



# the COMPANY CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

for business owners of the American Business Women's Association



August 2008-September 2008 Volume 8, Issue 12

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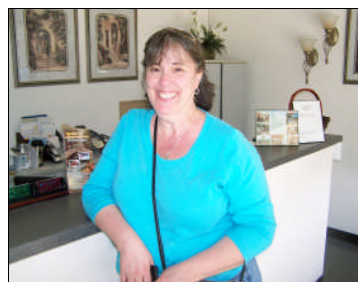
## Business Highlight: A Profile of Maryann Hanrahan Co-Owner, Hanrahans' HIP Hideaways, LLC By Mia Katz

**A**fter working for A Joy Wallace Catering Production and Design Team in South Fla., for 20 years, Company Connection member Maryann Hanrahan decided to cater to a dream of her own.

Around one year ago, Maryann joined her husband Warren to become co-owners of HIP Hideaways, LLC, a vacation rental business in Gatlinburg, Tenn. Maryann explains that she manages condos, cabins and chalets for individual owners who wish to rent out their vacation property for income.

"It was an extremely difficult decision to leave a secure position among many dear friends to embark on this new venture," Maryann says. But she explains that the attraction for pursuing the business was strong.

"My husband and I both feel called to be doing this," she says. With her



Maryann Hanrahan

background in hospitality combined with her husband's knowledge in sales and the music industry, "It seemed like a natural transition to do something that helps others take a step away from the stress and hurry of every day," she says.

Maryann says she was able to utilize savings for a good portion of the start-up funds, negotiating a note with the previous owner of the business for the balance. "I had never heard of ABWA at that time, and other commercial loans are very expensive," she admits.

To promote the business, Maryann says she has recently added online booking and is now working on upgrading the company's Web sites, which includes [www.hanrahanshiphideaways.com](http://www.hanrahanshiphideaways.com),

[www.oakleafaccommodations.com](http://www.oakleafaccommodations.com)

and [www.gatlinburgsbestcondos.com](http://www.gatlinburgsbestcondos.com).

Maryann says that she also advertises with the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce and a few area maps/guides. In addition, "we pass out cards and tell people about our business every where we go," she says. "Also we are working to build relationships with other businesses to establish referral programs and reciprocal links," she says, adding, "It's all about networking!"

To find other women with whom to network, Maryann realizes she has only to look to the other members of ABWA.

"I've only recently joined and am just beginning to meet and get to know other members," she says. "All the members seem to be so supportive of each other both personally and professionally. I am excited to be a part of ABWA."

## Marketing Insider: President, Owner of FilterSolution USA

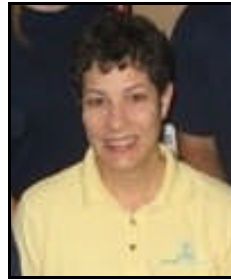
***A look at how Company Connection members are marketing their Businesses businesses***

***By Mia Katz***

**A**s the president and owner of FilterSolution USA, a supplier of air and water filtration products in Morgan City, La., Company Connection member Angela Stelly says that what makes her work so unique “is being a woman in a male-dominated industry.”

The owner of FilterSolution USA for seven years, “My company is part of the HVAC and plumbing industry, which is traditionally male-oriented, although that has changed tremendously,” Angela explains. “You now find many women at all levels — technicians, contractors, engineers, account sales reps, etc., as well as the more traditional accounting and administrative positions.”

Before the start of her business, Angela says she worked in a variety of capacities for Acadiana Cooling and



*Company Connection member  
 Angela Stelly*

Heating, her husband Gene’s contracting company. “The education I gained was invaluable, plus it gave me an inside track to industry knowledge, manufacturers and distributors,” she says.

“FilterSolution USA is my baby, though; practically built it from scratch, as Gene had his hands full with his contracting and management duties, working with his technicians and installers every day,” she continues. “We’re a supply and distribution company, selling to many local contractors as well as commercial enterprises and end-users.”

Angela says that most of the company’s sales are generated through the company’s Web site at [www.filtersolution.com](http://www.filtersolution.com), the advantage being that the business serves an often under-served market. But it is not only her clients that have been taking note of her success; Angela says the company was recognized by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development as a “Small and Emerging Business,” and she was asked to give a presentation at one of their conferences. She adds that she has also been named an ABWA Chapter Woman of the Year a few times through the years.

Angela credits ABWA for getting the word out about her business.

“ABWA has helped in the promotion of my business by referring my work to fellow members and their contacts in the local business community,” she says. She adds that she is looking forward to mentoring her female employees and sponsoring their membership, as well.

## Take Advantage of the Company Connection Online Directory

**I**f you have visited the Association’s Web site at [www.abwa.org](http://www.abwa.org) recently, you likely noticed the significant transformation and enhancement of ABWA’s online presence. But along with the totally new, modern look comes refreshing new benefits — including a new subscription-based directory for Company Connection members!

