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BLOC

business leaders of charlotte

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BLOC-n-Bowl Charity Event Strikes Again

The Seventh Annual BLOC and Bowl was Saturday, December 3rd and twenty five teams of four gathered at George Pappas' Park Lanes on Montford Drive. The bowlers raised money through pledges and flat donations for United Family Services and Charlotte Military Families/Wounded Warriors Local Chapter. This was the most successful BLOC and Bowl event in our groups history!!

We raised \$13,252 and along with money donations to the organizations above we also shopped for eight families. Julie Tache took control of the reigns and found 8 families in need. Rhonda York and her team did an amazing job shopping and have purchased over 130 gifts!! On Tuesday, December 13th the BLOC members and their families gathered to wrap the 100+ gifts with everyone bringing their scissors, tape, wrapping paper and bows. Many thanks to Justin Lowenberger and his wife Ellen for hosting this event yet again this year!! Always a highlight of the overall process! The morning of Saturday December 17th, we delivered the gifts, grocery gift cards, and wish list items to the eight families. It is always a great morning for the BLOC members and their families to come together before Christmas and do some goodwill in the Charlotte community.

The list is too long to be able to thank everyone personally who helped in this year's BLOC and Bowl, but if you helped raise money, bowled, shopped, wrapped or helped deliver gifts: THANK YOU! A special thank you this year goes to our BLOC administrator Kate Dellinger for the tremendous help she provided us all throughout the process!

BLOC and Bowl is the charitable event that started the Community Involvement movement. Since 2004, BLOC has donated over \$200,000 to local charities and families in need. We are all proud of this accomplishment and we look forward to many more years of Goodwill in the Community!



Each family was very grateful and thankful. Here are some comments from those that participated in the delivery:

Chad Champion and Heathir McElroy Speet lead the delivery for a family who has had a tragedy within the past four months. The husband is quadriplegic as a result of a broken neck he incurred during a dive. He and his family (his mother, wife and son were also there - and they are expecting a new baby boy in Feb 2012) were incredibly welcoming to us. They offered cookies, spoke with us for about 30 minutes, shared their story and concern for spreading the word about diving / neck injuries, and they expressed such gratitude for BLOC's generosity. What an amazing delivery this year to a family that is extraordinarily inspirational and deserving. Great pick!

Adrian Stout went to NoDa with Myra McNeely, Erin Finke and Mike DeFabion. We had a mother and 4 boys, all were very happy to see us, we all got hugs from everyone, and a group picture on Mike's phone. The house was pretty bare, they had a tree, but not a single ornament. Glad as always I did it.

Courtney and Kate Dellinger delivered to a single mother with three daughters and a baby on the way. The mom was so excited and appreciative. They had a very small apartment, a TV that was smaller than most people's laptops and a small tree with no presents. The little girls were so excited to have presents. It really made their day.

We hope everyone will participate in some way next year for this awesome event. It is a great way to give back to the community during the Holidays!

Message from the President

By Michael Barnes

Fellow BLOC Members,

2012 is off to a great start and I want to thank all of the wonderful BLOC friends who have provided me with support and encouragement as the new President of BLOC! I am excited to lead this group and with the foundation of our board, I know this will be a great year.

While I do plan to implement some new and fresh ideas, especially in this "Letter from the President", I will not stray from our Mission. We are the premier business alliance in Charlotte and with your help, support, encouragement and continued dedication this will not change.

My hat goes off to Mr. Scott Donaghy for 8 strong years of guidance and professionalism. Without Scott, this group would certainly not be what it is today: an alliance of professionals who believe that individuals can grow their businesses by building relationships. Scott took this group from the infant stages and has nurtured and developed this membership into a 170 strong and growing!!

It is important to showcase his accomplishments one more time:

- Grown membership: 2004, 20 – 25 members / 2011, 170 members
- Grown market representation: 2004, 1 chapter uptown / 2011, 5 chapters serving 5 distinct markets in the Charlotte-Metro region

- Changed the focus of BLOC from a leads/networking group to a relationship/business association.
- Started the BLOC One-on-One initiative
- Added Tuesday Topics to BLOC member benefits
- Added the BLOC Social initiative and committee
- Added the BLOC Marketing Committee to gain visibility in our market, enhancing membership and our fund-raising efforts
- Added Community Involvement as part of the BLOC mission
- BLOC has raised nearly \$100,000 and served approximately 100 families with our Holiday Giving Program, the inspiration for our CIC initiative.
- BLOC has handed checks to over 20 local non-profit entities, in addition to the Holiday Giving Program.
- Scott's company, Best In Tech, has sponsored EVERY BLOC event that has sought sponsorship, setting an example for all members.
- Routinely raises more money than the rest of membership, but rewards others for their efforts, while staying silent about his.
- Successfully reshaped BLOC's status as a non-profit organization

Thank you Scott. BLOC WORKS!

