

2.0. Minutes with...

March 13, 2009

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Scott Ferguson | CEO  
Inilex

*Inilex is a Tempe-based company that combines GPS and messaging systems to provide asset tracking solutions.*

**What is one of your business goals for 2009?** "To grow Inilex by 300 percent."

**How have you changed your business strategy to reflect current economic conditions?** "Through acquisition, smart decisions and broadening our customer base."

**What resources did you use to help develop your business and marketing plans?** "ASU Technopolis and customer suggestions."

**How do you use technology to promote your business?** "Industry blogs, discussion boards and professional newsletters online."

**How do you recruit and retain quality employees?** "Each employee must have part of their compensation package performance-based. This instantly weeds out nonperformers."

**What is the biggest challenge you've overcome in growing your business?** "Funding."

**What advice do you have for entrepreneurs just starting out?** "Get input and advice from successful individuals, then execute without excuses."

**Do you have an exit strategy or a succession plan for when you retire?** "Retirement is not for me, and I have no plans in the next 30 years to slow down."

**What do you know now that you wish you had known when you started your business?** "Attitude is a difference maker, and it's contagious."

**What mistake have you learned from?** "Believing someone will change when they have a history of repeated failures."

**What's the best piece of business advice you ever received?** "Activity does not equal progress."



Ferguson



UNLEASHING  
THE ENTREPRENEUR  
INSIDE YOU

Startup

Company offers 'sense of scale'

**A** former scuba instructor and technology entrepreneur launched VisitMyLuxuryHome.com last year. Although it is tagged as a Web site, Ben Freedman's company specializes in videotaping property tours for the owners to use as they choose. A narrator leads the walk-through, pointing out amenities or additions as requested by the property owner.



"We are a place for sellers and owners to create content," Freedman said. "Having a person in the video adds a sense of scale, and you get a much better sense of the property."

While the company initially focused on high-end homes, Freedman has expanded his target market to commercial properties, such as apartment complexes and industrial buildings, as well as small businesses. The videos are prepared for the owners and given to them to use however they please, whether it be posting it on the Multiple Listing Service or their own Web sites, or including it in direct-mail marketing.

Freedman previously worked as a scuba instructor in Mexico and founded and sold several technology companies. He is using his own capital and some investor funds for the new venture, he said.

Close-up

Kilburg carried hospitality career from hotel bellman to startup CEO

BY LISA POULIN | lpoulin@bizjournals.com

Bill Kilburg worked his way from a bellman to chief financial officer of the Scottsdale Plaza Resort.

"I carried luggage for all my years at Arizona State (University) as a bellman," said Kilburg. "I always had a drawer full of crumpled dollar bills."

He met Joe Forster, the resort's senior vice president of sales, in the mid-1990s. In 2002, the duo left the Plaza to launch the Hospitality Performance Network, which helps businesses select sites and secure the various services required for group meetings. Kilburg is chairman and CEO, responsible primarily for strategic growth.

"We looked at the marketplace. We had been on the hotel side dealing with third parties," he said. "There was a niche for one that was structured differently — a higher level for the associates and independent contractors."

The company has grown from two associates to 100 in North America, and plans are in the works for an international division.

Kilburg grew up in Chicago and moved with his family to Minnesota, then to Arizona in 1977. He received a degree in finance with a minor in real estate from ASU. He also is a certified public accountant.

He and his wife, Karin, have six kids, ages 5 months to 16 years. They live in North Scottsdale. "Since I have a very flexible schedule, I get to spend a lot of time with my kids. They are active in sports, so we do a lot of kid activities," Kilburg said. "My wife does all the coaching. I'm like the team mom."

For more: www.hperformance.com.



Kilburg

Social networking  
Businesses all a-Twitter

More businesses, universities, nonprofits and professional sports teams are creating Twitter accounts to announce news on popular social networking sites.

"Twitter is amazingly powerful, and if used correctly, all businesses can benefit from using it. Companies that aren't using Twitter are going to get left behind," said Jennifer Maggiore, CEO of Scottsdale-based Maggiore Consulting & Marketing. She said some businesses have private Twitter accounts to communicate internally with employees and clients, while others use it to market their businesses.

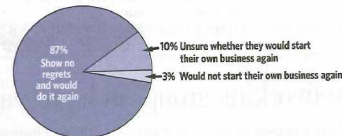
Twitter is especially popular with marketing and PR firms, but the Phoenix Suns and PetSmart Inc. are among those with institutional accounts.



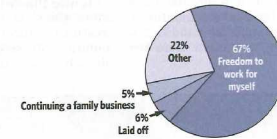
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Small-business stats

A poll of 478 small-business owners showed that, despite today's economic hardships, the vast majority are glad they went into business for themselves.



The survey also asked the reason for starting their own business:



Source: PayCycle Inc.