS, EX-OFFICIO (Past Presidents/Chairmen)

Rodney Barstein - Simply Fashion Stores, Birmingham

Greg Gregerson, Gregerson's Foods, Gadsden

O. H. Delchamps, Jr., Mobile

Bobby Little, Tuscaloosa

Charles Parker of Dadeville.

PARTNERING WITH YOUR SUPPLIERS AND CUSTOMERS

The Strategy for Keeping Costs Down and Profits Up!

Copyright Edwin Richard Rigsbee

American business, for the last half-century has functioned within the paradigm of adversary relations: Squeezing the lifeblood out of all they can. In the '70s I learned this as the "Sears Syndrome" by many small manufacturers. This was especially true for companies supplying them with the necessary ingredients to fulfill the business cycle. The time for a major shift is now and it is happening before our eyes! The cost of doing business is steadily increasing; yet only in a few industries are profits increasing to keep pace. A new paradigm or model has become absolutely necessary. This paradigm is PARTNERING.

Partnering is the process of two or more entities coming together for the purpose of developing synergistic solutions to their challenges. Partnering is more a journey than a destination. No matter how well you think you're currently partnering, you can always do it better! Partnering is a mind-set and it's an activity — a place where management, marketing, and philosophy meet.

Many benefits from partnering are obvious and some are not. Listed are some important reasons to embrace partnering:

1. Technological contribution or edge.
2. Competition from non-traditional sources has created a need to become more competitive.
3. Market advantage and increased distribution.
4. Financial stability.
5. Additional business to justify operation of a marginal production facility.
6. JIT (just-in-time) inventory control for product sales and manufacturing materials.
7. Greater consistency in parts, supplies and semi-assembled or semi-completed products.
8. Elimination of the tangle of claims and litigation many industries experience.
9. Quicker response time to what your market desires.
10. Productivity and quality increase. TQM is a by-product of partnering and not the reverse!

Along with the benefits of partnering, come the pitfalls and land mines.

Identifying these before you begin will greatly increase your prospects of achieving effective partnering alliances. Some misfortunes of partnering:

1. Not making a complete commitment, especially from executive suites.
2. Partnering alliance members having incongruent core values.
3. Alliance members' unexpected inefficiencies or poor management and not having partnering capability.
4. Length of time to finalize agreement, especially with Japanese companies.
5. Resistance of employees or some suppliers to new methods.
6. After making a partnering commitment, one member pulls out.
7. Allowing customer driving forces to take you away from core strengths by partnering to perform functions contrary to your capabilities.
8. Corporate culture clashes.
9. Alliance member receiving unfavorable media or engaging in sub-acceptable behavior tarnishing not only theirs but also your reputation.
10. Complacent attitude, expecting others to do the difficult or unpleasant activities.

By understanding the possibility for these calamities to arise, you can plan and organize your partnering agreements to hopefully eliminate dreadful occurrences. One of the best ways to guarantee failure is not to know your partners. Knowledge of your partner is imperative for successful long-term relationships. In today's unstable economic environment, you want the least amount of surprises possible.

Depending on where you fit into the manufacturer, wholesale distribution, or dealer/retailer cycle, your needs and possibilities will differ. First, suppliers to manufacturers, if this is you, you're looking to develop stable partnering relationships with your manufacturing customers. Some things they are looking for are: geographically desirable partners having the technological capability and financial strength to supply them with the materials necessary to

manufacture their products. They want an excellent price and are willing to make longer term commitments than they were previously. You are also being evaluated by your EDI (electronic data interchange) capability. This is necessary in helping them with their JIT (just in time) material inventory needs.

If you can make the cut as manufacturers are shrinking their sources of supply numbers, you'll enjoy a longer and more rewarding relationship. One way manufacturers are making this a possibility is through a supplier certification system. Usually about three levels, the first is entry. This is where the supplier is non-proven. The next level is achieved with some successes in zero defects, on time delivery (not early or late) and desirable pricing. It's at the middle level that a manufacturer sees promise in a supplier. This is the time they are willing to assist the supplier with technology. By helping the supplier to become more profitable, the supplier can sharpen their pricing to the manufacturer. The top level of certification is achieved by a supplier when the above become the norm and not the dream. This is the level that gets the EDI and long-term agreements.

Manufacturers, your issues are that of partnering with those who supply you with materials and your desire to partner with your distributors and/or retail dealers. Making use of JIT and EDI is critical in this competitive business climate. You must find suppliers that have the technological capability to assist you in future product innovations and development. You want a fair (not always the lowest) cost on and an uninterrupted supply of materials necessary to your production schedule. You want your suppliers to be an extension of departments such as purchasing, research and development, and production assisting them to be more effective and productive in their daily activities.

