

International Business Brokers Association News May 2012 - In This Issue:

Member Spotlight: John Johnson - 5.21.12



John sold his distribution business, and then went "on scout for next". Returning to corporate employment lacked appeal. He threw ingredients into a bag; corporate expertise in strategy, acquisitions, economic valuation, feasibility analyses and business development, mix in engineering and an advanced business degree seasoned by success in business ownership, add strong measures of passion for mid-sized family businesses and add experience driven empathy with their owners.

Shaking the bag for an answer, he happened upon a Tom West article about business brokers. Business brokerage popped out as "next". That was 25 years ago.

After a few years struggling on his own, John went to an IBBA conference in Atlantic City. There, he discovered jackpots full of knowledge and experience for boosting success. He became an IBBA regular and a true believer.

Through the years, peers allowed John to work to advance our profession. Next to serving clients, John finds his greatest professional joys have come in working for our industry and earning peers' respect, such as opportunities to lead efforts to:

- Create IBBA's first strategic plan
- Improve Certified Business Intermediary credentials credibility by completely rewriting the qualifying exam

- Work with Brian Knight to transition association management (following the heroic start Tom and Barbara West's leadership gave IBBA.)
- Serve as Director for IBBA and The M&A Source, President of IBBA, then Chairing The M&A Source.

Working beside exceptional leaders on formative issues was especially gratifying. It made John keenly aware of the quality, dedication and generosity of people in our profession. Some contributions include working with:

- Darrell Fouts in founding, creating, and nurturing The M&A Source,
- Brian Knight in growing and nurturing IBBA's CBI program
- Robert Groag in bringing the M&A Expo to a successful reality
- Bob Gurrola in resuscitating a faltering M&A Source and creating the M&AMI
- Linda Purcell, Chet Walden, Mike Ertle, Gary Johnson, John Zayac, Ron Chernak, Doug Robbins, Brian Knight, Walt Lipski, Doliver Frederick, and others steadfastly wrestling with the securities licensing - Curse? Opportunity? Possibilities? Necessity? or Cure?
- Bernie Siegel in creating what evolved into Pratt's Stats
- Henry Hicks, Mike Hoesly, Clem Barrere, Ed Telling, Jim Afinowich, Fred Jager, and other top leaders building and strengthening many programs.

Outside our profession, John enjoys friends and family, working to improve their ranch and their community. He's led as director and/or officer for the Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance, Entrepreneurs of Tulsa, Tulsa Executives Association, The Academy for State Goals, Leadership Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Private Enterprise Forum, and The Oklahoma State Chamber.

In earlier days, John was very involved with his children, from coaching soccer, baseball, and basketball, to serving as PTA President. He and his lovely wife, Phoebe, have twelve busy grandchildren from a blended family of five wonderful children. They note juggling family time is like living inside a pachinko machine. One daughter, Katie, is Executive Assistant and a valued contributor in BluestemUSAsm. When they can steal away from work, they hunt, fish, shoot, garden, swim, work, and play at the ranch; blissfully detached from city traffic, crowds, computers, A/C, telephone, and TV. They also hit auctions, bidding Yuuup!! for hidden treasure or "must have" equipment.

Gratification comes to John in knowing his grandchildren still think he's cool, and because Phoebe, who knows him inside out, still likes him. Phoebe jokes his best quality to her is that he'll never be a smooth talker, urbane, or suave, but is "a real guy" through and through. Fortunately, John gets it - it is her high compliment. Phoebe has been John's rock when he has doubted or faltered, as well as in all he achieves or accomplishes professionally.

Looking forward, John downsized his practice to fit his lifestyle. He continues to foster relationships and referral networks, rather than expend time and energy dealing with partners or associates. He has become mindful that his preferred activity and best talent is serving his mid-sized family owned business clientele.

John's advice to others in our profession? Find your own path; one with heart for you and one that works. Generously reach out to help others excel. Never stray from the high road. Getting to know numerous peers through IBBA, John realizes many different concepts can succeed. Various models work superbly for some, but fail miserably in the hands of others. A common thread he sees is the brokers who endure are driven by service; those driven by greed and self-service inevitably corrode, corrupt, then foul their nest.

John Johnson sees IBBA as the best vehicle to uplift our profession and boost individual successes; "Get involved. Serve your client, your team, and our profession. You will be rewarded."

John C. Johnson, CBI, M&AMI, founded Tulsa Oklahoma's Bluestem Resources Group, LLC (BluestemUSASM) in 1987. He received IBBA's Tom West Award, its President's Award and is a Fellow. He was selected for The M&A Source Darrel Fouts Award for visionary leadership in the profession. John was recognized as Oklahoma's Financial Services Advocate of the Year by the U.S. SBA and was finalist as Tulsa's Chamber of Commerce Small Business Person of the Year. He earned a Petroleum Engineering degree at the University of Tulsa, an MBA from TCU, and is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma. He served IBBA as President and Chaired The M&A Source. Connect with John at BluestemUSA.com.