

Dear Members:

I am very excited to introduce our first Accelerent Quarterly Newsletter. This is one of the many enhancements we have made during the last few months. As you may have noticed, with the creation of the Member Services Division and the addition of both Orientations and Member Review Meetings, we have built substantial momentum coming into the fall. In fact, I was astounded by how many members have approached me during our recent events to share their enthusiasm.

We are delighted to see the increase in activity with new members joining Accelerent, new relationships being built between member companies... and of course the record breaking response to our most recent Breakfast Event.

Speaking of the Breakfast, I would be remiss if I didn't congratulate Virginia Commerce Bank on a hugely successful kick off to our event season with over 100 attendees to their Evening Reception and over 30 of their guests and employees at the Breakfast. We look forward to harnessing this great energy and continuing to generate new business opportunities for you!

-Troy Peple

HEADLINE CONNECTIONS

In July, two Accelerent members featured prominently in the Washington Business Journal. A cover story about NV Roofing, complete with cover photo, examined the company's new, environmentally-friendly roofing design and portrayed John Francis as an innovative leader within his field. Legum & Norman executives were quoted as expert sources for an article about homeowners associations, positioning their business as one of the area's top property management companies.

The value of getting an article – or even a passing mention – in the Journal or any other media outlet is obvious. What isn't apparent, however, is how newsworthy businesses and the media get connected. How reporters find stories, and how editors decide what makes the news is, to many executives, a mystery.

Here are a few tips on how to make the most of Accelerent's media connections – the Business Journal, Citadel Radio and Comcast Sportsnet are members – as well as reach out to other media.

Be part of a trend: The media love trend stories. The WBJ article that featured Legum & Norman was a trend piece about how homeowners associations are losing out on membership dues because of the foreclosure crisis. While this type of story won't revolve around one particular company, it can be excellent exposure. In featuring a quote, a piece of advice or some commentary given by an executive, these articles will position your company as a leader within the field.

The biggest trend story of this summer – and likely the entire year – is the economic downturn and how it impacts local businesses. Let editors know if your company is dealing with the recession in an intriguing way or if your business is effected in an unexpected manner, such as in Legum & Norman's case with the homeowners associations.
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BANKING ON ACCELERENT

Virginia Commerce Bank was ready to quit after one year in Accelerent. Even though VCB's well-trained sales force attended every Accelerent breakfast, the bank managed only to make one connection in 12 months. VCB's management had dismissed Accelerent as just another networking group "like BNI" and was ready to write off the membership fee as a failed investment.

Accelerent staff, however, had not given up. They convinced the bank to change its approach. That's when Vicki Adams got involved. Hired in September 2007 as the bank's new SVP Business Development Sales Manager, Vicki was tasked with evaluating the group and attended an Accelerent orientation. She was impressed by the tools the group offers. "This was so not BNI," she remembered thinking. Working closely with Accelerent staff, she quickly reformed the way her company was using the group.

Her efforts have paid off. Less than a year later, the bank has "more than covered the cost of Accelerent membership", having entered into high-value relationships with more than a dozen new clients. Vicki found that for VCB the secret formula for working with Accelerent was to focus, organize, follow up and bring value.

At the suggestion of Accelerent staff, Vicki selected a small cadre of her sales staff to focus on Accelerent. Vicki also began to schedule their attendance, use RSVP lists to assign member meetings and highlight members at sales meetings. She set goals and made her team accountable. Another important change was full attendance. Before, sales staff attended breakfasts but often missed other opportunities to meet members and build lasting relationships. Now, VCB is represented at every event, including orientations, which Vicki says always lead to meetings and appointments. Vicki also found that access to Accelerent events is a powerful value-add for many of her most important clients – and can lead to unexpected connections.

In Vicki's words: "We had been looking at Accelerent backwards. We stopped identifying and focusing on a few accounts and started bringing guests, introducing them to members and making connections for fellow members. I sometimes am able to connect members with my clients. Eventually members began to see us as a conduit to new business. I met with Stan Peregoy from Calvert Jones recently

and he said 'what can I do for you?' which was a funny experience because we are used to asking that question, not having it asked of us."

According to Michael Anzilotti, President, Virginia Commerce Bancorp, Inc., several factors played a role in their turnaround:

- Time
- Hiring Vicki
- Accelerent staff stayed after us to make it work
- The staff really worked with us to foster relationships
- We began to focus on sales management
- Vicki put together a system to exploit (in a good way) every potential relationship

Michael also noted that the bank took a different attitude to Accelerent: "we took a 'let's get to know you first and then see what works out' approach." As VCB changed their approach to Accelerent, they soon found that this changed the way Accelerent members perceived them. According to Anzilotti, after they changed their approach, their message began to resonate with fellow members. "Accelerent has allowed us to express what kind of bank we are. We're a perfect fit for Accelerent because we're all about community, commitment and involvement. Through Accelerent we can demonstrate what we're about."

"We've been thinking out of the box," said Vicki. "Although we're not doing business directly with some members, we are able to put people together and have found that that ultimately benefits us." VCB now considers Accelerent to be one of its primary business development tools.

HEADLINE CONNECTIONS (cont)

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Be an expert: Tracy Merzi, the advertising director for the Journal, said one important thing WBJ has gained from joining Accelerent is access to the leadership of such a wide variety of industries. While the Journal joined Accelerent in order to grow its subscription and advertising base, the paper has also come to value its fellow members as key resources for keeping in touch with, and relevant to, the business community. To take advantage of this, approach an editor or reporter (the Accelerent – Washington Business Journal breakfast was a perfect opportunity) and offer to be a source. Eventually, when the reporter is writing about your industry, he or she will be more likely to think of you as a resource for expertise and insight, and ask for an interview.

