



## CEI At 25 --- What Made It Happen?

*"To win, you have to get people who want more out of life than a paycheck."*

~George Allen, football coach

*"People who cannot invent and reinvent themselves must be content with borrowed postures, secondhand ideas, fitting in instead of standing out." ~Warren Bennis*

It's difficult for me to believe that Competitive Edge, Inc. is celebrating twenty-five years in business; the time has gone by so swiftly. One evening after my staff had left for the day and the telephone had quit ringing for a short while, I sat down with my cup of coffee to take stock of what we have accomplished in these few short years. What came to mind were the original goals I had set for my company, the values I wanted to share, the product I wanted to deliver and how. Being a people person, my intended mission was to help make the world a better place by helping people understand themselves and others.

Then I remembered an exercise I had completed when I went through the Train-the-Trainer Program for *Adventures in Attitudes* in 1984 where the instructor, Bob Pike, had the attendees complete a Total Life Goal Planning Worksheet. So I went, once more, to my bookshelf and pulled out that very old, yellowed and handwritten exercise that I did so long ago. Little did I know it then, but I now realize that my next two decades were defined during that exercise. It has been my unconscious roadmap and one, which I believe, has been my personal "Northstar."

Upon reviewing my goal planning worksheet, I realized that it was the clarity of my mission and purpose in life that has helped me sustain this business with even more passion than I had in 1984. One of my goals was to give at least one hour of my time and expertise every week to another person without any expectations of reciprocation.

Another was to spend at least one month a year on professional growth to learn from others and to form a network of consultants that complement each others' strengths and weaknesses and who would share my mission in life to make it a better world.

My overall plan for achieving my goals called for maintaining a positive mental attitude, setting daily, weekly and monthly goals along with focusing on long-term objectives and priorities. I also vowed to never stop learning and to remain open to new ideas and change and to share my knowledge with others. With the intensity of change we experience today, I am so thankful that I added those exercises to my objectives.

My goal planning worksheet included spirituality goals: to continue to look for the spark in each individual and to respect the dignity of all people by practicing humility. To connect my purpose in life to my financial status I decided then and there that I would volunteer my talents to persons/groups who could not otherwise afford my services. Here again, I saw my original mission and purpose which was to make this a better world for everyone by using my ability to impact the lives of others.

Therefore, my goal for 2008 is to continue to be true to the original commitments I made in 1984. In addition, I made the commitment to repeat the *Adventures in Attitudes* training (now called AiA Classic) again in January, which I did, and to offer this as an additional program to further enrich the lives of my clients' organizations and their people. For more information about AiA Classic please contact our office at 770-487-6460 or [www.competitiveedgeinc.com](http://www.competitiveedgeinc.com) and click on products.

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## CEI Introduces a New Training Tool...

Competitive Edge, Inc. is pleased to announce the **Discovery Map Game**, a new experiential product that will enhance your training sessions. The **Discovery Map Game** was designed as a visual representation of the **DISC Model** overlaid onto an actual map of a country. Participants play the game by being dealt cards that have a particular place on them which they have to locate within a specified time frame. There are five different game options created depending upon the time frame available and familiarity of the participants with **DISC**. The purpose of the game is to help participants recognize the behavioral difference of the people who reside in the different regions.

For more information on the **Discovery Map Game**, call our office @ 770-487-6460 or go to our website, [www.competitiveedgeinc.com](http://www.competitiveedgeinc.com) for pricing.

## What's Ahead...

According to a 2006 report released by the National Endowment for the Arts, "To Read or Not to Read," today's literacy rates are similar to those in the 1970s. However, the report continues, the economy itself is not the same because today's workers are required to read and analyze complex, often very technical material. So, once again, it looks as if the education of young people has been transferred to the business world as more and more companies are finding it necessary to teach basic skills. Perhaps entrepreneurs with teaching skills will step in to fill the vacuum left by our educational system and relieve businesses of the burden of doing what our schools do not.

**VoIP** is on the move. According to Avaya, a leading telecommunications company, in 2005, companies worldwide installed more new VoIP phone lines than conventional lines. Among the advantages for business use of VoIP is that employees can be reached on an extension in your phone system anywhere they happen to be, even if they are using cell phones. A Harris Interactive poll reports that 87% of business decision makers reported being aware of VoIP, 36% of consumers said they were not, and 25% believed it was a European hybrid vehicle, a new Internet search engine or a low-carb vodka.

Additional communication information reported by three Harris Poll surveys of a total of 6,748 adults finds:

- 18% of U.S. adults, *only* use a landline phone
- 11% use just their cell phones and 2% use just VoIP
- 5% use either a cell phone or VoIP.

### Technology Spinoffs...

A survey of 3,000 people by Trinity University in Ireland found that 25% did not know their home telephone number. Not surprising as more and more of us rely on PDAs, cell phones and computers for remember our numbers. On average, the survey found, the respondents had at least five passwords, five PINS, five security IDs, three bank account numbers, and two license plate combinations to remember. Memory atrophy could be on the rise since memory grows weaker when not used. (*Business Week*, July 30, 2007)

## Five Signs That People Hide Things from You

1. A sudden decline in information flow from one person or team.
2. Visibly deteriorating morale.
3. Ambiguous oral messages that require digging from you.
4. Nonverbal signals, such as defeatist body language or a growing number of people working behind closed doors.
5. Outside signals, such as customer complaints or slowing orders.

