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The SAC® Release

Consulting Society Business Predictions/Advice for 2011

The Society for Advancement of Consulting® (SAC®) has asked its global membership to comment on key predictions and/or advice for the coming year. SAC CEO Alan Weiss, PhD states, "Growth, and how to achieve it, will be the primary focus."

Gary W. Patterson, president and CEO of FiscalDoctor® www.FiscalDoctor.com, offers these three projections for 2011 to help improve your company's fiscal management, creating new opportunities while managing risk.

1. **Accessible Cash Is King.** How opportunistic can your company be when you are not sure about the accuracy of your balance sheet and cash equivalents today and six months into the future? If you must, sell low to liquidate useless inventory and/or money-losing facilities and products. Use freed-up cash to fund new opportunities on the horizon.
2. **Put Your Money into Resources That Create New Opportunities.** Research shows that major initiatives for new opportunities never get off the ground because of lack of resources and effective strategic planning. Where should you reallocate resources today so that next year's revenues and net income levels will bring about new opportunities?
3. **Join the 21st Century.** Stop using budgetary constraints as an excuse for not investing in the latest technologies, including safety systems.

Roberta Chinsky Matuson, President of Northampton, Massachusetts based Human Resource Solutions (www.yourhrexperst.com) predicts that exhausted employees will begin to flee their organizations as we move more fully into the recovery. "Right now, the departure lounges of organizations are overflowing with people waiting to take flight the moment they see signs that hiring is in full force again, which I predict will occur in 2011. The time for companies to act is now." She advises her clients to be observant of signs that indicate people are preparing to leave. This includes the removal of personal items from their offices, fewer late nights at work and an increase in the number of private calls made on cell phones.

Matuson suggests meeting with people to learn more about what is on their minds. By doing so, you may be able to defer their departure. This will give you time to make changes in your organization that could prevent an entire crew from leaving.

"Large businesses will grow more quickly than small businesses in 2011," points out Lisa Anderson of LMA Consulting Group, Inc. in Claremont, CA. "Most businesses dramatically cut expenses during the recession and are experiencing improved profitability. With slow economic improvement, large businesses are better positioned to capitalize on even small growth with a smaller fixed cost base. On the other hand, those businesses focused in the retail sector, be cautious of the price sensitivity of consumers." According to Anderson, those businesses positioned with cash reserves

and with exceptional employees will leapfrog the competition as they are able to take advantage of significant opportunities as they arise.

“How well businesses do in 2011 is partly under their control,” states Dr. Pat Lynch, President of Business Alignment Strategies, Inc. (www.BusinessAlignmentStrategies.com), a management consulting firm in Long Beach, CA. “Organizations whose leaders choose to seize the opportunity presented by adverse economic conditions to re-examine what they are doing and how they do it, to commit or re-commit to a realistic, focused mission, and to make the changes necessary to achieve that mission are likely to thrive in the coming year. Organizations whose leaders continue to wait for the economic storm to run its course will continue to struggle.”

Lynch’s prediction is especially salient for public sector organizations, whose recovery in 2011 will lag that of their counterparts in the private and non-profit sectors. Government agencies at all levels face unique constraints that will slow their ability to rebound from the devastation to public services during the last two years. Chief among these obstacles are public perceptions of “government” workers as incompetent individuals who are richly rewarded for poor performance. Lynch notes that the combination of antiquated bureaucracies, union contracts that promise employee benefits that are impossible to provide, and a dearth of courageous leaders willing to take on those with vested interests in the status quo has created a perfect storm that is wreaking havoc nationwide. Though 2011 will not be the year in which the sun breaks through the clouds for them, government agencies with courageous leaders will begin the transformations necessary to re-create themselves so they can serve their constituencies effectively in sustainable ways and thereby begin to re-gain the public’s trust.

Dr. Maynard Brusman is a consulting psychologist and executive/career coach. He is the president of Working Resources, a boutique talent management consulting and leadership coaching firm in San Francisco, California. www.workingresources.com He offers a few insights:

Dr. Brusman predicts “An enterprise that does not innovate will not survive long. Management that does not learn to innovate and foster creativity will not last long. Businesses and organizations will need to be designed for change *as the norm*. They must create change rather than react to it.”

“Successful businesses will marry passion, purpose and profits. Enlightened leaders will ignite peoples passions by clearly communicating what they believe and why,” notes Dr. Brusman.

According to Dr. Brusman, “Great leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Walt Disney always communicated their ‘why’—the reasons they acted, why they cared and their future hopes.” Great business leaders follow suit:

- Herb Kelleher, founder of Southwest Airlines, believes air travel should be fun and accessible to everyone.

- Apple's Steve Jobs believes in the pursuit of perfection through the design of products.
- Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos believes in delivering happiness.
- Chip Conley, founder and CEO of Joie de Vivre Hospitality applies Abraham Maslow's pyramid of needs to transforming businesses.
- Starbucks' Howard Schultz wanted to create social experiences in cafés resembling those in Italy.

"The New Year bodes well for business," concludes Weiss, "since we've just seen a 6 percent increase over last year in initial Holiday retail spending."

SAC is an international association of consulting professionals who subscribe to an industry code of ethics and have provided evidence of significant consulting results among their clients. For more information, please go to <http://www.consultingsociety.com>, write to info@summitconsulting.com, or call 800/825-6153 (401/886-4097).

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