



CHICAGO FAMILY BUSINESS COUNCIL PARTNERS WITH DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

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For more than 20 years, the Family Business Council has taken the lead in offering a support network to owners and heads of family businesses in the Chicago area. Leaders from nearly 100 member companies have come to rely on the Council to create opportunities for business growth and leadership mentoring. Member companies operate in industries including construction, printing, accounting, retail, metal fabrication, floor coverings, and chemicals manufacturing. Together, members address common challenges faced by every family-owned and closely-held business, regardless of the products or services they offer.

Family Business Council roots date back to 1993, when local businessman James P. Liautaud approached the University of Illinois at Chicago about underwriting an organization dedicated to encouraging family businesses. The Family Business Council welcomed its first members in 1994 and operated under UIC's College of Business Administration for nearly two decades.

"We had a meaningful and productive partnership with UIC for many years," says Judy Hogel, Family Business Council executive director. "Over time, the University's plans and needs changed and so did ours. It became clear to all involved that serving our active and growing membership would require a new University partner."

The Council's desire was to become more independent, yet remain affiliated with a major university program. Negotiations between DePaul University's Driehaus College of Business and the Family Business Council took place in mid-2011 and culminated with an agreement later that year.

Under its affiliation agreement with DePaul, the council now operates as a separate entity with its own board. Now known as the Chicago Family Business Council (CFBC), it coordinates efforts with DePaul's Driehaus College of Business and with the Coleman Entrepreneurship Center in particular, to provide educational programs for students and local businesses. The firm's Jeff Warren represented the CFBC in its negotiations with DePaul, and the firm remains a strategic partner with the CFBC.

"Our new DePaul partnership is delivering many new opportunities for both CFBC members and for DePaul," says Hogel. "We are now able to deliver important new benefits to CFBC members with a combination of professor know-how and student ambition."

Via DePaul, CFBC members now have access to many high-value services ranging from executing research projects to designing and implementing training programs. There are also opportunities for CFBC members to teach courses as adjunct professors.



“If a member requests help with a strategic plan or a new product launch, Driehaus College of Business can very likely address that need with a for-credit student project.” says Hogel. The work would be performed under professorial direction at no or vastly reduced cost to the CFBC member. DePaul students also benefit from the partnership as they receive authentic business experience that they are not likely to find elsewhere.

“Better than a Board”

As of July 1, the CFBC welcomed new member president Burt Klein, CEO of Chicago-based PortionPac Chemical Corp., a business with 100 employees providing sustainable cleaning products to janitorial, sanitation and food service industries. PortionPac was recently featured in Inc. Magazine. (See www.inc.com/top-workplaces/2010/a-look-inside-the-un-factory.html)

Klein first came to the CFBC when he felt a need for insight into some of the challenges of running his business; he was hoping for enlightened support from accomplished CEOs.

“I have a lot of smart friends in different fields to talk to, but very few have a full understanding of what it takes to run a business” says Klein. “CFBC membership puts me in regular conversation with successful CEOs with decades of business experience. There aren’t many places where you can be surrounded by that level of talent that is open to sharing what they have learned. In my view, CFBC is better than a board.”

CFBC members get together eight to ten times a year for “all-in” meetings. They also take turns hosting various monthly CFBC forums.

To find out more about the CFBC, please contact Judy Hogel at 312/362-7518 or Judy@chicagofbc.com. Burt Klein can be reached at 312/226-0400 or bklein@portionpaccorp.com. Firm sponor-liasons for the CFBC are Jeff Warren, who can be reached at 312/840-7020 or jwarren@burkelaw.com, and Jonathan Michael, who can be reached at 312/840-7049 or jmichael@burkelaw.com.