-from "Nobody Trusts the Boss Completely: Now What?" by Fernando Bartolomé

## And If You Want A Very Different Career...

These out-of-the-mainstream jobs were included in Rica Schiff's book, *Odder Jobs: More Portraits of Unusual Occupations*. We thought you might find them amusing:

1. **Dog Sniffers** - Once a week, they analyze dogs' breath to test the effect of their dogs' diet on their teeth.
2. **Ball Testers** - They test basketball, footballs, volleyball and soccer balls for air-retention, inflation, roundness, weight and rebound ability.
3. **Foley artists** - The noises and sound effects you hear in films are produced by this rare group.
4. **Dieners** - They prepare cadavers before autopsies are performed.
5. **Breath Odor Evaluators** - If morning breath and garlic smells don't offend you, this job wouldn't bother you at all.

## What Judy is Reading...

### **Mavericks at Work: Why the Most Original Minds in Business Win by William C. Taylor and Polly LaBarre**

In their introduction, Taylor and LaBarre present a 35 year-old quote from Alan Kay, a well-known computer scientist: "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." What the authors have done is to explore how 32 companies, executives and entrepreneurs have set their organizations apart from others who are simply playing off the competition to meet their numbers. Business as usual is not part of *The Mavericks'* vocabulary as they are seen as disruptors of the present mindset that pervades many organizations that continue to "play it safe," while at the same time remaining true to their values.

One of the more fascinating organizations highlighted by Taylor and LaBarre is ING Direct USA, one of the fastest growing retail banks in the country whose president and CEO believes in the old-fashioned value of savings which is an anomaly to most banks today. Everything they offer is simple and easy to understand from savings, CDs and no-frills home mortgages, all offered online rather than in local branches on every corner; it is an Internet-based savings bank that deemphasizes credit cards. And I, being naturally curious about this organization, went online and here is what I found: On their products page, everything refers to savings of one type or another and mortgage information, nothing about other lending practices. Unbelieving, I fired off an email asking them about credit cards; here's what they told me: "We do not offer credit cards – we encourage savings." So here we have it: a bank that is truly a disruptor by not offering credit cards, the real money-maker for their competitors.

While Taylor and LaBarre present additional original and disrupting ideas from the likes of a film studio, a 120-year-old research facility, a hard-charging hedge fund group, and an office furniture manufacturer in Green Bay, Wisconsin, among others, we can best summarize the goals of this book in their own words:

*"...to restore the promise of business as a force for innovation, satisfaction and progress, rather than as a source of revulsion, remorse and recrimination...despite all the bleak headlines and blood-boiling scandals over the last five years.."*

The book's major theme, "The best way to out-perform the competition is to out-think the competition," is thoroughly validated by Taylor and LaBarre. The 32 organizations highlighted in *Mavericks at Work* each display creativity and originality along with the courage of experimentation, those ideals that all organizations need to perform successfully in an uncertain business climate. For certain, they have something to teach us all.

In addition, Judy recommends Fast Company's "**Ten Years of the Most Innovative Ideas in Business**," a collection of their magazine's best articles that are a great source of inspiration. In it, Tom Peters gives the answer to the IBM ad in a chapter on "The Brand Called You," with his discussion on power, loyalty and four things to measure yourself against. Marshall Goldsmith chimes in with his chapter on, "Adding Value---But at What Cost?" by arguing that our quest to add value may have its costs on employee engagement. If you want to learn how to "reinvent" yourself or your organization, Linda Tischler's article on Cirque du Soleil will lend you some ideas on change. For a huge dose of inspiration, the "Genius at Work" article about Bill Strickland, a potter turned social entrepreneur, is all about unleashing one's passion to help change the world. This book is a quick read and well worth your time.

## Upcoming Events

### Training for Success Train the Trainer Program

**April 23, 2008 through April 25, 2008**

**The Hampton Inn, Peachtree City, GA**

**Your investment for all three days is \$1195.00** (Please note that this price will increase in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2008 to \$1495.00)

The April Train-the-Trainer is an extra session added because of high demand. Register early as these classes fill quickly, and we often have a waiting list. (Our May Train-the-Trainer is sold out.)

Please register by April 9, 2008. A cancellation fee will be charged if you cancel after April 16<sup>th</sup> for other than emergency situations.

## Keeping Your High Performers...

A recent article in the Atlanta Business Chronicle exposes the legal risks involved when employees, namely job-hopping managers, choose to leave an organization. Many of these people leave in groups to form independent firms or to work for the competition. Several of the suits filed by employers are against former employees who have taken proprietary information with them and have violated a non-compete clause. Often, former employees file countersuits alleging their former employers libeled them.

Despite the fact that employees will continue to leave corporations for various reasons, there are numerous methods and strategies to head off their departures. For instance, create a work environment that allows for both flexibility and creativity and provides full worker engagement. Small things such as appreciation in both compensation and words will go a long way to keep employees happy. Initially, the best way to ensure employee retention is to make certain that the person you hire, in the first place, is suited to the job and the work culture. You can avoid many employee problems by benchmarking positions before a person is hired and then by using validated assessments matching the jobs to the individuals. For the best available assessments for your use, contact us @ [www.competitiveedgeinc.com](http://www.competitiveedgeinc.com).

*"Do you see the forest? Or the trees? High performers see both."* ~Accenture Golf Ad, Newsweek, May 1, 2006

*"So much has been given to me; I have no time to ponder over that which has been denied."* ~Helen Keller

*"Hidden within every disadvantage or obstacle is an equally powerful opportunity."*  
~Napoleon Hill

*"Success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines practiced every day, while failure is simply a few errors in judgment repeated every day."*  
~Jim Rohn