



# Newsletter 3

## President's Message

### The Grass is MUCH Greener. . . with Systems

Last summer in late August I was in the kitchen at home looking out the window, half daydreaming, and it occurred to me how green our grass looked. This struck me because usually in August the grass gets a little brown, weeds somehow gain strength, and I generally feel like I've neglected it. Although we have a sprinkler system, I usually try to run it when it needs to be run, as opposed to the Ron Popeil "set it and forget it" method. Kind of the same approach with fertilizer. No real schedule, just apply it whenever I determine that it's time.

But last year was different. Half way through the summer, I recognized that the pattern described above was beginning. So I took the time to program the sprinkler timer and LEAVE IT ALONE. I also decided to farm out the fertilizing to a company that had a *system* of applications.

Six weeks later, there I am, looking out the window, realizing that the system is producing results. Darn good results. The system is keeping my grass green and weed free. My lawn looked better than it had in 4 years. Not exactly rocket-science, but I was impressed.

I've heard lots of "gurus" talk about the importance of systems for producing results in business. But on this particular day, the analogy hit home. We need a similar "system" for marketing, to keep our sales pipeline healthy. We need a system for the sales process, instead of "winging it" with each new prospect. We need a system for operations and the "deliverable". And we need a system for feedback on how we're doing in the minds of our customers – to keep the "weeds" from taking root.

Sales trainer Chet Holmes says sales growth is not about doing 100 things, it's about doing 7 things over and over with pig-headed persistence. Most of us try to do sales & marketing like I tried to manage my lawn. . . hap-hazardly. But this usually results in brown grass and frustration. Marketing guru Dan Kennedy says systems – even flawed systems – are better than well executed "random acts of marketing".

We're already past the mid-point of 2010 – *how are your systems doing? Are they producing results???*

**Bird Grill Update.** If you read the last issue of the newsletter, you'll remember that we had a bird's nest with eggs in it in our BBQ Grill (see newsletter archive if you missed it – [www.michigancfo.com/newsletter-archive](http://www.michigancfo.com/newsletter-archive)). Well, I'm proud to announce the arrival of at least 3 "little ones" hatched in said BBQ grill (see photo). Unfortunately, their time with us was short-lived, presumably due to my kids opening the grill 50 times a day to see them. Our guess is the



Three newest members of the Rammler family: Chirpy, Steve, and Mr. Feathers, named by my son Josh. I suggested the name "Cheapy" but my wife said that name was already taken.

mother relocated the family under cover of night, as all birds and eggs were gone one morning after we had just seen them the night before.

As a result of this bird invasion, I am also the proud owner of a NEW BBQ Grill, complete with the latest "anti-nesting technology". At least that's what the astute salesman told me.

**IMPORTANT – CONTEST.** Check out our New Client Drive contest on P.2 to see how your "Early Bird" reply could get you some great rewards. Don't miss this opportunity!

Best Regards,

Todd Rammler, CMA, MSA  
President

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**View past newsletters online!**

[www.michigancfo.com/newsletter-archive](http://www.michigancfo.com/newsletter-archive)





## What's Happening?

**Website update.** Over the past few months we've "freshened up" our website, improving menus, navigation, content/resources and aesthetics. You can now find staff bio's, FAQ's, articles & whitepapers, interviews, webinars, events and much more. If you haven't visited in a while, check it out now! [www.michiganCFO.com](http://www.michiganCFO.com)

**New Client Drive.** Here's your official "Early Bird" notice: We'll be running a **New Client Drive contest beginning 8/9/2010** that you DO NOT want to miss! If you've got a friend, colleague, family member, golf buddy - who would benefit from what we do (i.e., someone who wants to generate more profit & cash flow in their business), we're holding a contest with **great rewards for your participation**. Specifics will be sent out shortly, but start thinking now about who you know that doesn't have the counsel of a CFO for strategic thinking in banking, margin improvement, cash flow, expansion, capital deployment, etc. **This role is not optional in the present economy.** Watch your in-box and/or mailbox for details! (If you'd like to jump in early, [email us](mailto:email_us) your contact's info right now while you're thinking about it, or fill out the enclosed reply form and fax it to us - and you'll be entered ahead of the pack!).