Be quotable: When it comes to working with the media, few things are more frustrating than interviewing with a reporter for 30 minutes only to find that you are either buried at the end of the article or, even worse, none of your quotes made the story. To prevent this, take a look at the highlighted quotes in magazines and newspapers and notice how these, in one or two colorful, succinct, sentences, encapsulate the point of the story. These are the sound bites that reporters look for.

When speaking to a reporter, use specific examples to illustrate your point. Try to avoid technical jargon and explain a complicated subject in a way that will be understandable to those outside your industry. For example, in his interview with the Business Journal Mike Myers of NV Roofing uses a vivid example to illustrate his position in what is a complex debate over green roofing design: "When you see a Prius driving down the road, it doesn't have vegetation on top, does it? But it's considered green." Using this kind of metaphor and colorful language is an excellent way to ensure your point gets published.

For reporters working on a feature story, the easy part is gathering facts and statistics. What is not so simple to come by is insightful expert commentary. Legum & Norman won a major piece of the homeowner association article largely because Executive Vice President John Rhodes offered a perceptive forecast: "This is really the first big year of foreclosures," Rhodes said. "Associations are now putting together their budgets for next year, and that's when they'll really see the first big impact."

Beyond an increase in subscriptions and ad sales, it is this kind of access which really makes Accelerent work for the Business Journal. And as with so many other Accelerent connections, the relationships they are building are firmly grounded and highly valuable to both parties.

THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE?

Scott MacDonald
Broker/Owner – RE/MAX Gateway

With hurricanes and finance dominating the headlines, we can't help but ask, are we in the eye of a hurricane or did we just weather the storm of the century?

Obviously, September was a rough month for the financial world, to say the least. First, it was the government takeover of Freddie and Fannie, next it was Merrill Lynch and the buyout by Bank of America, then it was reported that new home construction fell to its lowest point in 17 years. The bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, the Federal bailout of AIG, and the Washington Mutual collapse all happened within days of a tumultuous debate over a federal bailout approaching a trillion dollars.

Where does this leave those of us with an interest in the real estate business? So far, the impact has been positive on the rate front. We saw a decline in mortgage rates – woo hoo! We are no longer a "declining market" in Northern Virginia for conventional financing (loans less than \$417,000) and we can finance up to 95% on conventional loans again. Price points below \$300,000 continue to solicit more and more offers, which is bringing up values. This could be signaling a bottoming-out of prices in that market. At the same time we are beginning to see banks work with sellers in short sale situations. This makes these types of sales more viable today than they have been in previous months. I call that positive.

Low prices, low rates, and a bottoming-out market should mean that we've weathered the storm. We shall see. Hopefully, we are through it and not just taking a breather. As I may end up on my back looking at our market from the ground up, I should point out what I once heard when making predictions: "don't give a date if you give a number, don't give a number if you give a date and finally, if you get it right, don't look surprised." Let's see where I end up and how I look next quarter!

As of September 18th:

13,502	Active # of Resales
34%	% of market that's vacant
3,576	Resales Under Contract last 30 days
3.7	Month Supply of Resale Houses
3,294	Active # of Rentals
1,477	Rentals rented last 30 days
2.2	Month Supply of Rentals

CONTACT

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Visit us online at www.accelerent.com

ON THE HORIZON:

October 2008 Events

- 10/07 Roundtable hosted by K.C. Company, Inc. (Invitation Only)
- 10/08 Accelerent Orientation hosted by Aronson & Company
- 10/16 Evening Reception with Bob Somerby hosted by Aronson & Company
- 10/17 Breakfast Event hosted by Aronson & Company
- 10/22 Accelerent Orientation hosted by E-Structors, Inc.
- 10/29 Roundtable hosted by Facchina Group of Companies (Invitation Only)

November 2008 Events

- 11/04 Accelerent Orientation hosted by Windows Catering Company
- 11/05 Roundtable hosted by Vistage (Invitation Only)
- 11/06 Roundtable hosted by INOVA Health Systems (Invitation Only)
- 11/12 Roundtable hosted by Flooring America (Invitation Only)
- 11/20 Evening Reception with Matt Eversmann hosted by BELFOR USA Group, Inc.
- 11/21 Breakfast Event hosted by BELFOR USA Group, Inc.

NOTE: Please use www.accelerent.com to view updated event calendars, get event details and to RSVP.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Some of the recent new business which members have developed through Accelerent:

The Brickman Group acquired a landscaping agreement with a prestigious 3000 acre resort.

Destination Cellars welcomed AOC Solutions as one of its newest members.

Flooring America has completed 7 residential projects, including Hilary Fordwich, Gale Paige and Lynda Mann's homes and four of Bryan Felder's clients' homes. They are also working on three large commercial bids with Facchina.

Impact Office Products signed long term agreements with both Remax and Rutherford.

NV Roofing recently completed over \$230,000 in residential and commercial business through member referrals.

Verasolve signed five new clients through Accelerent in recent months: Bean, Kinney, & Korman, RE/MAX Gateway, Service Force USA, Davelle Clothiers and Paradigm Leadership Solutions, for a variety of services ranging from research and marketing plan development to ongoing marketing and PR programs.

Virginia Commerce Bank locked in 3 mortgage loans from the September breakfast.

Accelerent Welcomes its Newest Washington, DC Metro Members

- The Ezra Company introduced by US Business Interiors
- Rosenthal Automotive introduced by DHR International Executive Search
- SigNet Technologies introduced by E-Structors
- Vistage International introduced by Accelerent
- Impact Office Supplies introduced by DHR International Executive Search
- The Palm Restaurant introduced by The Washington Group