

## SHORT FORM

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#### Hey, boss! How am I doing?



#### Motivation Matters

Dr. Paul P. Baard

While it's true many workers dread performance feedback, most employees really do want to know how they are doing. Indeed, for the sake of motivation, they need to know. One cannot satisfy the psychological need for competence — essential to the experience of intrinsic or self-motivation — without getting feedback on current performance, so adjustments can be made if appropriate. This is how people are enabled to grow and excel.

The problem is with how this feedback is administered. Too often the experience almost devolves into character assassination. With annual performance evaluations around the corner (I will be addressing those formal matters in an upcoming column), this is a good time for managers to get some things in place. After all, no manager wants to win the "evaluation disaster of the year" prize (some HR departments actually have such a designation, as an inside joke, of course). If there is only one serious discussion about performance in a year, that talk will be overburdened. Here's an alternative.

The first thing that needs to be addressed is where the manager's heart is. If resentment has been building up toward a subordinate — perhaps because you suspect him of criticizing you behind your back, or maybe she habitually arrives late for your weekly staff meetings — the process of providing feedback may be viewed as a chance to get even.

If you intend to demean such an employee, then conflict is likely to follow. In order to be effective, the communication must be viewed as an opportunity to constructively address any shortcomings. For managers who want to get over their own anxiety, which often accompanies giving subordinates honest feedback, a few ideas follow.

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## Credit cards are back, in a more sensible way

By KEVIN G. HALL  
McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — America's torrid love affair with the credit card appears over. In its place is a less passionate, more stable relationship.

Wild spending and mounting personal debt characterized the run-up to the 2008 financial crisis. The subsequent Great Recession was marked by frugality

and a long slog back. Now Americans are comfortable enough to take on more debt, especially credit card debt. Just not too much.

That was evident in Federal Reserve data released last week that showed the amount of credit extended to consumers grew at an annual rate of 9.7 percent in July. Revolving credit — bank-issued credit cards and retail store cards —

grew at an annual rate of 7.4 percent. That was almost three times June's annualized rate of 2.5 percent.

The growth rate stands out when compared with last year, when the full-year rate of the growth of debt on bank cards and retail cards was 1.3 percent. Card debt was largely flat in the two previous years, and it had fallen sharply in 2009 and 2010, when Americans

frowned on debt.

The website CardHub, a place for consumers to shop for cards and rates, projects a \$41.9 billion net increase in credit card debt this year, 8 percent more than in 2013 and 14 percent above 2012.

A CardHub study earlier this year raised concerns that consumers are paying off less debt than they did a year ago.

Signs of a credit bubble as

before the crisis? Theodore Iacobuzio, MasterCard's vice president of global insights, a research unit, isn't worried.

"Yes, people are going back to using the credit card, but they're not going back to how they used them before," he said.

Before the financial crisis, Americans had about

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Big Idea Group CEO Mike Collins and president Beth Obermiller stand in the lobby of their Bedford office, where they "incubate" and partner with startup businesses.

CASSIDY SWANSON

## Big Idea Group a startup breeding ground

By CASSIDY SWANSON  
Union Leader Correspondent

BEDFORD — By his own admission, Bedford-based Big Idea Group Chief Executive Officer Mike Collins says his firm is "the most interesting company no one even knows about."

"We are probably are involved with the actual starting of more businesses than probably anybody in New Hampshire," he said. "We're in kind of a nondescript little building off 101, and we go in and think about starting businesses every day."

Collins, who graduated from Dartmouth College in 1986, went to work for venture capitol firm TA Associates in Boston after earning

a degree in engineering. It was here that he caught the startup bug.

"My whole career's been starting businesses, investing in startups as an angel investor, helping people get their businesses off the ground, dealing with inventors and their ideas," said Collins, who earned an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1992.

He went on to start a toy company called Kid Galaxy, which is still based in Manchester. He sold the company in 1999 and started BIG, located at 360 Route 101 No. 4A, the same year. Collins employs three other people.

"We help people with ideas that want to start a business but are stuck,"

“We help people with ideas that want to start a business but are stuck.”

MIKE COLLINS

Big Idea Group chief executive officer

Collins said. "We help unstick them, in essence."

The other side of the business, as Collins explained, is a "new business incubator." When a client has an idea that BIG thinks has great potential, the

company offers to partner in business with the client.

"At any one time, we're probably working on 10 projects with people that have inventions or ideas about starting businesses," Collins said. "Out of that work, we start a business or two a year."

Some of BIG's portfolio businesses it has partnered with are NextHire, a hiring platform for medium-sized businesses; Statusfy, a question-and-answer platform that helps blogs and business websites improve reader engagement; and Launch Angels, a venture capital firm focused on alumni affinity groups.

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## Food companies, restaurants add protein to beef up profits

By YASMEEN ABUTALEB  
Reuters

NEW YORK — Though diet studies disagree about what's worse for you, carbohydrates or fat, most say nice things about eating protein, including its potential for better weight control.

U.S. consumers have taken note, and so have food manufacturers and restaurant chains. More than a dozen companies have introduced new products or meals that are "enriched" or "fortified" with protein in the last few years, and the protein push is accelerating.

In July, Taco Bell started selling high-protein meals, which contain Greek yogurt options and twice the meat as in its traditional burritos and bowls. In May, General Mills Inc. introduced protein-enriched Cheerios, which provided a bright spot at its Wednesday earnings call. In February, Kraft started selling a "protein pack" with meat, cheese and nuts.

Protein has so far scored a big win for the companies, which are looking for



The nutritional labels of two types of Cheerios cereal, one with protein, left, and one without, in this photo taken in Wilmette, Ill. Sept. 12. Protein has so far scored a big win for companies which are looking for new ways to beef up their profits as sales of traditional prepared foods slip and consumers seek healthier and fresher food options.

REUTERS/JIM YOUNG

new ways to beef up their profits as sales of traditional prepared foods slip and consumers seek healthier and fresher food options. The trend also has been a boon for the mostly Canadian "pulse" industry, which provides the dried seeds of peas, chickpeas, beans and lentils used to fortify many of these products.

Whether these protein-enhanced products are actually healthier is another

question. Soy, lentil and pea powder — extracted from those legumes and used in everything from pasta to milk — are, in fact, good sources of protein similar to steak or eggs, nutritionists said. But many of the products they are delivered in, such as granola, cereal and breakfast bars, are often high in fat, salt or sugar.

Besides, most Americans already get almost twice the daily protein they need. The average American con-

sumes 79 grams a day of protein, but men only need 56 grams and women 46, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

"Protein is not deficient in U.S. diets," said Marion Nestle, professor of nutrition and public health at New York University. "This is about marketing."

Some studies have said that because eating foods high in protein makes people feel fuller sooner, they tend to eat less and may be able to control their weight better. On the other hand, eating too much protein can lead to kidney disease, cancer and osteoporosis, while adults who eat diets high in animal protein are four times more likely to die of cancer and diabetes than those with low-protein diets, according to a March 2014 study published in the journal *Cell Metabolism*.

To be sure, people would need to consume at least twice their recommended daily amount to potentially suffer serious health consequences, according to the USDA. The recommended

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## Inventing out of the box: A short history of the fax machine



Sam Asano

Let's Invent

There is an organization called SCORE consisting of experienced business executives willing to serve as consultants to small businesses. SCORE is a nationwide nonprofit organization mainly sponsored by the Small Business Administration.

Every major city has its own SCORE group, and they actively seek for small business owners who need experts to speak to and discuss their problems. Although I am not a member of SCORE, I know a few members active in the groups in Portsmouth, and other cities have similar group doing their job to assist small businesses. (SCORE is active elsewhere in New Hampshire including Manchester and the Lakes Region.)

If your business faces some issues, and you feel you'd like to speak with someone there, you'd do well to call them. The group consists of members of wide variety of experience. I am certain the group would be able to find the right members to match your problems. Consultation is free of charge.

Sometime in August an executive from the Portsmouth chapter got in touch with me, and asked me if I would do a presentation about "Innovation and Invention" in front of the SCORE's monthly meeting. Because my target audience has always been either individuals or smaller businesses, I was happy to accept their invitation.

Below is an excerpt from my presentation done on Sept. 16 at SCORE Seacoast Chapter 185, Portsmouth.

### Inventing a smaller fax machine

Good morning, my name is Sam Asano. I will first explain my association to the modern fax machine. MIT appointed me as one of the 10 Most Influential Inventors of the 20th Century sometime in 2011. When I was so informed, I thought that was a phone scam. (laughter) I thought the idea was so preposterous. Nevertheless, here I would like to explain what I did in the early years of '60s in order to straighten out the myth that I did invent the fax machine.

