

Second City is USOC's Number One

The Chicago skyline as a future Olympic backdrop?

On April 14, 2007, the US Olympic Committee selected Chicago as its US site to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. From a list of several US cities, Chicago and Los Angeles were the final contenders. Both cities offered comprehensive programs including facilities both existing and planned together with significant financial guarantees.

“Playing host to the Olympics is an unprecedented opportunity to

showcase our city to a world-wide audience,” says the firm’s Richard Burke. “The total package put together under Mayor Daley’s leadership will be very attractive to the international committee. It utilizes the excellent venues of the Chicago Park District which our firm represents.”

Chicago must now compete with international entries for opportunity to host the games.

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INSOURCING: Channer keeps states-side manufacturing profitable

“It used to be that we focused on producing as much product as we could and that was all our bottom line required,” says Channer Corporation’s executive vice president Paul Orchard. “That’s not how we do it anymore.”

Lake Forest-based Channer Corporation provides electrical wire leads and harnesses primarily to industrial users. The company’s products are included in numerous products, including light fixtures, electric motors, transformers and paper shredders.

During a period when it seems that manufacturers couldn’t move operations overseas fast enough, Channer leadership made the decision to stay put. But to remain competitive, the company would have to do things differently.

The first step was the introduction of lean manufacturing techniques. In Channer’s case, it meant tighter controls over production and keeping inventory in check. “Better

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--|---|
| Teaching Improves Client Service | 2 |
| Effective Retirement Plans | 3 |
| BWM&S Attorney Teaches DePaul M&A | 3 |
| BWM&S Attorney Promoted to Partner | 4 |

NEXT ISSUE: The unique wealth planning needs of auto franchise owners; The mortgage fraud epidemic; The firm grows again, and More.

HOW TEACHING IMPROVES CLIENT SERVICE

Those who can, do; those who can't, teach. While good teachers know that the old adage is not true, some professionals who are accomplished at "doing" also choose the additional role of "teaching." Case in point: Jonathan Michael, a partner in the firm's Wealth & Succession Planning practice.

By day, Michael serves the various and often complex needs of clients. By night, he often finds himself teaching an estate planning course at The John Marshall Law School. The class is comprised of law students and practicing lawyers interested in the area of estate planning.

By the end of the course, it is Michael's goal for the students to understand the probate laws and federal



Jonathan Michael

estate and gift tax laws as they are applied in the daily practice of estate planning. While some of the students are fulfilling an academic interest, many of the students are pursuing careers in the area of estate planning.

"There is a clear value in teaching and I can assure you that it is not for the compensation," says Michael, referring to the typically nominal remuneration that adjunct professors receive for their efforts.

"In our area, we develop complex estate plans for our clients. It is very

important that we are able to clearly present our ideas to our clients. The classroom environment offers immediate feedback. If I am not effectively communicating an idea to the students, they will let me know through their questions," says Michael. "By listening to the students' questions and their interaction with one another, I believe that I am better equipped to serve our clients. I feel lucky to have the opportunity to work with the students. It is challenging, and I find that I am always learning too."

Jonathan Michael co-teaches the course with the firm's Stephanie Denby who is also a partner in the firm's Wealth & Succession Planning practice. Michael can be reached at 312/840-7049 or jmichael@burkelaw.com. 

INSOURCING *Continued from page 1*

coordination on the production side meant fewer dollars were tied up in inventory which contributed directly to the bottom line," says Orchard.

The company then dug deeper into its production cycle with the introduction of cellular manufacturing. The change required Channer to convert from manufacturing based on departments to a process based on groups or cells. The typical production line was converted to working groups where one team would work together to build a product from beginning to end. The results included efficiencies, new opportunities and potentially even a happier workforce.


"It took some getting used to especially since our employees have an average tenure of 16 years," says Orchard. "We estimate that our production is at least 30% more efficient. We can now take on smaller runs for clients and do them profitably. I would also venture to say that our employees prefer the diversity of the changing tasks that this new process requires."

Under the direction of company president Dona Bauer, Channer continues to grow by offering new products and services. It moved into its state-of-the-art facility in Lake Forest in 1995. Further growth included the acquisition in 2000 of Dallas-based Wallace Electronics, providing the



Paul Orchard and Dona Bauer of Channer Corporation.

company with a presence in another region as well as adding an electronic distributorship to its product offerings.

The firm's Michael Virgil is honored to have served as Channer's general counsel for many years. He can be reached at 312/840-7015 or mvirgil@burkelaw.com. 


WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT – EFFECTIVE RETIREMENT PLANS TAKE PLANNING

As our country's population ages and life spans increase, a larger percentage of many clients' assets consist of qualified retirement plans, such as IRAs and 401(k)s. Along with the rising popularity of these plans come increasingly complex distribution rules. The resulting income taxation of these distributions is an aspect of estate planning that can easily be overlooked.