Best of luck in 2012 and I look forward to serving you.

"Important Components of a Kitchen or Bathroom Remodel"

By Michael DiFabion
DiFabion Remodeling Inc.

As 2011 winds down and homeowners look towards the new year, one of the first things on the TO DO list is to start planning for that home remodeling project you've been delaying. In today's current housing market, more and more homeowners have decided to stay where they are and improve their existing home, rather than attempt to sell below fair market value. Part of this is to increase the long-term value of their home, but the other part is to improve their quality of life. If you're going to stay put, why not enjoy what you have?

Kitchens and baths are the two types projects with the biggest "bang for your buck". However, these are the most complicated projects in the house, so here are some important components of a kitchen or bath remodel to consider when planning your next major renovation:

Design

- Consultation and decision making have never been more important, making guidance and asking the right questions a top priority. Meeting with an honest and experienced kitchen and bath designer can prevent you, the homeowner from making costly mistakes, saving thousands of dollars in the long run.
- This may include efficient cabinet layouts, blending tile and countertop selections, and using the right mix of task and accent lighting for a new space

Functionality

- When working within an existing footprint or limited space, functionality and efficiency is key.
- Three very important functions of an effective kitchen plan are food storage, preparation, and service

- Incorporate pullout storage, hidden waste storage, and recycling bins
- Transform the kitchen into a multi-purpose room for not just cooking and entertaining, but also adding office and homework niches. An office niche within the kitchen is a great way to perform other important tasks such as paying bills, mail sorting, checking emails, and doing homework, while someone else is preparing dinner.
- Replacing large, underutilized Jacuzzi tubs with custom walk-in showers is an excellent way to improve the functionality of a master bathroom. This is a great way to incorporate shampoo niches and shower benches.

Value

- Good value does not mean cheaper. You want to ask yourself, "What will last the longest and provide the best satisfaction for the lowest price in the long-run?"
- Working with a professional that places an emphasis on quality and doing things the right way is very important
- References and experience in the industry are very important. The current economy has forced many new home construction contractors into the home remodeling industry. Remodeling is significantly more difficult and very price and time sensitive. Choosing an experience remodeling professional will eliminate many potential mistakes that could affect cost and tight time frames. You're only going to do a major kitchen or bath remodel once, so you want someone to perform the work correctly, one time only. This will only add to the long-term value of the new space.

Michael DiFabion works with his father, Mike DiFabion Sr. at DiFabion Remodeling Inc. Please visit www.difabionremodeling.com for more information on residential remodeling in the Charlotte and surrounding areas.

BLOC BOARD & BLOC CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

President: Michael Barnes

VP: Pam Decker

Co-Dir BLOC-B: Stacie Pinnavaia

Co-Dir BLOC-B: Joe Keener

Co-Dir BLOC-M: Myra McNeely

Co-Dir BLOC-M: Jonathan Malone

Co-Dir BLOC-N: Liana Matheney

Co-Dir BLOC-N: Eric Beyer

Co-Dir BLOC-U: Justin Lowenberger

Co-Dir BLOC-U: Michael DiFabion

Co-Dir BLOC-S: Eddie Brown

Co-Dir BLOC-S: Mary Middleton

Treasurer: Myra McNeely



ASK THE EXPERT - Q&A: EDDIE BROWN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DUNCAN-PARNELL, INC. / SPOT ON GRAPHIX

Question: How impactful can a sign be on my business?

Answer: A study by the University of San Diego that evaluated the correlation between on-premise signs and retail revenue showed that adding an additional on-premise sign generally leads to a 4.75% revenue increase. However, we all know that growing your business by 5% is not as simple as sticking a yard sign in front of your building. In a world of constant distractions, it's essential for you to identify what you're trying to accomplish with a sign, keeping in mind functionality, branding, and aesthetic appeal.

Question: My company is signed up for a tradeshow - what do I do now?

Answer: In order to justify the cost of exhibiting at a tradeshow, it's important to identify what you're trying to get out of being there. For instance, the approach of someone with an established brand should be different from someone trying to break into the market. Ultimately, first impressions are everything, and you have about 15 seconds to make one. The reality is that many more people will walk by your booth than will stop to chat, but you're forming an impression on both of these types of people. The difference is those that don't stop will develop an opinion based on looks, whereas those that do stop will develop an opinion based on the conversations they have, what they learn, or the collateral they walk away with. Keep in mind what your end goal is. If you want to build broad brand awareness, shake a lot of hands and collect a lot of business cards. If you are selling a product, take your time, identify who has a legitimate interest in your product or service, and work towards the sale as if you would on a sales call.