**New Faces.** In the past few months we've been busy adding talented staff members to the Michigan CFO team. Here's a brief recap:

**David Hodges, CFO.** With over 25 years financial and business management experience working primarily with small and medium-sized businesses, David has broad industry experience as well as government accounting experience. As a "hands on" professional, one thing David understands most about businesses today is the need for good cash management. He has successfully implemented cash control and cash savings plans that help companies get through tough financial times. David is a **Certified Management Accountant (CMA)**, has a Bachelor of Accountancy Degree from Walsh College and an MBA in Accounting and Finance from American Intercontinental University. David can be reached at 586.580.3285 x204 or at [dhodges@michigancfo.com](mailto:dhodges@michigancfo.com).



**Leigh Landis, Office Manager.** Leigh is responsible for ensuring the daily operations run efficiently. She supports the entire Michigan CFO team, responsible for internal accounting, administration, marketing, and communications. She is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Accountancy degree at Macomb Community College. Leigh can be reached at 586.580.3285 x202 or at [leigh@michigancfo.com](mailto:leigh@michigancfo.com).

## A New Kind of Tax Reform: Are You Paying "The Stupid Tax"?

I've read a couple articles on this subject from different sources, so I'm not sure who to give the credit to - it may belong to Dave Ramsey, Dr. Charlie Martin or someone else entirely. In any case, I thought I'd share the message with you, tweaked slightly with the Michigan CFO spin.

**When he spoke** the room grew quiet. What he said next gave the entire assemblage one of the biggest ah-ha's of the entire conference. First, he related how he had tried to go it alone and how much he had spent. It was nearly fifty thousand a month promoting his business. His tone foreshadowed his next words.



*"I had been paying **the stupid tax** month in and month out because I thought I could go it alone. Yet when I finally did get the advice and assistance I needed, my promotional spend dropped to twenty-five thousand a month with better results."*

John's admission created more than a little buzz in the room as each member of the crowd reflected on his own life and the "stupid tax" he had paid on more than one occasion. It was one of those unexpected learning moments - a treasure that made the entire day worthwhile all by itself.

How many forms of the stupid tax have you seen others pay? *How many have you paid yourself?*

**First, the definition of stupid tax: the money, time, energy or effort you paid or lost needlessly.** The stupid tax is an error that costs you when it didn't have to.

Patients pay this toll repeatedly - waiting until the problems are so bad that the time, energy and expense to repair them mount to thousands or tens of thousands of dollars.

The tax is paid when one keeps doing the same thing over and over and expects a different result.

The tax is levied when one fails to act when one knows he should.

The tax is extracted from one's bank account when trying to go it alone, lacking expertise in a field where an expert is needed.

This "unnecessary fee" is paid when one fails to implement strategies that work.

The tax comes due when trying to go cheap when you shouldn't.

The tax gets paid when patience is required and impatience reigns.

The tax is paid when one doesn't nurture one's leads and doesn't continue to communicate with both leads and existing customers.

The stupid tax is life's way of teaching us lessons - hopefully only once instead of several times over.

**Do you know someone who is paying one now? Can you help them?**

**CONTINUED ON P.3**



## Client Spotlight on...

### Anthony Schena, CEO, Schena Roofing



**Schena Roofing** ([www.schenaroofting.com](http://www.schenaroofting.com)) is a commercial and industrial roofing contractor, started in 1969 by George Schena. They are certified installers of all major roofing manufacturers. They pride themselves on their customer service and long relationships that have been built over the past 41 years.

#### **How has Schena Roofing been able to survive for 41 years? What are the keys to longevity?**

We have a very loyal and talented staff. We have built great relationships with our clients, suppliers, manufacturers and employees. We maintain a strong family culture the keeps the work environment comfortable. I also have a strong faith in God and attribute that to most of our success.



Anthony Schena, CEO

#### **What makes Schena Roofing different from other contractors?**

We keep our company at a comfortable size to easily adjust to the economic demand. I don't want to be the biggest, I just want to be the best. We also take customer service seriously. Most of our business is based on referrals (emphasis added) from satisfied customers. We like to build relationships that last a lifetime and not for just one job.

