

## No Time Like the Present

I clip maybe one in 5,000 articles, and today I clipped Meg Hirshberg's "If Not Now, When?" [Balancing Acts, September]. It's the best business advice I have read in years. My husband and I are living our own version of Stonyfield Farm with our young business and two young kids. It's optimism that keeps us going, too. I am inspired now to take that vacation we put off, get the kids that dog they've been asking for, and even go out to dinner. —**CHERIE COLLINS**, owner, HomeSpin Websites, Portland, Oregon

"If Not Now, When?" is an incredible perspective on how to live when it seems so often work and life for the entrepreneur are one.

I'm a 30-year-old aspiring entrepreneur in the digital media space. I work for a superfast-growing start-up called Groupon, and I'm in business school part time. Needless to say, I have a hard time feeling like I have a "life." Yet when I read the column, I realized that the journey is more important than the destination. Live in the moment, and enjoy the path that so few are willing to tread.

**PETER ANTHONY JACKSON**

California accounts manager, Groupon, Chicago

I very much appreciate Meg Hirshberg's candid style in discussing the profound impact the business had on her family. This is a really important issue, especially for female entrepreneurs.

"If Not Now, When?" is particularly on point. I started my business just after getting married at a time when we are trying to build a family. Everyone keeps telling me I am crazy and that I am taking on too much. The column pretty much confirmed my thinking, though—that I can't put off my personal goals for my professional goals. Such a crazy journey.

**MEGHAN CONNOLLY HAUPT**

Founder and principal, C5, Oakland, California

I recently picked up my husband's *Inc.* and came upon Meg Hirshberg's col-

umn. I felt as if she had written it for and about me. I have been married to my entrepreneurial husband for 16 years, and I am still waiting for the day when all of our dreams are realized.

I grew up in a family where my mother stayed home, and my father was a career employee at General Electric. I had no idea what I was getting into when I married into a family of entrepreneurs! I feel jealous of my husband's business as if it were another woman. He doesn't quite understand what I mean when I say that, but Meg has validated my thoughts and feelings. Her column gave me hope that one day this will all work out.

**GLORIA YENNACO**

Londonderry, New Hampshire



### In Praise of Profitability

I read with interest your article on Bill Niman and his new company, BN Ranch ["No Compromise," July/August]. As we've seen recently in places ranging from your article to the newly released *Food Inc.*, it's popular to evangelize for naturally produced foods.

While I respect Niman's views on raising his meat animals "the old-fashioned way," isn't it also interesting to note that he rarely, if ever, did so profitably? As anyone reading this magazine should realize, unprofitable business models aren't real sustainable. I own a cattle ranch where we take advantage of technological advancements to help us raise healthier,

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better-producing animals—and we do so profitably.

I'm not sure why there is a sudden push to unwind the technological progresses made in agriculture, but I would ask this: Would you go to a doctor who practiced medicine the way it was practiced 100 years ago? What industries succeed by not adopting new technologies?

Even with the enormous advances in agricultural production, we still barely produce enough food to feed the world's population, and in order to support future population growth, agriculture production must *double* by 2050. A return to old-fashioned production techniques will leave tens of millions of people to die from starvation.

The phrase *unintended consequences* comes to mind.

**NATHAN SANKO**

*Owner, Back 2 Basics Beef, Pittsburg, Kansas*

## Taking on Norm Brodsky

Norm, shame on you! What would Jack Stack say about your advice to Eliot Poole [Street Smarts, July/August] that “It's a bad idea to offer ownership in a new business to people who are making no investment but their time.”?

Two things we know about the circumstances of start-up entrepreneurs: They don't have as much cash as they would like, and they need the help of associates who will bring an entrepreneurial spirit and put out the hustle and creativity needed to build something where there was nothing. Giving people a financial stake in the outcome (to use Jack's classic phrase) by granting an equity interest can do a lot to address both those challenges. And it can be done at minimal risk to the founding entrepreneur. As Poole suggests, just include a vesting requirement with the equity grant. If the recipient doesn't last the required time (whether because he bailed out on

you or you dropped him), you get the equity back. To further limit the founder's risk, grant smaller amounts of equity on a recurring annual basis rather than a single lump at the start.

The book I authored with Corey Rosen and John Case (*Equity: Why Employee Ownership Is Good for Business*) lays out how and why this approach can be so effective. My organization advises a diverse range of entrepreneurs. We've seen the equity-based approach succeed wonderfully.

See you next spring at Jack's annual conference in St. Louis.

**MARTIN STAUBUS**

*Director of consulting, the Beyster Institute at the Rady School of Management  
University of California, San Diego*

## The Old Ball and Chain

I just finished Meg Hirshberg's “Sharing Gary” [Balancing Acts, July/August], and I was both laughing out loud and cringing, because I am the Gary at my house!

As the owner of a boutique business brokerage firm, wife of 18 years, and mom of three, I, too, am guilty of thinking that my beloved BlackBerry allows me to have it all. I have even negotiated deals with six-figure fees at stake from the soccer field.

You will be happy to know that after my kids staged a BlackBerry intervention with me over the Christmas holiday, I agreed to surrender my “business partner” from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.—and now actually turn it off from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Breakthrough!

So thanks for the friendly reminder that business isn't everything and that being present for my family will ultimately bring me the success I desire (most of it, anyway!).

P.S. Just realized that I am writing this after 6 p.m., and we're on vacation. Uh-oh, double oops!

**JULIE GORDON WHITE**

*Principal, BlueKey Business Brokerage M&A  
Point Richmond, California*

## WELCOME TO THE HALL OF FAME

In addition to its appearance on this year's Inc. 500, U.S. Energy Services was on the list in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002. We welcome U.S. Energy Services to the Inc. 500 Hall of Fame, an honor reserved for companies that have made the list five times or more. For a closer look at the Plymouth, Minnesota-based energy management company and its president, Bill Bathe, please visit [www.inc.com/inc5000](http://www.inc.com/inc5000).

## CORRECTIONS

The Inc. 500 listings contained a few factual errors. The correct information is as follows: The 2008 revenue for Mpell Solutions was \$13 million. LaunchSquad had \$4.3

million in revenue in 2008 and a three-year growth rate of 267 percent. CaseStack's growth rate was 72.5 percent.

Data from the following companies was misstated on Inc.com: Netcordia, a software company in Annapolis, Maryland, had a three-year growth rate of 533.9 percent. Spectraforce Technologies, an IT company in Raleigh, North Carolina, had a growth rate of 1,064.6 percent. We inadvertently omitted Inphi, a computer hardware company in Westlake Village, California, from the rankings. The company's three-year growth rate was 547.3 percent. These three companies have earned a spot on this year's Inc. 500.

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