



**Advisory Link  
&  
Career Dimensions  
Fall 2005 Newsletter**

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## **Career Dimensions Merges with Advisory Link**

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In Career Dimensions' last newsletter, we commemorated our 25 years in business. In this issue, we're celebrating once again as Career Dimensions merges with Advisory Link, the company Taunee Besson and Gerry Myers started in 2000.

Both organizations focus on helping individuals and organizations develop and use people networks to achieve greater success and satisfaction for everyone involved. With their common philosophies, cultures and potential client synergies, combining Advisory Link's and Career Dimensions' expertise and resources was the right thing to do. From now on you can come to Advisory Link for all of the integrated services below:

- Counseling with professionals to identify and pursue careers that match their skills, values and personalities via job search counseling, executive coaching and spouse employment relocation programs
- Facilitating mastermind groups and Exec-U-Links for business owners and corporate leaders
- Consulting with companies on how to recruit, retain, promote, market and sell to underserved markets, especially women
- Forming and consulting with external women's advisory boards
- Writing columns for national publications such as CareerJournal.com and Dealer magazine
- Serving as a resource to the media on career management, marketing and women's issues.

We are very excited about the combined resources that we can bring together now for our clients, and look forward to working with you for another 25 years.

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## Close-Ups: Good News from Our Readers



**David Lester** had rejoined the Amend Group, the first tenant representation firm in Dallas, which integrates commercial real estate brokerage, project design and construction services. In only 1.5 years he and his partner **Joe Gallini** have leased and sold over \$300,000 in commercial real estate.

Did you know that **Alex Townes**, Advisory Link's tech wiz, is also an accomplished performer and songwriter? His latest CD, *All Around Townes*, has received critical acclaim and he was a finalist in the B.W. Stevenson Songwriter Contest this year. He regularly performs around Dallas/Fort Worth and is also the Vice President of the Dallas Songwriter's Association. You can hear some of his music on his website at <http://atownes.tripod.com/music>.

After taking Leadership America, an outstanding organization for women in leadership across the USA, to a new level, **Candace O'Keefe Mathis** and **Dirk Mathis** are moving on at the end of 2005 to help other nonprofits achieve their greatest potential. Many of you undoubtedly remember Candace as the first executive director of the Women's Museum, a Smithsonian-affiliated institution, based in Dallas.

**Helen Turnbull** (LA, 03) has completed her PhD from the Fielding Graduate University in Human and Organizational Systems and her first book, which she hopes to have published later this year. Titled *The Village of Illusions* and written under her pen name, Dr. Cara Bridges, it is a fantasy about human behavior and how people get themselves stuck in negative emotional places.

Speaking of authors and Leadership America alums, **Cary Broussard**, a former director of the "Women on Their Way" program for Wyndham Hotels and Resorts and former member of Advisory Link's Women Executive Business Owner Exec-U-Link, is promoting her new book called *From Cinderella to CEO*. For more information, go to <http://www.cinderellaceo.com>.

*Women's Enterprise USA* featured **Sandra Dance** (LA,02), in an article on "Women in Transportation." *The Sentinel*, the Department of Homeland Security's newsletter, will also spotlight her and her award from St. Mary's University in San Antonio in an upcoming issue.

**Kim Titus** says his consulting firm, SCA, repeated its successful media tour for an energy company client the second year in a row. Touring six Texas cities, SCA performed "energy makeovers" to low-income customers' homes with the help of local youth volunteer organizations. The client's focus was to produce a media event, which emphasized the community relations aspect of various home improvements and energy conservation messages.

After having been a full-time mom for twins Alex and Nathan for over a year, **Amber Besson Blaha** has restarted her professional career as Director of Product Marketing for Navisite, an Andover, MA company that deploys, manages, and enables applications and IT infrastructure for mid-to-large-sized businesses.

**Ken Myers**, son of Advisory Link partner Gerry Myers and father of just turned two-year-old Aaron, was promoted to Sergeant in the Allen Police Department. Gerry's daughter, **Debbie Richman**, will have a show featuring her collection of pop art at AMS Production November 7 thru December 9. For more information visit her website at [www.debbierichmanart.com](http://www.debbierichmanart.com).

**Don Carter**, president of CartGroup International, has recently been elected treasurer of the Association of Career Professionals International's USA Country Board. He was also a recent guest on Dallas/Fort Worth Fox 4 TV's program "Insights," where he discussed workplace and career transition stress.