In general, the longer the period of time over which monies are distributed from a qualified plan, the better the income tax consequences for the beneficiaries. Remember, the reason these plans are so valuable is that, while assets remain in the plan, the earnings and gains are not subject to income tax. The same economic principles apply after death – but it is up to the participant to structure his or her estate plan in a manner that allows the beneficiaries also to take advantage of the tax deferral aspects.

Oftentimes, clients will have their living trusts named as the beneficiaries of their IRAs or other plans. In such a case, the identity of the beneficiaries of the trust will be a critical factor in determining to what extent the beneficiaries will be able to continue to defer the payment of income taxes after the participant's death. In general, the life expectancy of the oldest beneficiary will be the period over which distributions must be made and income taxes paid.

The IRS' rules pertaining to making an effective designation are quite complex and continue to evolve. Therefore, if you have designated your living trust as the beneficiary of your IRA or other plan, from time to time you may want to verify that your trust and beneficiary designation satisfy the rules in a way that maximizes the value of these assets.

Achieving the best tax results while maintaining consistency with the existing estate plan takes planning and expertise. Many taxpayers let years of careful planning go to waste when they fail to seek advice as to how to properly structure the beneficiary designations for their qualified plans. The estate planners at BWM&S are experienced in assisting clients with these tax-saving strategies. For more information about structuring your retirement plans to get the most out of your estate plan, call Marty Ryan at 312/840-7060 (mryan@burkelaw.com) or Melissa Cover at 312/840-7097 (mcover@burkelaw.com). 



Marty Ryan



Melissa Cover

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BRUKS TEACHES DEPAUL M&A LAW

The firm's Patrick Bruks just completed his first semester teaching at DePaul University School of Law. Bruks taught an upper level course on Mergers and Acquisitions to law students interested in entering the field.

"My goal for the course was not to teach just facts, but rather to demonstrate a systematic process for analyzing any M&A transaction," said Bruks. Time will tell whether he was successful in doing so, however, early indications seem good. By the end of the semester, his students were able to


draft an acquisition agreement from scratch as well as effectively analyze complex M&A transactions from both the perspective of a lawyer and a business person.



Pat Bruks

"I was impressed not only by the work product of my students, but also by the amount of time and effort that they were willing to put forth to learn and understand

the material," said Bruks. "Hopefully, the process which they learned will help make them more effective and confident lawyers as they begin their legal careers."

In connection with his course, Bruks developed a 90-minute seminar that provides an overview of his process for analyzing any M&A transaction. If you have M&A questions or would like to attend his next seminar, Pat Bruks can be contacted at 312/840-7090 or pbruks@burkelaw.com. 



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The Bulletin is written by the firm of Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella, P.C. to keep clients and friends current on developments in the law and the firm that might affect their business or personal lives. This publication is intended as a general discussion and should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances. It is meant as general information only. Consult an attorney with any specific questions. This is a promotional publication. ©2007 Editor: Cy H. Griffith, Director of Marketing; Legal Editor: Jay S. Dobrutzky, Esq.

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DANIELLE SZUKALA PROMOTED TO PARTNER

The partners of Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella are pleased to announce that Danielle Szukala has been promoted to partner.

Ms. Szukala joined Burke Warren four years ago to become part of the firm's growing class action defense practice. The group has built a national reputation serving banks, mortgage lenders, loan servicers and related entities in matters throughout the United States.

"I gained valuable litigation experience at my previous firm," says Ms. Szukala, "however, I was looking to focus my practice, and I found a dynamic group of attorneys at Burke, Warren with whom I could do that. It is an important accomplishment for me to be named partner and I am proud to be part of this firm."



Danielle Szukala

Ms. Szukala has defended numerous class actions involving a variety of state and federal claims, including federal statutory claims and claims for violations of state consumer protection statutes. These class actions include challenges to payoff statement fees, facsimile fees, lender placed insurance, fees charged at origination, bankruptcy fees and practices, alleged predatory lending practices, and other claims.

Ms. Szukala has also represented corporate and individual clients in other litigation matters, including individuals requiring pro bono

representation.

Ms. Szukala received her undergraduate degree, with honors, from the University of Iowa, graduating in 1996 with a double major in Journalism and History and a minor in Dance. Ms. Szukala was awarded her J.D. degree, with high distinction, from the University of Iowa College of Law in 1999, where she was a Note and Comment Editor on the *Journal of Gender, Race & Justice*.

When not working, Ms. Szukala is an avid runner, and enjoys attending Cubs games. She can be contacted at 312/840-7070 or dszukala@burkelaw.com. 