Your suppliers can only assist you when you share information with them. In short, TRUST is an absolute necessity. JIT and EDI applications will assist your PROFIT by lowering investments, speeding up delivery schedules and maintaining a continuous flow of product. This is only possible when you allow suppliers access to the data

necessary to fulfill your requirements. They're not mind readers!

You too, must give to get. In exchange for sharp pricing and extraordinary service, you'll need to give a multi-year commitment. Give them something they can take to their banker to obtain the capital necessary to gear-up for your needs. In technology and knowledge advancement you must assist your suppliers. You also want them to assist you so you both can be as profitable and on the cutting edge as possible.

If you are a wholesale distributor or manufacturer's representative your desire will be to prove you represent both well. You will want to prove that you are their partner. To be of the greatest value to both, and to yourself, you must be a knowledge and innovation broker. You must share all you can and not take it personally when your ideas are met with a lack of receptivity. While you feel you are being squeezed from both sides, you must always see issues from both sides. In Partnering, you must never get so dug-in on your position that you are blinded to the "bigger picture."

For retailers, you are or should be, desiring to develop closer ties with your suppliers. This will get the best product, price and delivery. You can then offer your retail customers what they want, when they want it. You hope the result will be customer loyalty; your customers partnering with you. You too must give to get. You must show respect for those suppliers with whom you do business. This is one of my personal issues with the retail community as a whole! You too can enjoy all the benefits I earlier detailed. For manufacturers, you simply have to treat your suppliers the way you want them to treat you — as you were equal partners. Think about it. Each CAN survive without the other, but not as profitably.

I spent many years calling on retailers. Trust me on this one. Whipping a rep into submission does not, I repeat, does not get you the best deal. Especially in the long-haul. When I was treated poorly and disrespectfully as a supplier, I kept score. I always found a way to even the score. Conversely, when I was treated well, I would bend over backwards to do more for that customer than was ever expected. Be careful not to talk marriage with your suppliers but act like a one-night-stand when it's time to walk your talk. The choice is yours!

The following are five steps to partnering:

1. **Monitor.** Study your business, observe,

and identify areas for improvement. Also take inventory of core strengths that might be valuable to a potential alliance partner.

2. **Educate.** Learn about those companies you might consider for partnering arrangements, arrangements that create a win-win result for all who participate. Ask yourself and your management team these questions: What are their strengths and weaknesses? What effect would they have on our business and ours on their business?
3. **Select.** This is the critical step because all your future efforts are built on this foundation. Select with knowledge, understanding and commitment. Surely there is little security built upon a flimsy foundation. Search for the strongest materials for your partnering foundation.
4. **Organize.** Now you're to the point of identifying, understanding, and putting together the possibilities for an alliance. This will be not only your partnering structure but also your road map, plan it well.
5. **Charter.** This is the agreement, whether it is a hand shake (which I advise against) or contractually. I strongly urge all partnering alliances to put their agreements on paper. It's so much more clear six months or two years later. Each party's commitment to the other, on paper, will smooth a path through the pot holed road of partnering. Also your charter should explain conflict resolution as Murphy's Law is sure to emerge. Be ready for it and the conflict will be resolved timely and amiably.

Roger Choquette, Vice President, Dealer Alliances at Steelcase, Inc., (the world's largest manufacturer of office furniture and office environments), Grand Rapids, Michigan, recently told me Steelcase believes that there are four elements to a successful partnership: Mutuality, Commitment, Understanding, and Growth. Though there are many sub-elements, remembering only these four, will serve you well. In all of your business dealings, ask yourself if the elements of mutuality, commitment, understanding, and growth are present? If so, you can feel a sense of security in the venture. If not, I should hope a sense of terror would vanquish your efforts. This will allow you to create an environment to make a new partnering decision.

Selecting partners well will serve you and your company for years to come. To aid you in the search, I've identified many of the necessary qualities of a person, management team, or corporate culture with which to successfully build your alliance:

1. **Wants to win.** There is NO reason to partner with a loser. This kind of relationship will only drag you or your company down to an unacceptable performance or production level. You and they must have a desire to win to want to do better, to be useful in creating synergy with your partner!
2. **Knows he/she/they are ultimately responsible for their own success.** He, she or they understand the value of synergy and know when partnering is and is not, the best choice for success. Caveat Pars (Beware of Partner)! Accountability

(Continued on page 8)



MARK YOUR CALENDAR! APRIL 24-28, 2002



**FAMILIES ARE
WELCOME!**



**CONGRESSIONAL
VISITS!**



SITE SEEING!