"The fax machine has been in existence for quite some time. It existed in a massive mechanical pack-

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## Motivation Matters

Continued from Page C1

Consider having a preliminary discussion a few months in advance of the formal performance evaluation meeting. Set a goal for this effort, such as helping the subordinate master additional aspects of the job. The intent is to acknowledge positive contributions, and to identify any present deficiencies (euphemistically referred to as "opportunities for growth"). By having this exchange some time prior to the official ratings being assigned, the employee can demonstrate improvement and possibly enhance the rating he or she receives. This early assessment is also being made in the absence of a discussion about any raises or promotions — thoughts of which can easily overshadow the formal annual review.

Another helpful thing to come out of this meeting could be the start of a memo from the subordinate to the manager

listing accomplishments over the past year. This can be especially helpful to a manager with many subordinates and achievements to remember. When heading into this discussion, remember to include both negatives and positives (if there aren't any of the latter, this session becomes more of a warning exercise). Telling employees what they have done right is as important as helping them improve in other areas. The old-school quip "If I haven't told you you're fired, then I have implied you are doing a good job" just doesn't cut it in today's management environment. This kind of thinking often results in the lack of retention of top performers and unnecessary resources spent on resultant turnover costs.

While the formal performance review needs unhurried time, this preliminary talk should be relatively brief and focused.

The above should be helpful in reducing the anxiety experienced with the eventual review discussion. If a subordinate challenges the manager, even accusing him/her of deficiencies, the manager should refuse to go there: this is your evaluation of his/her work. After all, you have your own boss to assess you.

New York City's former mayor Ed Koch was famous for asking the question: "How am I doing?" He got a lot of feedback, and certainly not all good (including from this columnist). But he got better at his job over his three terms in office.

Dr. Paul P. Baard may be reached at pbaard@baardconsulting.com. He is an organizational and sports psychologist with Fordham University, a former senior line executive in the television industry, and the lead author of a book on leadership and motivation. He and his wife, Veronica, a former senior HR executive of an international investment bank, head up a consulting firm based in Campton, focusing on motivation, conflict reduction, and team building. Questions are welcomed at baardconsulting.com.

## Sam Asano

Continued from Page C1



Original fax machines were unwieldy and expensive, somewhere in excess of \$10,000 in the early 1960s.

how the fax worked. That is, I was forced to work "out of the box" PERIOD.

Ignorance is bliss," they say. If you do not know about something, you do not worry about it. This approach just happened to be what I did. By chance my idea worked. I didn't invent anything, yet I did come up with an innovation — a collection of conventional basic circuits that made the system work.

Sometimes, an engineering system or product stays with no forward progress or improvement because of its monopolistic position or lack of outside stimulus. Fax machines were in a small limited market mostly for the U.S. Weather Bureau distributing weather maps to government branches and ships. My fax design was what today people would call a "disruptive" product. Out of nowhere, a simpler, more capable, cheaper and easy-to-use product shows up and takes the market by a storm. Now, if you ask me if I planned to do that, my answer is a firm NO. I had no idea what I was doing. But, also it was the result of "out of the box" thinking.

Once in a while I teach a class in machine design. Students are usually from high schools or colleges. I say to them that they should think out of the box, and

there is no penalty whatsoever if they fail to satisfy the design criteria. You would be amazed how students do not deviate from the conventional thinking. I do not know if that is caused by fear of failing.

The majority of these students try to follow conventional thinking lines. I try to say to them that this is an experimental space, and you are free to fly with your imagination. Whatever you'd come up with will be happily accepted, even if it doesn't work. Yet, they continue to stick with the conventional design principles.

I tell them repeatedly that if they follow convention, then their design would never be better than the products available in the marketplace. If they think out of the box, maybe there's a small chance their product would be successful and called disruptive.

*To be continued.*

Shintaro "Sam" Asano of New Castle, who speaks and writes English as a second language, was named by MIT in 2011 as one of the 10 most influential inventors of the 20th century who's improved our life. He is a businessman and inventor in the field of electronics and mechanical systems and is credited as the inventor of the portable fax machine. He developed a data tablet used in the retail point of sale to capture customer signatures when credit cards are used. Write to him at sasano@gmail.com.

## Credit cards

Continued from Page C1

seven general-purpose credit cards per household, he said, excluding debit and store cards. Today the average is about four, he said.

Americans are using credit cards now as one of several financial tools, along with debit and prepaid cards. And they're paying off much bigger chunks of what they borrow.

"Cards are now being used by consumers as a way to navigate economic waters . . . not as wish fulfillment," Iacobuzio said, adding, "I can't emphasize enough how much of a 180 this was."

Indeed, payment delinquency rates, which tend to be high when consumers have overextended themselves, are at record lows. From April through June, 2.25 percent of credit card accounts were delinquent.

It suggests two overlapping realities: Many Americans have sharply paid down their credit card debt and are wary of taking on more, while others who defaulted on their payments can no longer get credit cards.

The 2.25 percent delinquency rate is the lowest since the Federal Reserve began publishing the number in 1991, and roughly a third of the peak of 6.78 percent during the same period in 2009, when the financial crisis was in full bloom.

Tempering the return to credit cards is growth in prepaid cards from companies such as Green Dot and Wal-Mart, which have become a viable alternative to checking accounts and debit cards.

These cards are bank-like.

Consumers can check their balances online or via text message, without the fees and relationship of a bank account or bank-issued credit card. With so many jobs lost during the Great Recession, and so many Americans working two or even three jobs to make ends meet, the prepaid card was a good fit for many consumers.

"I think that has definitely helped the growth in prepaid," said Madeline Fernandez, the chief customer officer for Green Dot, based in Pasadena, Calif. "It's unfortunate that that's the way we've been helped, but it's definitely made consumers think about how are they managing their finances, how much debt they want to take on."

## Protein

Continued from Page C1

amount is 0.8 grams per two pounds of weight, or 80 grams a day for a 200-pound man.

"Consumers think of protein as a hard-working calorie," said General Mills Chairman and CEO Ken Powell in an interview with Reuters. That is fueling demand for everything from protein bars to Greek yogurt, he said. "It's clearly an opportunity."

As the food industry scrambles to meet the demand, the effect has been felt along the supply chain, especially in Canada where most of the ground protein for U.S. food-makers is produced.

Canada produced a record 6 million tons of pulse in 2013, up from 4.5 million tons in 2012 and 4.3 million tons in 2011, according to Pulse Canada, an industry association that represents Canadian growers and processors. Privately-held Best Cooking Pulses Inc. in Por-

tagela Prairie, Manitoba, has quadrupled its capacity in the last year, and opened a second plant to process the seeds.

"I see it being a fantastic opportunity," said Murad Al-Katib, president and CEO of Alliance Grain Traders in Regina, Saskatchewan, one of the world's largest lentil and pea processing companies. "Where we're seeing a lot of that growth is new product lines from major food companies."

### Banking on protein

Food makers are eager to find new sources of revenue. Consumption of carbohydrate-laden foods has fallen 5 percent in the United States while consumption of protein-rich foods has risen 7 percent, according to a recent report by Credit Suisse investment analyst Robert Moskow.

Protein is becoming ubiquitous: It's piling up in extra meat servings at fast food

restaurants and in everything from cereals to biscuits to cream cheese.

Dairy companies are even adding protein to milk, which already has about 8 grams per serving. General Mills, which Wednesday reported lower-than-expected quarterly profit, is counting on its protein-fortified snacks and expanded Yoplait Greek yogurt line to boost profits.

It plans to expand distribution of its recently introduced Cheerios Protein, fortified with soy and pea protein, which at 26 cents an ounce costs significantly more than the 19-cent an ounce traditional oat Cheerios.

Its Nature Valley protein bars, introduced in 2012, made over \$100 million in sales in their first year. Its Yoplait Greek yogurt line, which contains twice the protein as generic yogurt, debuted in 2012 and in its first year netted \$150 million in sales.

Morningstar equity analyst Erin Lash said these are impressive figures considering that 81 percent of new consumer packaged goods failed to hit \$7.5 million in first-year sales in 2011. General Mills is counting on consumers like Maryland college student Madeleine Entwistle.

"I'm cautious about the food I eat," said the 20-year-old, who said she eats a couple of its Nature Valley protein bars a day. "I would expect that it costs more because it has more nutrients. But I associate the foods as being better for me."

*Additional reporting by Anjali Athavaley*

## Big Idea Group

Continued from Page C1

"People think that the basis of a startup is a great idea," Collins said. "Having done this for 20 years, (I know) you have to have a good idea, but it also takes money and great people. So at Big Idea Group, we work a lot, kind of pulling together great ideas, great people and money. I think we're very good at that."