Be sure to maximize this benefit by keeping ABWA National updated with all of your current information, including company name, Web site and contact information. Plus — don’t forget to always provide ABWA National with your most current e-mail address. By doing so, you can log in as a member and take advantage of member pricing for merchandise and conferences. You will also ensure that you receive the *Company Connection* newsletter and other important Association-related notifications. Send your e-mail address and current company contact information to [webmail@abwa.org](mailto:webmail@abwa.org).

To learn more about what you need to know to log in to [www.abwa.org](http://www.abwa.org) as a member, see page 3.

## We Welcome You to the Redesigned ABWA Web Site

*Your E-mail,  
 Your ABWA,  
 The Online Way*



|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Name            | Member Login  |
| Upcoming Events | Click on the link for a list of all events and special events.                                      |
| Online Store    | If your login information is displayed below, then you are already logged in.                       |
| Contact Us      | If you are a visitor and not a registered user, please use the form below to register for the site. |
| Login           | Primary E-Mail Address:   |
|                 | Password:   |
|                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Remember Me  |
|                 | <input type="button" value="Go"/>   |
|                 | <a href="#">Forgot your Password?</a>   |

ABWA National is debuting the new [www.abwa.org](http://www.abwa.org) Web site and database system this summer. And your involvement is key! This system is personalized, and designed to meet your needs. But, we **MUST** have your correct e-mail address.

If you want to access the new system and site, you must complete the following steps:

- Step 1:** Make sure we have your correct e-mail address on file. If you have not been receiving information from ABWA National via e-mail, please e-mail us at [webmail@abwa.org](mailto:webmail@abwa.org) with your correct address.
- Step 2:** If you do not have an e-mail address, visit Yahoo, G-mail, or Hotmail to set up a free account. Once you have this account established, send the address to ABWA National at [webmail@abwa.org](mailto:webmail@abwa.org).
- Step 3:** Watch your e-mail. You will be receiving a welcome e-mail with your assigned password. Upon logging into the new system for the first time, you will have the opportunity to personalize your password. Always remember to log in as a member to take advantage of member pricing on merchandise and conferences.
- Step 4:** Enjoy the new website! Shop ABWA for merchandise or register for the National Women's Leadership Conference.

Trouble logging in? Make sure your e-mail address with ABWA is correct by sending that address to [webmail@abwa.org](mailto:webmail@abwa.org).

*Always  
 remember  
 to log in  
 to take  
 advantage  
 of member  
 pricing!*

## How Your Company Can Survive This Recession

By [www.newsandexperts.com](http://www.newsandexperts.com)

**T**he recent economic downturn looks to be claiming its first corporate victims. Among the list of once strong retailers scurrying for bankruptcy protection are industry giants Linens 'n Things, Bombay Company, Sharper Image and Steve & Barry's. This raises a frightening question: can your company make it through?

"Absolutely," says Dr. Tom DeCotiis, author of the new book *Make it Glow* (Greenleaf Book Group Press 2008). "In a down economy people focus their spending on companies they trust. As consumers get choosy, mediocre choices fall by the wayside for one reason: These companies have not earned enough customer loyalty to survive a challenging economy."

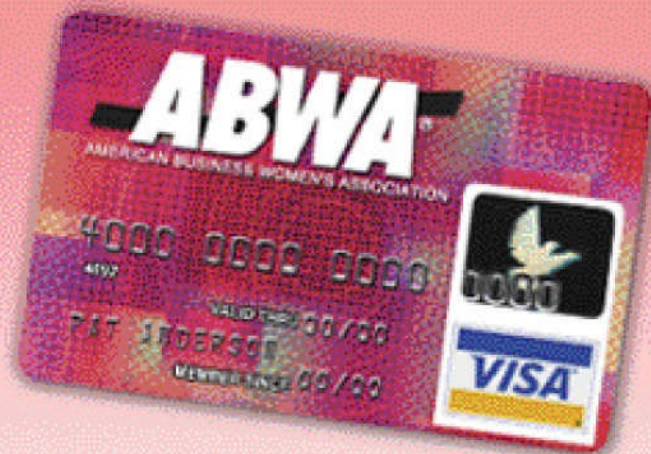
Here are Dr. DeCotiis' 5 essential tips to propel your company through this recession and prepare for even more success:

- 1) **Focus Your Employees on Creating Positive Customer Transactions.** Insist that your employees provide a great experience every time and teach them how to do it. Train every employee in proper customer service procedures and ensure they clearly understand the importance of the customer to the company's, and their own, survival. In difficult times, companies do not get a second chance to make a good impression on their customers.
- 2) **Ensure Your Customer Feels Valued.** Customers need to be valued, not just for their money, but for who they are. In order to do this, make sure that your company is addressing your customers' need for a strong sense of belonging and significance. For example, make sure that your staff is positive and proactive with complaints rather than negative and reactive.
- 3) **Set Your Customers Expectations.** It is not a matter of exceeding customer expectations, but guaranteeing that your customers are never disappointed. Use your company's unique selling point (USP) to shape your customer's

*(Continued on page 5)*

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## How Your Company Can Survive This Recession

(Continued from page 4)

expectations. Saks Fifth Avenue sell their consumers on their exclusive and elegant shopping experience, and when customers go into their retail outlets they are not disappointed.