**2002 ALABAMA RETAIL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL WASHINGTON TRIP
GRAND HYATT REGENCY, WASHINGTON, DC**

Call the Alabama Retail Association, 1-800-239-5423 or 334-263-5757, for more information.
Details will be mailed to you soon.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

America's Mortgage Resource, Inc.	Daphne	Goar's, Inc.	Haleyville	Players Choice Tennis	Birmingham
Action Automotive Center, Inc.	Mobile	Golden Rule Bar-B-Q	Arab	Poplar Head Mule Co. Pub & Grill	Dothan
American Klassic Designs, Inc.	Montgomery	Hamilton Drive-In	Hamilton	Posey Furniture Co., Inc.	Florence
Arnold's Country Café	Courtland	Hammond Furniture, LLC	Geneva	Precision Tune Auto Care.	Mobile
Auburn Orthopedic Center, P.C.	Auburn	Hampton Inn	Irondale	Professional Panels, Inc.	Tuscaloosa
Azalea City Bar & Grill	Mobile	Haygood, Cleveland, Pierce, LLP	Auburn	Quality Cleaners	Saraland
Big Sky Bread	Mountain Brook	Helen Keller Birth Place Found.	Tuscumbia	Quality Valve, Inc.	Mobile
Bioimaging of Huntsville, Inc.	Huntsville	Hilton Garden Inns	Auburn	Quizno's	Robertsdale
Blimpie Subs & Salads	Huntsville	Image Now, LLC	Trussville	Quizno's Classic Subs	Birmingham
Bonnie Crest Country Club	Montgomery	Inge, McMillan & Coley	Mobile	Renee Chambers	Gadsden
Britt Animal Hospital, Inc.	Birmingham	Isbell Animal Clinic.	Gadsden	Restaurant Varnedoe, LLC.	Fairhope
Buckner & Walker, P.A.	Birmingham	Jobe Noodles.	Birmingham	Reynolds Technical Associates	Greenville
Bunkley Enterprises, Inc.	Theodore	KC's Pizza	Hoover	Rita's Sunset Grille and Oasis	Dauphin Island
Burkett School Supply Company	Huntsville	Kokomo's Chicken Fingers and Hot Wings	Decatur	S & D Garage, Inc.	Andalusa
Buy-Rite Drugs, Inc.	Hartselle	Lake Hill Restaurant	Alexander City	Safe, Inc.	Homewood
Café Avanti	Pell City	Lake Martin Grocery	Dadeville	Sea Moore's Fish Camp, Inc.	Gardendale
Café Trentuno	Pelham	Lathan Associates Architects, P.C.	Homewood	Sears Authorized Retail Dealer Store	Enterprise
CD Warehouse	Huntsville	Lawrence Hardware, Inc.	Troy	Sears Dealer Store.	Athens
Chambers Furniture, Inc.	Montgomery	Lighthouse Bakery, LLP	Dauphin Island	Sexton's Seafood of Birmingham, Inc.	Birmingham
Charlie B's BBQ & Family Dining, Inc.	Oneonta	Log Cabin Restaurant	Theodore	Singletons Bar-B-Q	Florence
Chewalla Restaurant	Eufaula	Love's Seafood	Mobile	Smitherman's Pharmacy	Montevallo
Cook House.	Tuscaloosa	MacKinnon Paper Co., Inc.	Mobile	Stuckey's Meat Packers, Inc.	Semmes
Cornerstone Animal Hospital, Inc.	Madison	Marengo Insurance Agency, Inc.	Demopolis	Subway of Daphne, Inc.	Daphne
Crestline Bagel, Inc.	Birmingham	McWhorter Design, Inc.	Decatur	Ted's Pharmacy, Inc.	Opp
Davis Tractor Parts.	Andalusa	Mellow Mushroom.	Montgomery	Teklinks, Inc.	Birmingham
Decatur Baptist Church, Inc.	Decatur	Midas Auto Service/Experts.	Huntsville	The Ark Restaurant.	Riverside
Decatur Tires & Services, Inc.	Decatur	Midas Muffler	Decatur	The Carpet Collection, Inc.	Mobile
Dothan Motor Co., Inc.	Dothan	Mill Street Pharmacy	Boaz	The Center of the Donut, Inc.	Hoover
Dr. David Shepherd	Birmingham	Mister J's Steakhouse	Dothan	The Daily Cup, Inc.	Mountain Brook
Eclipse Communications, Inc.	Birmingham	Mobile Family Physicians, P.C.	Mobile	The Grocery Store	Wilsonville
Emperor Garden	Mobile	New Balance Birmingham.	Hoover	Tri-State Rubber Co., Inc.	Dothan
Enterprise Anesthesiology & Critical Care Assoc., P.C.	Enterprise	Northcutt Dental Practice, P.C.	Fairhope	Union Furniture Co., Inc.	Tuscaloosa
Enterprise T-Shirts, Inc.	Enterprise	Northwest Alabama Vendors, Inc.	Fayette	Valley Bowl	Valley
Fairhope Health Foods	Fairhope	Oak Tree Furniture	Pelham	Vernon Market	Vernon
Feld, Hyde, Lyle, Wertheimer & Bryant, P.C.	Birmingham	Open MRI of Birmingham	Hoover	Weaver Furniture Co., Inc.	Montgomery
Full Serv Software	Madison	Outdoors Unlimited, Inc.	Tuscaloosa	Wells Turner Family Pharmacy	Cullman
EyeCare Associates, Inc.	Birmingham	Parker Tire	Tallassee	Whitten Motors, Inc.	Cullman
Furniture Factory Bar & Grill	Huntsville	Peggy's Hallmark Shop	Hoover	Wildflour, Inc.	Huntsville
Glory's Family Dining	Fairfield	Penny Profit Cleaners	Tuscaloosa	Willut Accounting.	Gadsden
		Pizza Pro	Tallassee	Willy T's Chicken Fingers.	Tuscaloosa
		Pizza Time Amigos	Sumiton		

