

# Failure has some value

**QUESTION:** Is there one key to success that does not compromise integrity?

**RESPONSE:** No, there are several, but let's focus on one: the value of failures. The positive impact of failures rests solely with the individual who is able and willing to face disappointments, learning how to avoid repeating the same mistakes. Those who deny personal or organizational failure by passing the buck or rationalizing poor performance seldom improve results.

Stuck in a cycle of self-congratulatory "voodoo" economics, they squander golden opportunities. Motivated and talented employees exit while they thrash about until these self-deceivers run out of money or opportunity, or both. Success is not for the inattentive.

For alert individuals, eager to learn from potentially devastating mistakes:

- Failure teaches humility — critical for working well with colleagues. Learning how to live with disappointment, one's own and the shortcomings of others, can pave the way for strengthening personal and organizational impact through supportive communications.

- Failure identifies flaws in any number of strategic business functions.

- Failure encourages listening to external counsel regarding more effective ways to plan, organize, staff, direct — and control.

- Failure builds relationships with others who have faced their own dis-



**INTEGRITY  
MATTERS**  
Jim Bracher

asters, having overcome adversities to become even more effective (and successful) because of them.

## Bishop sees failure's value

Transforming failure into success was illustrated by my friend, the right Rev. William E. Swing, retired Episcopal bishop of San Francisco, during his baccalaureate address June 16 at Stanford University.

Swing told a story of how he, comedian Jonathan Winters and Kenneth O'Donnell, a leader of the Peace Corps, had found themselves invited as specially invited alums to Kenyon College a quarter-century ago.

All three men agreed that none had been an exemplary student, so why were they singled out for recognition?

"Of all the students who were straight A's in math, or English or political science, why did they invite three dummies to return?" Swing said. "So we spent some time pondering that mystery. Why were we there? Actually we came up with two thoughts.

"One! Isn't it great to fail when you are 19 years old in front of your parents, peers and professors, and then

discover that life goes on, that the sun comes up again, that there is much more ahead of you? Some people don't conspicuously fail until they are 45 years old, and it devastates them. That's what I want to tell you graduates. Fail early and get it all over with! If you learn to deal with failure, you can raise teenagers, you can abide in intimate relationships, and you can have a worthwhile career. You learn to breathe again when you embrace failure as a part of life, not as the determining moment of life.

"There was a second learning that the three of us thought was worth knowing. We commented on how great to spend a lifetime working firsthand on one's own passion, rather than working secondhand or thirdhand on somebody else's. Whether comedy, faith or youthful idealism — whatever — be an apprentice in something that beckons your heart to pursue with endless fascination. None of us was an expert in many things, but all three of us were passionate about one unique thing. My advice to you is to stay with things that draw you like a magnet. Trust your DNA. Pay attention to your daydreams."

Failure becomes a stepping stone to success for those who are alert and receptive.

**JIM BRACHER** is founder of Dimension Five Consultants Inc. and the Bracher Center for Integrity in Leadership in Monterey. His "Integrity Matters" column appears Wednesdays in The Salinas Californian business section.

## SUCCESS COACH

# See yourself as others do

**QUESTION:** I was brought into a meeting with my supervisor, who told me he had a complaint from one of my



**Michael Crom**

co-workers that I was condescending towards others. I was caught off-guard, not even realizing this was how I come across. I always express my opinions during group projects, but respect the

ideas of others as well. What am I missing?

**ANSWER:** Perhaps the most challenging aspect of managing our external image is the difficulty in seeing ourselves as others see us. Research indicates that we are probably more critical of ourselves than others are of us.

Some ways to gain an accurate view of our own external image include:

- Seeing and listening to yourself on videotape.

- Asking trusted colleagues or loved ones for honest input.

- Monitoring others' reactions to us.

- Try to become more conscious of the impressions you are forming about others and try to isolate the cues that create those impressions.

**MICHAEL CROM** is executive vice president of Dale Carnegie Training.

# BANKS/ 'Human capital' is critical for success

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"When (banks) open branches, they are locating closer to customers and providing them a higher level of service," said John Fair, chief executive officer of the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce.

## 'People are the backbone'

Blanca Zarazua, a Salinas lawyer and chairwoman of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Monterey County, said the proliferation of new banks creates the kind of competition and lower prices for loan rates that can spur development of small businesses.

"If (the banks) are responsible to their owners, they will have done the research appropriate to support the fact there is sufficient client base for them," Zarazua said. "There may be untapped sources of business."

Pinnacle Bank, created last summer, has more than \$60 million in assets and branches in Gilroy and Morgan



**Blanca Zarazua**

Hill. It will expand to Salinas this year, said David Funkhouser, president and chief executive officer. In the past year it has hired many senior managers with decades of experience in Salinas, he said.

"In any business, people are the backbone," Funkhouser said.

While the advent of Rabobank is not the only reason Salinas is seeing a sudden blossoming of new banks, acquisitions and mergers do cause financial institutions to re-evaluate the market and see where opportunity for growth exists, he said.

Changes in ownership often prompt senior managers to leave their new master to create their own banks or work at banks with better-established roles in the community, Funkhouser said.

Such "human capital" — having good employees — is critical for any bank to



**David Funkhouser**

succeed in a new market, he said.

Picard said the Rabobank acquisition wasn't a major factor for Bay Federal, because credit unions serve a different market from banks.

Bay Federal is a non-profit and can't do business with individuals who don't work, live in or volunteer in the credit union's tri-county charter area of Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey, Picard said. All of its financial resources must be reinvested in the same tri-county area, she said.

## Alisal would like more banks

Even with the new profusion of local banks in Salinas, most are locating along the city's South Main Street corridor.

Victor Mehia, executive director of the Salinas United Business Association, a merchant group in east Salinas,

said he's confident that any bank that chooses to open a branch in east Salinas would attract a lot of business from individuals and small businesses.

The two banks serving the area, Wells Fargo and Washington Mutual, are always packed with customers who don't have another choice for where to bank if they want to stay in the neighborhood, Mehia said.

"I don't think anybody wants to break ground here," he said. "I think they are waiting for a large developer who will come along and develop a site and look to banks and other types of retail to lease rather than deal with land-ownership decisions."

Many executives of the local banks moving into Salinas said if their businesses do well, they will consider expanding into other parts of the city and possibly the county — wherever they can build the best staff and meet the needs of the most people.

Contact Dawn Withers  
at withers@thecalifornian.com.