**Doug Box** recently started working with the clients of ReGENERATION Partners, a firm that specializes in consulting with family-owned businesses. Having been in management with his own family's enterprise for a number of years, he brings great insight and experience to this new endeavor.

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**Close-Ups: Good News from Our Readers (continued)**

A 30-year friend of Taunee's, **Nancy Nolley**, will be facilitating two workshops each month through the end of the year at the Advisory Link office at 6330 LBJ Freeway, Suite 136. The title of her workshop is "Simple Steps, Simple Solutions." To get more information, contact Nancy at [nancy@nancynolley.com](mailto:nancy@nancynolley.com)

After a number of years as an investment representative, **Don Brock** has affiliated with Edward Jones. Many of you may know him in conjunction with the many seminars he has done for Career Connections, a job search program sponsored by the Presbyterian Church.

A note from **Susan Rees** in Peoria say that **Doris Symonds**, a MassMutual WAB member for the Central Illinois Agency, is the coordinator of the city's annual "Women to Women Small Business Showcase." This October event attracts over 1000 women for networking and small business development and benefits the Loaves and Fishes program to feed the homeless.

Susan also wanted our readers to know that **Helen Mamarchev**, another member of the WAB in Peoria, has been appointed to the National Board of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators for 2005-2006.

**Sheila Brooks**, founder, president and CEO of SRB Productions, recently celebrated the 15-year anniversary of her company. Her 27 years experience in the television and communications industry has resulted in numerous awards for excellence in journalism, entrepreneurship and community service. Most recently, she was inducted into the prestigious Silver Circle at the 47<sup>th</sup> annual Emmy Awards of the National Capital Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. *Enterprising Women* magazine named her among the 2005 recipients of the *Enterprising Women of the Year Award*. Sheila chairs the Washington Group WAB in Bethesda, MD.

*Enterprising Women* also named **Molly Barker**, founder of Girls on the Run, a non-profit organization and a member of the Hinrichs Flanagan Financial Group WAB in Charlotte, NC, among its recipients of the 2005 *Enterprising Women Advocacy Award*. **Faye Coleman**, chair of the West Financial Group WAB in Bethesda, MD and principal of Westover Consultants, Inc., was named as one of the recipients of the 2005 *Enterprising Women of the Year Award*.

**Dr. Frances Haithcock**, a member of the Hinrichs Flanagan WAB in Charlotte, has taken the helm as Superintendent of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, responsible for leadership and supervision of all the district's personnel, students and programs. Previously she was deputy superintendent of Educational Programs of the school district.

**Laura Meyer**, executive vice president of the Foundation for the Carolinas and a member of the Charlotte WAB, was honored with a *2005 Women in Business Achievement Award* by the *Charlotte Business Journal*

**Amy Rudolph**, chair of the Moore Financial Group's Women's Advisory Board in Atlanta, tells us that two of her members have achieved important goals this year. **Judi Bruce** has been made a partner of Deloitte Tax LLP. **Mary B. Riley, CPA** and founder of her own accounting firm, has been elected president of the American Women's Society of Certified Public Accountants for 2005-2006.

Taunee recently received an update from **Larry Sykes** on the one-year-old Dallas Community Voice Mail program, which he founded and directs for the Stew Pot in Dallas. Since August 2004, this vital nonprofit has served 754 people and helped over 100 of them find jobs and housing.

Do you need a small business or personal accountant? **Mike Stern**, Advisory Link's accounting contractor can handle the accounts payable and receivables, posting, data entry, bank reconciliation, tax reports, etc. for your business and/or keep your personal bills straight and your bank account balanced. Call him at 972-233-0704, or check out his web site [www.mikesbookkeepingservice.com](http://www.mikesbookkeepingservice.com) if this function is not your forte'.