#### **What's the outlook in your industry for the balance of 2010? What are you excited about?**

I am very excited about 2010. This year has had a much stronger start than 2009. I see many positive indicators in our state through my associations with customers and suppliers. Consumers appear to be ready to spend money. We don't expect any big windfalls this year but we are keeping a steady pace.

#### **What is the biggest challenge you're facing right now?**

Our biggest challenge is going to be keeping busy through the winter months. Consumers think that roofing in the winter time is not an option. Technology has now given us a few options to successfully install good roofs in the cold winter months.

#### **In addition to the automotive industry, the economy has been particularly bad for construction. How has your industry changed over the past few years?**

We chose to shift our focus in the state of Michigan to repairs and maintenance. We still have large replacement projects and some new construction projects. Many business owners have been choosing to maintain and repair what they have instead of the big replacement expense.

#### **What's the most expensive lesson you've learned in business?**

I feel that being true to myself if the biggest lesson I have learned. We cannot hide from problems and expect them to go away. The past few years have been tough and I wouldn't change it if I had the chance. I have grown personally and professionally as a result of hard times.

#### **Best book you've read in the past 12 months & why?**

There are two. The first is "[Managing Thought](#)" by Mary Lore. Mary does an excellent job of representing the limiting beliefs we put on ourselves in both our business and our personal lives. With some simple adjustments we can recognize the true issues that are holding back our development, progress and happiness.

The second is the classic by Dr. Seuss, "[Oh the Places You'll Go.](#)" It's a simple reminder of the normal ups and downs in life. I see so many people stuck in the "Waiting Place" instead of choosing to make something happen. I have been there and it is a long wait. I chose to stop waiting and things started to happen.

#### **Top 5 tunes on your iPod?**

I really enjoy listening to Christian Rock. It's great music with a purpose.

1. Alive - Pocket Full of Rocks
2. Free to Be Me - Francesca Battistelli
3. My Last Amen - Downhere
4. Devotion - Newsboys
5. I Will Lift My eyes - Bebo Norman

#### **How can people get a hold of you?**

**Anthony Schena** can be reached at (586) 949-4777 or at [aschena@schenaroofting.com](mailto:aschena@schenaroofting.com)

#### **CONTINUED FROM P. 2**

**Editor's Note:** Financial Examples of "**The Stupid Tax**" that must eventually be paid:

- Not knowing your margins by product/service/family/customer/location;*
- Lacking a tangible financial plan & target;*
- Lackadaisical cash management & planning;*
- Relying on unqualified financial people for strategic decision making;*
- Failing to "grow up" as a company and recognize present limitations.*

**"What got you here, won't get you there."**

## Michigan CFO Associates

The CFOs for *Small Business*

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# Newsletter ③

## Michigan CFO Associates

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Michigan CFO Presents. . .  
**Fun with BP**

"The BP president said yesterday that the company would survive. That's like someone running over your dog and saying, 'Don't worry, my car is fine.'" —Jimmy Fallon

"Here's a little bit of good news. The Coast Guard says that BP is now catching up to 630,000 gallons of oil a day. The bad news is that they're capturing it with ducks."  
—Jimmy Fallon



**We're bringing oil to American shores.**

"Scientists say they have developed a car that can run on water. The only catch is, the water has to come from the Gulf of Mexico."  
—Jay Leno

"On Monday, British Petroleum promised to pay all necessary cleanup costs for this oil spill. And they said they will do it, no matter how much they have to raise gas prices."  
—Jay Leno

"British Petroleum said today that if this spill gets worse, they may soon have to start drilling for water."  
—Jay Leno

"This Tony Haywire guy, whatever his name is, he told the BBC on Sunday that he believes the new oil cap that they've installed will eventually capture the vast majority of oil spewing from the well. You know, if they could capture half the BS spewing from Tony Hayward, people would be thrilled."  
—Jay Leno

"This is the worst thing to happen to beaches since the Speedo."  
—Bill Maher

"A new poll found that 43 percent of Americans think President Obama is doing a good job at handling the BP oil spill. Of course, the same poll found that 43 percent of Americans hate pelicans."  
—Jimmy Fallon



"This oil spill in the Gulf is affecting everybody. In fact, when I went to lunch this weekend and ordered the sea bass, they asked if I wanted it regular or unleaded."  
—David Letterman