Collins said he gets pitched 500 to 1,000 business or product ideas per year, with an average of one to two pitches received daily.

The initial consultation with Collins is free. During that session, there are a couple of elements he looks for in a worthy client.

"I'm looking for an interesting problem," he said. "Inventors come up with pretty lousy solutions a lot of the time, but sometimes they come up with pretty interesting problems, and I can help them come up with better solutions."

Another key item is whether Collins wants to work with the person.

"Ideas are a dime a dozen," he said. "What's valuable is someone with an idea who goes and does a lot of really good work: they prototype it, they evolved it, they do research, they find a customer."

Once Collins and a client have decided to move forward together, BIG puts together a "roadmap," which costs \$500 and charts the steps toward getting the client's idea off the ground.

"(The roadmap) is basically a kind of test drive for the both of us," Collins said. "I believe in kind of 'dating before marriage.' It's a way for the inventor or the entre-

preneur to kind of see if they like working with us ... and we get to know the inventor."

Should BIG choose to go into business with the client, they've usually been working together at least a year by that point, allowing time to get acquainted.

"It's a very evolutionary relationship," Collins said. "It's about partnerships. We add a lot of value, they add a lot of value, and we take it one step at a time."

Despite BIG's successes, Collins said, they're no stranger to failure in their business ventures — and it's part of the reason for their gradual process with clients.

"It's really easy, when you're innovating, to kind of fall in love with your own ideas," he said. "You just learn to do things kind of quickly and cheaply, and then get real market feedback. So if the market yawns, you're out \$5,000 and a month, not three years of your life at \$1 million."

Collins also uses his engineering background in the business, applying the scientific method to each project.

"Have a thesis, experiment, do more of what works, stop what doesn't work," he said. "We fail every day, in every one of our businesses, but we're failing in experiments that we can afford to fail with."

Bob Myhal, CEO of Boston-based NextHire, said Collins and BIG have been involved with "all elements getting his company off the ground, including launching NextHire's technology, raising capital, and generating revenue."

"What they've been able to do for us is help us set the

course early on in our business development," Myhal said. "Big Idea Group's strength is it's not their first rodeo. They've done this many times with a variety of different businesses, and they understand how businesses work in the real world, which is not exactly the same as what they might teach in business school."

Myhal said BIG's approach is different from other business incubators he's aware of.

"They're involved at a much deeper level," he said. "We are in constant contact with Big Idea through board meetings and phone calls, and they've pointed us in the right direction, in terms of raising money, in terms of building our technology."

Launch Angels CEO Sher-een Shermak said that BIG's strategy works well with her "execution-focused" team, also based in Boston.

"Mike continues to be a source of ideas and sort of an inside-outside perspective," Shermak said. "That's extremely helpful ... It's nice to see that ongoing level of dedication."

Collins compared BIG's approach to "the Marines of business."

"We take the beach, and that's what we're good at — it's a very particular skill," he said. "If you want to build a house, you don't just say, 'Hey, I've got an idea for house, I'm going to run over to Home Depot' ... We're like the builder and architect."

For more information on Big Idea Group, visit bigideagroup.net.

*cswanson@newstote.com*

## In film on alternative car fuels, former Shell exec speaks out

By LUCAS IBERICO LOZADA  
Reuters

NEW YORK — Frustrated by what he describes as a lack of political courage, a former president of the U.S. unit of

Royal Dutch Shell takes center stage in a new documentary film that makes the case for using alternative fuels in cars.

The movie, "PUMP," blames oil companies, and what is described as their obstructive

tactics, as well as political inertia for preventing the widespread adoption of cheaper and cleaner fuels based on natural gas and alcohol in the United States, world's largest economy.

The former Shell executive, John Hofmeister, has devoted himself to criticizing what he describes as an unhealthy dependence on oil and the high price of gasoline faced by consumers at the pump.

WEB

of information

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The mini-bar at the Ambassador Hotel, similar to many higher-end hotels, has implemented snack trays with an electronic sensor that charges when items are moved, resulting in guests being charged for items simply being moved.

RICK WOOD/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL/MCT

# Hotels use sensors to hit guests with unexpected charges

By GITTE LAASBY  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Most consumers know that if they drink anything from the minibar in their hotel room, they'll be charged. But did you know some hotels now automatically charge your bill if you as much as touch the snack tray — even if you don't eat anything?