- 4) **Ensure That Your Employees Understand Your Company's Values.** People are drawn to integrity whether it comes from another person or a company they buy from. If your employees understand what your company stands for and is trying to accomplish, then they will accomplish it. This is important to remember as owners train managers who train employees and so on. The result of this communication chain is a lack of consistency and alignment with the original values of the company. Spot check different locations of your business with "secret shoppers", people posing as customers who will report to you their experiences. This will tell you exactly how your company's values are being adhered to.
- 5) **Evaluate How Cutting Costs Will Affect Your Customer.** There is a big difference between cutting and managing costs. What you never want to do is cut quality. A company lives or dies by its reputation, and quality is at least one-third of its reputation.

(Continued on page 6)

## Do your finances need a makeover?

Get help from Prudential's new *Women & Money* website.

You'll find guidance, calculators, and tools covering a range of financial issues. Learn how to:

- Balance family life and money concerns
- Protect your assets
- Raise money-smart kids
- Plan for a secure retirement
- Manage your career
- Strategically price and sell your home
- And much more

It's free. Try it.

[Click here.](#)



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## How Your Company Can Survive This Recession

(Continued from page 5)

"Focus on keeping your company worthy of your customers' loyalty," says Dr. DeCotiis. "If you do, then you will propel your business through this downturn and create a solid foundation from which to grow in the future."



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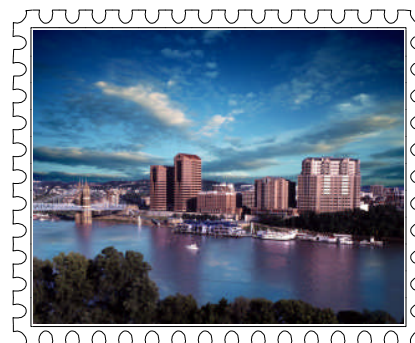
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## Conference Gives Company Connection Members Special Opportunity to Network

**H**ave you scheduled your trip to the 2008 ABWA National Women's Leadership Conference in Covington, Ky., Oct. 2-4? Company Connection members have many great reasons to attend this year's extraordinary event, among them ...

- A special networking social has been designed especially for Express Network/Company Connection members. Held the evening of Friday, Oct. 3 at the Fabulous-Furs Showroom, you will have the chance to meet Fabulous-Furs owner Donna Salyers and try on showroom pieces.
- Business owners, managers and leaders can enhance their skills and success with guidance from specialists in the field of organization and leadership management. Among the many workshop choices include ABWA-KU Essentials courses "Financial Leadership in the Firm" and "Human Resources Management" and "FranklinCovey: Speed of Trust."
- Extraordinary entertainment. Take a musical break with entertainers "The Water Coolers," plus get a healthy dose of humor from "Corporate Comedian" Mark Mayfield CSP, CPAE.



To register for the 2008 ABWA National Women's Leadership Conference, visit [www.abwa.org](http://www.abwa.org). Don't forget: By registering as a "Member Complete" before 8/21 you can receive a discount on the registration cost.



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# 2008 ABWA Fall Membership Campaign

September 1 - November 30, 2008



*You work hard  
representing ABWA.  
Celebrate with  
a few nights off!*

Recruit five new members in the 2008 ABWA Fall Membership Campaign from Sept. 1 through Nov. 30 and receive all you need for some well-deserved nights at home: a two-month subscription to Netflix and popcorn to enjoy while you catch up on the latest new releases. Rent unlimited videos from this innovative online movie gallery, boasting over 100,000 titles, and stay warm during the fall and winter by returning your movies by mail!

At the completion of the membership campaign, qualified members will receive a free subscription, along with more information on how to utilize the service. What movie night would be complete without popcorn? You'll receive plenty of that too!

***To enjoy Netflix, simply...***

1. Sign up and create your movie list - Netflix rushes the movies from your list.
2. Watch the movies when you want. No due dates, no late fees.
3. Return the viewed movies to get new ones from your list.

***Don't miss this chance to be a "star" recruiter and bring a bit of Hollywood home!***



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AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION