

Just Ask the Expert

This general information is not intended to provide individual advice. Schedule an appointment with an expert to discuss your particular situation and needs. Questions sent to our experts may be answered in future "JUST ASK THE EXPERT" pages.

Commercial Real Estate Development

Q:

Are any of the new green technologies good for business?



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A: Green roofs and pervious concrete pavement can protect our environment and reduce costs for the developer and the consumer. Green roofs treat and store water while reducing energy demand by as much as 45 percent. In addition, green roofs lower the heat signature of a building by as much as 50 percent. For a developer, it decreases the land necessary for water treatment; for the environment it provides great water treatment, and improves air quality; and for those paying the utility bill, it decreases the cost while reducing demand on public water, sewer and electricity. Even more impressive, green roofs can last more than 60 years.

Like green roofs, pervious concrete can reduce the need for stormwater infrastructure, such as pipes, drains and retention ponds. That's because pervious concrete lets 80 percent of rain soak directly into the ground.

Going "green" triples the bottom line for the environment, developer and consumer.



Call Grady for a more detailed explanation, or for specific information on commercial real estate development.

Management & Leadership

Q:

The word "Strategy" is used so often in business that it is hard to really understand what it means. What is "Strategy" and how can I create an organization that truly has one?



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A: Strategy is in essence your business plan. It should be easy to communicate and be described in terms of how your company acts differently than others. In order to answer "What is our Strategy?" your company must decide:

1. The industry are you in, and
2. What is different about your company within your chosen industry?

If you can't describe your strategy in two words or two themes then chances are you don't have one. However, identifying how you are different is merely the first step. In order for your strategy to provide you with a competitive advantage you must be fanatical about aligning all activities and resources around building this position while also having the discipline to stay focused. Once this is accomplished it will force your competitors to choose between maintaining their current position and attacking yours.



Call Sean for a more detailed explanation, or for specific information on management & leadership.

Employee Health Benefits

Q:

We fully insure our health insurance, and our renewal came in at a single-digit increase. We don't receive claims experience from our current insurance company, so we aren't sure if we have good claims experience. However, if we receive a single digit increase, does this mean we might be a good candidate for self funding?



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A: If you have a relatively healthy population and/or a history of good claims experience the chances of single-digit renewal increases are greater in a self-funded environment than a fully insured one. When employees have good health, claims are usually lower.

You can obtain this information from your current carrier, or submit underwriting information that would allow a carrier specializing in self-funding to determine whether your company would be a good candidate. If the results are positive, you should know that under the fully insured plan, you likely will not benefit from a strong record of employee health.

The fully insured model pools costs of an entire segment to set an average price. Therefore, the majority of groups within the segment tend to subsidize the higher-cost companies. With self-funding, you can back out of the pool and benefit directly from your own claims experience.



For more information about self-funding and employee benefits, please contact Tracy Carter at tracy.carter@gwl.com.

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