Automated minibars with sensors and snack trays with built-in electronic scales are now common practice at hotels, including Hilton, InterContinental, DoubleTree and Sheraton. But a slew of complaints in hotel reviews online reveal consumers still get taken by surprise when they discover "incidental" charges on their bill for food they never consumed.

A manager at Milwaukee's Ambassador Hotel estimates that as many as 90 percent of automatic charges for the minibar turn out to be in error. There, a staff member manually checks the bar in each room and corrects any errors before the consumer is charged. But at other hotels it's often up to guests to discover the false charges.

A reporter who visited a DoubleTree hotel in downtown Chicago at the end of August discovered six charges marked "minibar" on his bill. They ranged from \$6.06 to \$7.72 each. The reporter was puzzled because he and his family didn't eat anything from the tray and hadn't seen any signs warning that they'd be charged if items were removed or moved around.

When he inquired at the front desk about the unexpected charges, he was told the hotel automatically bills guests if an item is removed from the snack tray, even if the guest puts the item back. A hotel rep agreed to

SENIOR WILL CHARGE ROOM ACCOUNT WHEN PRODUCT IS LIFTED FROM UNIT	
PEPSI CAN	\$3
DIET PEPSI CAN	\$3
SIERRA MIST CAN	\$3
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KISS MARGARITA	\$6
KISS COSMOPOLITAN	\$6
CABERNET SAUVIGNON	\$18

The mini-bar at the Ambassador Hotel charges customers who even remove an item from the mini-bar. Most consumers know that it's expensive to help yourself to the minibar. But many are unaware that they can get charged for even touching the snack tray.

RICK WOOD/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL/MCT

remove the charges.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel contacted a spokeswoman at DoubleTree by Hilton to find out whether the apparent lack of a warning note at the Chicago location was a mistake and to ask why the automatic system was implemented. A Hilton spokeswoman would not answer those specific questions, but acknowledged that hotels in the chain have the option of installing sensors in their snack trays. "A small number of our hotels have units that do use motion-sensor technology, and should include information on the menu card or unit stating the way in which the sensors work," the spokeswoman said in an email.

In automated minibars generally, each snack spot has a sensor. Items are typically charged to a guest account if an item is moved, although a charge sometimes occurs only when the item isn't put back within 60 seconds. That's potentially problematic for guests with curious kids or those checking nutritional labels

for calorie content or allergen information.

Guests at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Chicago have complained about automatic charges at the hotel going back to at least 2010.

"The snack tray was horrendously expensive (\$7 for a little bag of candy) and God forbid you touched anything because the sensors in the tray would automatically charge it to your credit card," a Canadian guest said in an online review on TripAdvisor in December 2010.

In response, a DoubleTree representative wrote: "Our mini bar and snack tray are sensory activated so if a guest happens to pick up an item for a few seconds, they can erroneously be charged for something they didn't eat. If something like this occurs, we just ask the guest to be honest about the mistake at check-out."

Amy Schneider, assistant general manager at the Ambassador Hotel in Milwaukee, wasn't surprised to hear about guests at other hotels being unfairly billed for food they didn't eat.

## BUSINESS CALENDAR

- Capital Toastmasters Meeting,** 6:30 to 8 p.m. Monday; Improve your speaking, presentation and leadership skills in a fun and relaxing environment. Granite Ledges, 151 Langley Parkway, Concord Capital Toastmasters, contact-2112@toastmastersclubs.org, capital.toastmastersclubs.org/.
- Launch Your Business into Social Media Workshop,** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday; Jaffrey Chamber of Commerce offices, 7 Main St., Jaffrey, Christine Halvorson, 203-0593, chris@halvorsonnewmedia.com, HalvorsonNewMedia.com. \$120/\$50 Prior registration required.
- HR101: Human Resources Compliance Bootcamp,** 8:30 to 10 a.m. Tuesday; A 90-minute Human Resources Compliance Bootcamp. Free review of your company's HR practices. Cultural Chemistry, LLC, 150 Dow St., Tower 2, 4th Fl., Manchester. Amelia Hayes, 623-3633, events@culturalchemistry.com, www.culturalchemistry.com/event/hr101-human-resources-compliance-bootcamp/. \$35 Prior registration required.
- Launch Your Business into Social Media,** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday; Congregational Church of Amherst, 11 Church St., Amherst. Christine Halvorson, 203-0593, chris@halvorsonnewmedia.com, HalvorsonNewMedia.com. \$120/\$50 Prior registration required.
- Do You Want To Become A Better Speaker?** 7 to 8 a.m. Thursday; 10-Week Free Better Speaker Series. Merrimack Town Hall, 6 Baboosic