PARTNERING WITH YOUR SUPPLIERS AND CUSTOMERS THE STRATEGY FOR KEEPING COSTS DOWN AND PROFITS UP!

(Continued on page 5)

- goes both ways. Don't always assume your partner is looking out for your best interest.
- 3. Is an active listener.** To truly keep in touch with the heartbeat of an alliance, active listening is critical. This helps you to know what you need to do extra and when the other side is falling behind in their commitment to you. Alertness from both sides equals mutual success.
 - 4. Understands and cares about what drives his/her/their partners' businesses.** Because successful partnering is about synergy, you must consistently give added-value to the relationship. Regular "relationship bank" deposits are required before withdrawals are possible. You can add value to your partner in the relationship by knowing what it is that your partner considers synergistically valuable to their business.
 - 5. Responds well to, and acts on feedback.** "If you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen!" The only possibility for forward and beneficial movement occurs when leaders are willing to accept counsel. None of us are smart enough to know it all! If so, there wouldn't be a need for partnering. Notice I didn't mention criticism – it was intentional!
 - 6. Flexibility, especially when events or circumstances are not what was expected.**
- If you don't have the ability to change direction when the road ahead is washed out, you'll find yourself wishing for rescuers as you uncontrollably float down the stream. Flexibility is absolutely necessary because things will never be exactly as we expect.
- 7. Trust, integrity and respect for others.** Through interviewing Steelcase, I found this to be the common thread weaving through the employees' consciousness from the factory floor to the executive suite!
 - 8. Seeks win-win arrangements and solutions.** Earlier I said that you must look after yourself, but if that is all you do, you're of little value as a long-term partner. You must win for the sake of your business. At the same time your partner must also win. This will develop a desire within them to want to continue in the relationship. The partnering advantage becomes stronger the longer the relationship lasts.
 - 9. Understands that partnering is a relationship of interdependence, not dependence or independence.** Visualize your partner and yourself as partially overlapping circles. The overlapping parts of the circles are your areas of mutual value. The greater the overlap, the greater the value. This overlapping area is also your area of interdependence. Working together for mutual improvement is the great benefit received from partnering.

Inherent in partnering are benefits and pitfalls. The benefits usually outweigh the challenges. Be careful and methodical in the

search for your alliance partners. Take care in structuring elements of the arrangement. Do this, and you will be a happy camper for years to come. Remember partnering is not instant gratification. It is your long term paradigm for success.

Adapted from *The Art of Partnering* by Edwin Richard Rigsbee. Rigsbee is a professional speaker and president of Rigsbee Enterprises, Inc. (REI) located in Westlake Village, CA. REI is a strategic management and marketing consulting firm specializing in problem detection and solutions, customized training programs, and keynote presentations. Rigsbee can be reached by Tel: (805) 371-4636/(700) RIGSBEE, Fax: (805) 371-4631, Mail: P.O. Box 6425-PC, Westlake Village, CA 91359, or Email: EdRigsbee@aol.com. You may visit Rigsbee's internet web site at: <http://speakers.com/rigsbee.html>.



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7265 Halcyon Summit Drive
Post Office Box 240669
Montgomery, Alabama 36124

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