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CSBS Growth

The practice firm network is continuing to grow. Currently, Mercer’s network consists of 44 practice firms in 34 schools in 12 states. Our new members are as follows:

Off the Chains
Elgin Community College (IL)
Teacher: Stuart Wasilowski
Email: swasilowski@elgin.edu

Rough Riders of Wyoming
Laramie County Community College (WY)
Teacher: Ed Mosher
Email: edmosher@lccc.edu

REsource
Sheridan College (WY)
Teacher: Tracy Dearinger
Email: dearinger@sheridan.edu

Badgerland Gourmet Foods
Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College – New Richmond (WI)
Teacher: Alex Birkholz
Email: birkholz@witc.edu

Signature Sweets by Legacy
Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College – Rice Lake (WI)
Teacher: Renelle Gill
Email: rgill@witc.edu

Devils Tower Pens
Hulett School (WY)
Teacher: Deb Adema
Email: ademad@mms.crooknet.k12.wy.us

WYld Things
Kelly Walsh High School (WY)
Teacher: Mary Hopper
Email: mnhopper_2000@yahoo.com

Candy Company and Traveling Toothbrush
Wayne Hills High School
Teacher: Paul Giovine
Email: pgiovine@mail.wayneschools.com

Congratulations to all on your efforts to start and “grow” your IBPFs.

Happy Spring!

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mccormick@mcco.edu

Cougar Traxx, Inc. sells PDAs (Personal Digital Assistance).

At Cougar Traxx we would like to make network virtual firms aware of the importance of supplying PDAs for employees. PDAs will keep employees on time and organized. With the models of PDAs that Cougar Traxx, Inc. offers, firms can have the PDAs activated for wireless phone and internet use. PDAs will allow a firm to reach its employees at anytime. The PDAs will let the employee “take the office home”. Employees will be up to date on all messages the firm sends.
PDAs will offer the reminders needed to accomplish many tasks throughout the hectic day. The PDA will allow your employees to travel without carrying a lot of items, since the PDA can function as a cellular phone, internet connection, planner and even a camera.

Our marketing department looks forward to working with firms to help them increase their communication level through the use of PDAs. Firms will also receive a price break based on the number of PDAs ordered. Along with increased productivity and efficiency of the firm, the PDA will let your employees know that you value their time and want to help them to stay on top of meetings and appointments. Also, employees will be overjoyed to be able to carry just their PDA.

Please contact Cougar Traxx with any questions. Our e-mail address is ctx@lccc.com. You can also contact us by calling 610-799-1121 ext. 6001. Please call between 9:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. ET on Tuesdays and Thursdays only.

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TALON DISTRIBUTORS MAKES ITS TRADE SHOW DEBUT

On March 31 and April 1, 2004, the International Business Strategies class from Morris Knolls High School went to the Virtual Enterprise International Trade Show, located at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York City. This was the first appearance that Talon Distributors has made at a Trade Show, and we were eager to participate in such an event.

After many weeks of preparation, planning and organizing, the class was ready and excited to meet other classes and new businesses for the first time. On March 31, we went to set up our booth and prepare for the actual trade show on the following day. Everyone was pleasantly surprised by how successful the booth turned out. Our team worked very well together, and we realized that all of our hard work would pay off. It was also interesting to see the themes that the other schools utilized for their booths. It was evident that everyone put forth a lot of effort to make this Trade Show a success. The theme for the Talon Distributors booth was outer space, since Talon Distributors sells “space” in a warehouse.

Finally, April 1 had arrived, and the class returned to the city for the Trade Show. It was a long and tiring but exciting day, and it helped create a lot of business for the class. We had a great time working our booth, networking with other businesses and meeting new people. All in all, it was an invaluable learning experience, and this trip will be something that future classes will look forward to and ours will never forget.

Pictured: Bottom row, left to right: Mr. Geary, Chris Scheffer, Michael O’Donnell, Christine Browning, Jane Lee, Oscar Black Top row, left to right: Adrian Molina, Akash Patel, Gina Basanese, Joe Okaly, Tara McMahon, Jared Sonners, & Brian Salge

More Pictures: Our Booth

Talon Employees at Work

Involved in Bringing Personal Freedom (IBPF)

IBPF at Austin Community College has now been in operation for almost one year.

About our product: IBPF sells PDAs (personal digital assistants) to the sophisticated professional. It includes many features such as:
- Desktop and Support system requirements,
- Remote email and Internet access,
- 32MB Ram and ROM size, and Intel Xscale Processor at 400MHz,
- GPS capability

Our mission statement is: We will strive to be one step ahead of the competition in product quality, technology, design, and most importantly, customer service. Without you, there will be no us. You, the customer, are our #1 priority.

Our vision statement is: In three years, we want to be seen as the first choice of PDAs. We will both succeed in the industry and surpass all expectations of our consumers and competitors, taking PDAs to a new level.

We set the following goals at the start of the semester: create a comprehensive employee database, publish an employee manual, organize the financial books and budget, create an approved vendors database, get the business up and running, and finally, increase sales and generate a profit by means of a successful promotions campaign.

We are happy to report that we have accomplished and surpassed all of our
In February, our company visited the Martin Guitar factory in Nazareth, PA for a tour and meetings with our departmental counterparts. It was an opportunity for Martin Guitar Managers to critique our business practices and offer recommendations for further developing our departments.

Recently Unplugged Inc. hosted a joint meeting with Cougar Traxx, a firm from Lehigh Carbon Community College. Our agenda included an information exchange regarding departmental operations and formal sales presentations. Both parties agreed it was a great learning experience and would like to make it an annual event.