- Administrative Assistant Network Group,** 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday; This group will help you grow in your career, expand your knowledge, and help you with your network. Cultural Chemistry, LLC, 150 Dow St., Tower 2, fourth floor, Manchester. Amelia Hayes, 623-3633, events@culturalchemistry.com, www.culturalchemistry.com/event/administrative-assistant-network-group/. \$15 Prior registration required.
- Complacency in the Workplace: How to Motivate Long-Term Employees,** 9 to 10 a.m. Wednesday; We will demonstrate how to motivate longer-term employees. Online Webinar, Bedford. Lisa Byrd, 666-4051, bedford@leddygroup.com, leddygroup.com/component/jevents/icalrepeat.detail/2014/09/24/344/-/2014-webinar-series.html?Itemid=556. Free. Prior registration required.
- Launch Your Business into Social Media,** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday; Livermore Community House, 5 Union St., Milford Christine Halvorson, 203-0593, chris@halvorsonnewmedia.com, HalvorsonNewMedia.com. \$120/\$50 Prior registration required.
- Tri City Toastmasters Meeting,** 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday; Tri City Toastmasters provides a supportive opportunity for practice in public speaking. Wentworth Douglass Hospital, 789 Central Ave., Dover Karen Gilbert, 767-2274, tricitytm.toastmastersclubs.org/. Free.

- Lake Road, Merrimack. Laurie Heidel, 801-9410, laheidel@gmail.com, www.toastmasters.org. Free.
- Innovating in NH - Innovation Assistance: From Concept to Commercialization,** 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday; Yvon Durant, Co-Founder and CTO, explains how he successfully navigated an innovation in polymer. Alpha Loft, 9 Madbury Road, 4th Floor, Durham Chelsey DiGiuseppe, 862-5318, unh.innovation@unh.edu, www.eventbrite.com/e/innovating-in-nh-innovation-assistance-from-concept-to-commercialization-registration-12934494421. Free.
- Launch Your Business into Social Media workshop,** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Function Hall, 5 West Main St., Hillsborough Christine Halvorson, 203-0593, chris@halvorsonnewmedia.com, HalvorsonNewMedia.com. \$120/\$50 Prior registration required.
- CALENDAR LISTINGS:** To include events, enter them at NH365.org.

## Newsmakers

### Kratt joins Private Jet Services as president

SEABROOK — Private Jet Services, a worldwide private aviation consulting firm, has named **Brian Kratt** as president. He will focus on supporting and empowering PJS employees to deliver superior aviation services to corporations and individuals worldwide.

### Mayo named to chair nonprofit

WEST LEBANON — **Gary Mayo**, owner, president and commercial risk manager at A.B. Gile Inc., in Hanover, has been chosen to chair the board of trustees for Visiting Nurse and Hospice for Vermont and New Hampshire. Mayo, who has a bachelor's degree in economics from Dartmouth College in Hanover, has been a member of the VNH board since 2012.

### Jeffcote named VP at Community Bridges

Community Bridges, a

nonprofit agency committed to advancing the integration, growth and interdependence of people with disabilities within their home communities, has appointed **Richard Jeffcote** as vice president of finance and chief financial officer. Jeffcote most recently served as an advisor to Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital.

### Rajanna joins Dartmouth-Hitchcock

MANCHESTER — **Preethi Rajanna**, MD, has joined the family medicine department of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Manchester. Dr. Rajanna, who is board-certified in family medicine, received her Medical Degree from M.S. Ramaiah Medical College. She then completed her internship at M.S. Ramaiah Medical College & Hospital, Karnataka, India followed by a residency at Central Maine Medical Center, Lewiston, Maine.

### Bean joins NH Print & Mail Services

CONCORD — **Richard Bean**

has joined New Hampshire Print & Mail Services as senior account executive. Bean spent the last 30 years at Concord Litho Co., where he worked with strategic accounts.

### Retaining wall project earns award for firm

AUBURN — **Jeff Benway**, P.E., retaining wall specialist at Auburn-based SFC Engineering Partnership Inc., worked with Redi-Rock of Central Maine and the Maine General hospital as they began construction on the Alford Center for Health in Augusta, Maine.