GET 2KNOW BLOC MEMBER: Julie Taché

BLOC Member Since:

Member since the beginning of FLOC
(Future Leaders of Charlotte)

One of My Favorite Quotes:

Don't wish it were easier, wish you were better.
- Jim Rohn

Reading:

A New Earth (still) & Bedtime Bunny (often)

Always Wanted To Be:

A Travel Magazine Photographer

Family:

Brian & Gemma (9 months) Novak, Foster the dog

Education:

MA Sports Management, Ohio State; BGS,
University of Michigan; Degree in Radio & TV, Specs
Howard School of Broadcast Arts

Personal Mantra:

What you think, you become (I think Ghandi said it first)

Favorite Local Restaurant:

Sullivan's for the wedge and creamed spinach

Hobbies:

Sports Broadcasting, Yoga, and good red wine with friends

Favorite BLOC Moment:

The very first holiday giving about 10 years ago where we "passed the hat" and delivered gifts to two happy families!

ADD THESE DATES TO YOUR CALENDAR!

BLOC-SouthPark	2nd Tuesday of each month
BLOC-Ballantyne	2nd Wednesday of each month
BLOC-Uptown	2nd Thursday of each month
BLOC-Matthews	2nd Thursday of each month
BLOC-North	2nd Friday of each month

Jan 18	Tuesday Topics Event
Jan 26	After Hours Event
Feb 15	Tuesday Topics Event
Feb 23	After Hours Event
Mar 15	Tuesday Topics Event
Mar 30	After Hours Event
April 19	Tuesday Topics Event
April 27	After Hours Event

MEMBER AWARDS & RECOGNITION AROUND THE BLOC OCTOBER 2011 - DECEMBER 2011

BLOC - Co - Director of the Matthews chapter, Pam Decker with SunTrust was named a finalist for the Business Leader's 2011 Women Extraordinaire Award! The ceremony is on December 8, 2011. Please join me in congratulating her on this achievement! Great job, Pam!

BLOC - Uptown member Dr. Picot of SouthEnd Dentistry was recently voted among his peers as one of the Top Dentists in Charlotte in 2011. SouthEnd Dentistry mission is to offer the best in dental care utilizing the latest technology in a soothing atmosphere for our guests. "It's the Experience!"

BLOC - Uptown member Dr. Bradford Picot of SouthEnd Dentistry was recently recognized as one of Charlotte's Top Dentists in Charlotte Magazine's latest issue. This award is given to dentists who are most highly recommended by their colleagues.

BLOC - Uptown member Allen Clark, with the Charlotte Business Journal, has chartered and is the founding President of Charlottes newest Rotary

club, the Rotary Club of Charlotte - Evening. The club meets 6-7pm Monday nights at Chima Brazilian Steakhouse Uptown. Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. Contact Allen at acclark@bizjournals.com or 980.229.9470 if interested in attending.

BLOC - Uptown Member Craig Dunn and BLOC Ballantyne member Ted Peterson of Carolina Office Solutions recently attended the Charlotte Business Journal's Best Places to Work Awards to represent Carolina Office Solutions as a finalist for 2011. This event honors companies in Charlotte that have outstanding benefits, policies and practices. Each company is rated by its employees through a confidential survey that is completed online. Carolina Office Solutions is extremely proud to have been a finalist for 2 years in a row.

BLOC - Co - Director of the Matthews chapter, Pam Decker with SunTrust, has been honored as a winner of the 2011 Women Extraordinaire of Charlotte by Business Leader Magazine. The Magazine will be doing an article on the winners and have an exceptional lunch on Dec 5 to honor all of these extraordinary women and present them with their awards.

BLOC - Hatcher Law Group – has opened its Davidson office located at 107 N. Main St., Suite 200, in Davidson, North Carolina (28036). In addition to the main office location in Charlotte, Hatcher Law Group will also have an office location in downtown Davidson to better serve clients in Iredell County and nearby Mecklenburg County.

BLOC - Uptown member LeeAnn Shattuck and Women's Automotive Solutions, a unique car buying service dedicated to helping women through the entire car selection and buying process, enabling them to save hundreds to thousands of dollars on a new or pre-owned vehicle. The 100% woman-owned

company was named one of "Most Innovative" companies, over thousands of home-based businesses nationwide.

The StartupNation Home-Based 100 highlights 10 top-ten lists making it not just your ordinary business ranking. From the wackiest, to the most innovative, to the best financial performers - this unique and diverse list highlights the home-based businesses that usually go unrecognized, but still play a vital role in the economy today.

BLOC - Southpark member Anna Smith, with Hibiscus Graphix, Inc., a Charlotte based marketing company specializing in Branding & Graphic Design, was engaged by Carolina Connections, Inc. to redesign and implement their website. Carolina Connections, Inc. is a full service background screening firm focusing on areas of employment and volunteer screening nationwide.