We can be contacted at:
Unplugged Inc.
International Business Practice Firm
3835 Green Pond Road
Bethlehem, PA 18020

Phone: 610-861-4142
Fax: 610-861-4193
Email: Unplugged_01@hotmail.com
Website: http://www.unpluggedinc.tripod.com/

The departments used the meetings and newsletter both as tools to remind the other departments what they needed from them and to help other departments with what they needed as well. The Quality Circle meeting usually had an underlying theme such as problems at RCI. Employees discussed what problems they faced, for example, inefficient responses to requests for information from other departments and lack of a timely return of surveys, job descriptions, invoices, etc. Each attendee was asked for suggestions for solutions to the problems discussed at the meeting. As a result, RCI learned that they needed to come together and work as a team to get company and department projects done and the overall consideration for each other’s needs was improved.

The meetings were held every other Thursday, with a few exceptions when a meeting was impossible. Regardless of whether or not there was a meeting, a newsletter was distributed every second Tuesday, not only containing highlights from the meetings but also department and company reminders, information on company events including the Trade Fair in NYC and the luncheon in the beginning of the semester, employee birthdays, and special announcements from individual employees or their departments.

The newsletter was an effective means of keeping the entire staff up to date with the goings on of the company. They were able to keep track of the progress of projects and keep their contributions on time and up to date. The newsletter was a good source of company information and it should be continued in following semesters
business. This person can be a lawyer or a teacher/administrator.

**Question 2**—This semester we have two extra students in our IBPF class. How do we get bank accounts for these new students?

**Answer 2**—The teacher can set up accounts for these new students in the bank by using his/her teacher/manager password to “generate application codes” (same procedure as opening accounts for the original group of students in the class).

**Question 3**—We just received an order from a firm in France. Do we need to complete any special forms?

**Answer 3**—Yes, if the firm purchased $250 (or more) worth of goods from you, you will need to complete three forms: the Shipper’s Export Declaration, the Commercial Invoice, and the Certificate of Origin. For more information on this, check the CSBS website as well as Section 4 of the teacher training manual.

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**NYC Trade Fair 2004**

**Krystin Smith**  
**RCI**

On April 1, 2004 four students: Ray Whitehouse, Nikiya Jacobs, Sabrina Isom, and Krystin Smith, from the Mercer County Community College Practice Firm, Radiant Care Inc. attended the International Practice Firm Trade Fair at the Old Armory in Manhattan. Radiant Care set up a booth in the front of the Fair by the entrance and decorated it with balloons and their colorful RCI company sign. The purpose of the Trade Fair was to provide students in practice firms around the country, and some international students, an opportunity to experience first hand the buying and selling of the business world. Students used money from their individual bank accounts and guests were given $3,000 in checks worth $500 each to buy goods from the various firms at the fair.

Many firms offered free gifts and/or discounts to lure in customers. Others dressed up in matching attire or themed costumes and decorated their booths in extreme detail to attract buyers. The marketing strategies of the firms as a whole were very impressive considering the limited experience most of the students had in the business world. Radiant Care does not spend as much time working on the trade fair as many of the high schools that attended; therefore, RCI had a relatively plain booth. However, the booth décor was clean and bright, which complemented Radiant Care’s personal care product line nicely. They held three raffles throughout the day, giving away three actual facial care products to the winners. Each buyer received a raffle ticket with their purchase and a chance to win one of the products. Radiant Care brought in a total $4,781.88. This was less than RCI expected to pull in, but still an admirable amount considering the small amount of time they had to prepare for the fair.

Radiant Care students who attended the fair suggested some changes for next year including bringing flyers to hand out to the other firms explaining who Radiant Care is, what they have to offer and what booth they are located at. RCI should also have some small give away (lollipops, stickers, bubbles, etc) to draw the attention of passing customers. It is understandable that the Radiant Care booth was not as outstanding and unique as some of the others, because most of the high school firms spend the entire year preparing for the Trade Fair alone. Radiant Care puts time into learning all different areas of the business world (international trade, banking, customer service, TQM, etc.) so the time spent on preparation for the fair is limited.

The fair was a great experience in getting to see first hand how the market works. The students who went picked up some valuable tips on what marketing strategies work and how marketing affects the sales of a company.

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**Unperplexed Solutions - Trade Show Capsule**

Deen Gu, Jason Pearson, Richard Lopez & Mary Kelly  
Marketing Department

Unperplexed Solutions, a virtual software company, attended the Virtual Enterprise Trade Fair on March 30 and April 1 in New York City. Companies from the United States and even around the world came in search of business and sales. They were pleasantly surprised to discover the business opportunities that the trade fair presented them. The commerce that took place was bustling—companies received countless orders and at times were overwhelmed with the magnitude of purchase inquiries. Unperplexed Solutions itself received over thirty orders—much more than any of the employees expected.

We had 13 students attend with our teacher. For our theme, we tried to incorporate the idea of time management and the fun of pirates in order to explain that our virtual software helps you to manage your time and work more efficiently. We had several raffles including a “Pirates of the Carib-
bean” DVD and a “Goonies” DVD. We also had small treasure chests filled with gold chocolate coins that we raffled.

In reflection, all of the employees believed the trade show was a great experience; it was unparalleled. One employee remarked, “By going to the trade fair, we had more sales than ever. We also realized the great diversity of the Virtual Enterprise Network.” In addition, there was great interaction between the employees of the various companies. One of our employees spent over $6,000 in 20 minutes: “I got caught up in the moment and ended up spending all of my money on plasma televisions and game stations.” There was huge product/service diversity – everything ranging from video games to insurance firms. Unperplexed Solutions was impressed with how much the hard work throughout the year paid off and is grateful to have been given such a wonderful opportunity.

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**Dates to Remember:**

**IBPF Teacher Training**—February 24 & 25, 2005

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**Well Done!**