Benway worked with Redi-Rock of Central Maine to create freestanding walls for the hospital. The project received the 2013 Rocky Award for best "Freestanding Wall of the Year" from Redi-Rock International. The awards recognize the best Redi-Rock projects completed each year across the U.S., Canada, England, Wales, Ireland, Spain, Norway and South Korea.

# Encyclopaedia Britannica sees digital growth, aims to draw new users

By ROBERT CHANNICK  
Chicago Tribune

Chicago-based Encyclopaedia Britannica, which shelved its venerable print edition in favor of a digital-only version more than two years ago, is looking to reclaim its legacy as the household reference of choice.

The 246-year-old, privately held company is shifting its virtual encyclopedia toward a free, advertising-supported model, believing it is poised to click with a new generation of online knowledge consumers.

"I think that most people in the consumer space would prefer to use Britannica to many other alternatives," said Jorge Cauz, 52, Encyclopaedia Britannica's president. "Whenever Britannica appears on search engines, we have a pretty amazing click-through rate."

Once the undisputed king of reference libraries, with armies of door-to-door salesmen peddling the expensive multivolume sets to families across the globe, Britannica has struggled to find its place in the digital age, where user-generated Wikipedia offers something on just about everything for free.

Hoping to boost site traffic and grow advertising revenue, Cauz has opened about half of Britannica's online database to the public at no charge. Two years ago, 80 percent of the articles were behind a pay wall, accessible only to subscribers.

Some 50,000 households pay \$70 annually and an additional 450,000 get full access through distribution partners such as telecom companies and Internet providers, a subscriber base that has remained stable despite the chipping away of the pay wall, Cauz said. Meanwhile, online traffic has more than doubled, and advertising growth has reduced dependence on user fees. Subscriptions now account for 75 percent of Britannica.com's revenue, down from 95 percent two years ago.

Like many traditional publishers, Britannica is finding that what worked on paper doesn't necessarily succeed online. The push-pull between advertising and subscription revenue, though, is nothing new, according to media analyst Ken Doctor.

"For consumer publishing businesses in general,



Jorge Cauz, president of Encyclopaedia Britannica, poses for a portrait at his office in Chicago on Sept. 4. The 246-year-old privately held company is seeing digital growth.

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they've always balanced circulation revenue on one hand and advertising on the other, and tried to optimize both," Doctor said.

Advertising will generate about \$13 million this year for the Britannica consumer websites, up 70 percent since 2010. Its digital portfolio includes Britannica.com, Merriam-Webster.com and more than 20 other reference websites, and the revenue upside is exponential, Cauz said.

"We think that there are hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of advertising potential that Britannica could tackle, if we were to have a very different business model," Cauz said. "It doesn't mean that we are going to be able to do that overnight. It means that we are going to be experimenting to be able to capture a place in the consumer space again."

Encyclopaedia Britannica employs 500 people worldwide, with 210 housed in expansive riverfront offices in downtown Chicago. User interface, curriculum and technology specialists abound as the company's diversified business model evolves.

Though the company itself is in the black, Britannica.com is barely breaking even, Cauz said. The educational business allows him leverage to tweak the online encyclopedia, and the patience to nurture it, as he seeks to increase its reach. That means taking back business from Wikipedia, a free encyclopedia website built and maintained by users, which dominates the digital reference space.

Britannica is a decided

underdog in the digital world. Wikipedia has nearly 4.6 million English language articles, compared with 106,000 for Britannica.

Where Britannica trumps Wikipedia is through a "rigorous editorial process," Cauz said. Like Wikipedia, users and scholars contribute to the database, but each article is professionally vetted by Britannica, enabling students and dilettantes alike to speak with authority on any given subject.

"I think the honeymoon for 'everything goes' is over," Cauz said. "I think people are understanding that even though digital technologies are great ways of creating and disseminating content, knowledge and scholarship are not democracies. There are people that know better, and the challenge is how to make that knowledge more efficient and make that knowledge reach many, many more people."

Britannica has added some 2,900 new articles and revised 7 million words this year, Cauz said. The site also includes some 5,000 videos. Though the database continues to grow, its breadth won't soon rival Wikipedia's, which details porn stars to Pokemon, and even includes what Cauz describes as an "inaccurate" entry on himself.

On core subject matters, Britannica covers much of the same turf as Wikipedia. Finding its articles, though, can be a little more challenging, something Cauz readily acknowledges.

"We need more visibility," he said. "We need to be able to attract more people. We need to be more present on search engines."