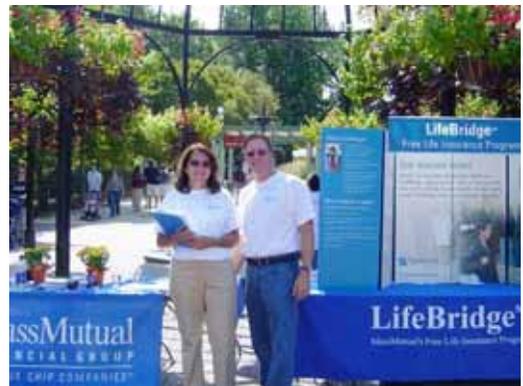
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## Women's Advisory Boards Involved in their Communities

**Capitol Financial Partners' Girls' Advisory Board**, in partnership with the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services, presented a girls' financial literacy event June 2 called "The Reality Store." About 150 teenage girls attended a simulation exercise that allowed them to learn the challenges that come with financial responsibility. The girls picked a career and its typical income, went to various stations to pay expenses such as housing, transportation and utilities and unexpected financial challenges like sudden car repairs. The format was derived from the Reality Store developed by the Business and Professional Women. Robert Norman, CEO of CFP, was one of the "bankers" for the day, along with 50 other adult volunteers who helped the girls juggle budget priorities. The event received coverage in the *Washington Business Journal* and the *Washington Post*. Fairfax County declared Girls Financial Literacy Week in conjunction with the program.

**First Financial Group** of Philadelphia reported preliminary results of its recent successful LifeBridge Day at the Philadelphia Zoo. The WAB worked with a number of nonprofit organizations to promote the event. WAB members took the initiative to contact organizations such as the Salvation Army, Jewish Employment and Vocational Services, Girls, Inc. and the Delaware Valley Consumer Credit Counseling Service. Volunteers signed up qualifying attendees, and thus far, MassMutual has provided more than \$1.5 million in life insurance coverage to underserved families in the Delaware Valley. This was the kickoff to build momentum for the ongoing rollout of the program.



**Hinrichs Flanagan Financial Group's Women's Advisory Board** (WAB) in Charlotte sponsored a Disability Awareness Day at Knight Stadium August 28. They distributed 380 tickets to charitable organizations, especially those who work with special or disabled individuals. MassMutual Financial Group donated 180 Game Face kits to an Exchange City after-school program in the area. The Game Face workshop is designed to build character among young teenage girls and boys.

**The Central Illinois Agency's WAB** in Peoria plans its second "Welcome to the Real World" event similar to the Reality Store for November 11, Veteran's Day. The group is also a sponsor for the Women's Lifestyle Show and is advocating financial literacy for abused women. MassMutual Financial Group (MMFG) made a \$5,000 grant for this project. In conjunction with its theme, "MassMutual ensures a good night's sleep," attendees will be asked to donate new pajamas, nightgowns, pillows, etc. to the Center for Prevention of Abuse. The Central Illinois Agency will also be presenting three financial seminars including "Never Kissed a Frog" and "Pearls of Wisdom." Attendees who donate an item and attend a seminar will receive a "frog" tee shirt. WAB members will be volunteering for seminars to offer their expertise for women attendees.



## Why You Should Market to Women

Advisory Link's clients are on the leading edge of powerful market and employment trends. With the help of Advisory Link, they are taking advantage of the shift in demographics and women's buying power to build new markets, hire and promote a diverse work force and generate greater revenue and profit. As marketing and management guru Tom Peters said, This "Women's Thing" is... unmistakably, in my opinion... Economic Opportunity No. 1.

According to Kristen Gerencher, CBS marketwatch.com, "Women control almost \$4 trillion in annual consumer spending, buy two of every three cars, take 50 percent of all business trips and control half of all the personal wealth in country."

A *Business Week Online, Special Report* concludes, "Whether their efforts involve retraining sales staff or redesigning products, companies that pay attention to the female consumer could hit the mother lode."

In her book, *Marketing to Women*, Martha Barletta said, "Women are the world's most powerful consumers... Women have a very different set of priorities, preferences and attitudes.... You can address these differences in your marketing to great advantage, or you can ignore them. If you put on blinders, you're going to be blindsided by your competition, and your share will suffer accordingly."

Capitalizing on this trend has proved successful for companies such as Jockey International. Howard Cooley, former president of Jockey said, "By listening to their customers, Jockey was able to become the most popular brand of women's underwear in the nation in just five years. Additionally, by making a product and marketing it to women, Jockey increased their bottom line tremendously by marketing to 100 percent of the population rather than just 50%."

From the board room on down the ranks of the corporation, recruiting and retaining women is a smart strategy for business.

My views on women's issues grow out of a simple observation: women represent at least half of the nation's skill, creativity, innovation energy and resourcefulness. To fail to make full use of these attributes would be a terrible waste...My counsel to anyone who is interested is that women's issues are not a social cause they are a business opportunity.

*Erle Nye, Chair of the Board, TXU*

Cigna's \$2 million annual commitment to recruiting and developing executive women is based on business strategy, not political correctness. It's an approach supported by research that says companies with the highest representation of women have better financial performance.

*Eve Tahmincioglu, Workforce Management*

HP isn't looking for women for the sake of being diverse. It's cashing in on a demographic trend: more and more, customers for its products are businesses led by women.

*Irwin Speizer, Workforce Management*

Advisory Link wants to consult with a variety of companies (only one per industry) to help our clients recruit, retain, promote, market and sell more effectively to women. We want to know your encounters relating to these issues and the organizations/industries you think we should approach. We're looking for potential clients who recognize the value of women as both consumers and employees, who know they need assistance in pursuing their goals and are willing to work with outside consultants to achieve them. If you have comments or referrals, please contact Taunee at [tauneeb@advisorylink-dfw.com](mailto:tauneeb@advisorylink-dfw.com) or 972-239-1399 or Gerry at [gerry@advisorylink-dfw.com](mailto:gerry@advisorylink-dfw.com) or 817-379-0956.

## **The Career Dimensions Business Owner Mastermind**

If you are looking for a place to get honest, pragmatic feedback from fellow entrepreneurs in the Dallas Metroplex on how to prospect for new customers, solve IT problems, handle tricky negotiations or find the right employee or supplier, the Business Owner Mastermind is for you.

This peer coaching group helps its members maximize their opportunities by brainstorming options, developing solutions, supplying contacts and cultivating camaraderie. Because a Mastermind group is based upon the premise that its sum is greater than its parts, all members benefit from the ideas and perceptions of everyone involved.

While no two meetings are alike, they are sure to be fast-paced, confidential, congenial, and confrontational, but never dull. Members get to know each other and their businesses very well. They become trusted friends whose sound, truthful advice and key referrals are invaluable to their mutual success.

Taunee Besson ascertains in advance what issues the members want to discuss. Then she facilitates each meeting to make sure everyone goes back to work with the answers to his or her business questions.

The Business Owner Mastermind meets on the first and third Thursday of each month from 11:30-1:30 over lunch at the office of Karen Fitzgerald, one of our members. The monthly fee is \$100.

The opportunity to participate in a group dedicated to your success doesn't present itself very often. For more information, call Taunee at 972-239-1399, email her at [tauneeb@careerdimensions-dfw.com](mailto:tauneeb@careerdimensions-dfw.com) or go to the Career Dimensions' web site at <http://www.careerdimensions-dfw.com/>.

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## **WEBO Is Looking for a Few Great Women**

The Women Executives and Business Owners (WEBO) is an Exec-U-Link group comprised of approximately one-half women executives and one-half business owners from around the country. This unique forum focuses on helping its members maximize opportunities by offering solutions to their common problems and nurturing mutual support. Agendas are set in advance using members' input to choose topics most likely to help them individually and as a group. Email communication continues between meetings to deal with "hot issues," to exchange contacts, and to encourage collaboration.

If you or someone you know would like more information on WEBO and how they can be invited to join, please contact Gerry Myers or Taunee Besson (972-239-1399) to learn more about membership. We meet three times a year over dinner on Thursday and an all day meeting on Friday. The benefits you derive are virtually impossible to find anywhere else. An annual investment of \$3,500 is for the time Advisory Link spends carefully selecting each member, planning and facilitating three meetings per year and communicating with the group throughout the year, as well as for the meeting room fees, food and drink expenses.

### ***What Advisory Link's clients have said about their Exec-U-Link***

"As a woman in a man's world, it's wonderful to collaborate with other high level women who are blazing trails in their companies. Brainstorming, sharing best practices and solving problems with them is a lot different from working with a group where I'm the only woman."

"The members gave me some critical advice that saved me \$50,000 and a lot of misery. My investment in the group was a small percent of the dollar benefit achieved."

"I joined the Exec-U-Link Group because it is one of the rare settings when you get to interact with a small group of truly dynamic senior-level women. We share best practices that help build our businesses, our credibility, and our brands."

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