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Name that GPSEGer

By Dave Palmer

And now, for the next question in our home game version of "Name That GPSEGer." Which member can lay claim to the following?

- Ran a cattle ranch with his Mom as a teenager



- Rode rodeo bulls as a hobby
- Knows how to gin cotton (don't get excited; nothing to do with alcohol)
- Can tan leather
- Knows the original name of GPSEG before it was called "GPSEG"
- Built and led multimillion dollar companies

If you guessed "Ernie Inmon," you're right! Well done!



Ernie's story is amazing! Born on a farm in west Texas, Ernie's family moved to a cattle ranch when he was 5 years old. As you might imagine, a ranch is a big, family-shared, responsibility. Ernie had to help even as a boy. He had to double-down at age 11 when his father died. He and Mom ran the ranch after that.

After high school, Ernie attended Texas Tech and earned a degree in Agricultural Economics with an emphasis on Management. His first job after graduation was in a feed mill. Then he worked for a company that made equipment for feed mills. That was his entrée to manufacturing, specifically in the agricultural arena.

Over the next few decades, Ernie worked in, and eventually led, businesses in cotton-ginning, vegetable oil production, and specialty leathers for car interiors. It was this last job that brought him to the King of Prussia region in 1997. He and his wife (his two kids were grown by now) fell in love with the area and its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay (Ernie's an avid power-boater), NYC, Lancaster, and the beauty of all the seasons.

In 2001, his company was sold and Ernie was adrift professionally. He did not want to leave this area. And a presentation by future GPSEG member Mitch Wienick (who had just started with Kelleher Associates) at an ExecuNet meeting clued him to an unpleasant reality - the average tenure for a CEO at a corporation was just 3-5 years. Ernie did not relish having to look for 3 or 4 more jobs before he could retire.

After much soul-searching, Ernie decided to "buy a job," as he puts it. He gathered capital, adjusted the family budget, and began looking for equity investment opportunities. He was searching for a company both to invest in and to lead. After a while, a business broker presented him with a company to buy outright, not just something to invest in and join. That company was US Axle in Pottstown.

When corporately employed, Ernie had built facilities, sold business and assets, but had never bought a full business. The process was a completely new experience and he knew he had a lot to learn.

In a bit of serendipity, while Ernie was searching for equity opportunities, Chris Pavlides was giving shape to what would evolve into GPSEG. Ernie and Chris were friends, and Ernie joined Chris at those first breakfast conversations when the idea for GPSEG was taking form. Ernie is indeed one of our "charter members," having been with the team since its beginning.

Ernie shares that there's no way he could have completed the purchase of US Axle without GPSEG.

During his research, due diligence, and planning to buy and lead US Axle, Ernie tapped into the collective wisdom of GPSEG members. In particular, he asked a ton of questions of the CEO Roundtable. Ernie still marvels at the overwhelming support, advice, ideas, and resources that were shared with him so openly. With all that help, Ernie was able to make his dream happen.

On January 2, 2003, he showed up at US Axle and began his new career.

Ernie says he owes an incredible debt to GPSEG as a group. And he helps repay that debt by sharing his business purchase and launch experience with others considering whether to buy a company.

As CEO of US Axle, Ernie has succeeded in returning the company to financial health and leading the team to understand their true core competencies and how to pursue those opportunities effectively. His next mission is to expand beyond industry segments that are "commodity market dependent."

So, the next time you see Ernie, ask him about cotton-ginning, or bull-riding, or farming, or how to re-build a company and return it to prosperity. You'll have a terrific conversation!

Dave Palmer is a strategic marketing and sales consultant who is the principal of Incyte Strategies, LLC.

Membership Campaign Leader Board - Borton Wins First Comp Membership



Congratulations to **Bill Borton**, who has earned the first complimentary membership in the [GPSEG Membership Campaign](#)-hot on his heels is **Bob Jarvis**. Bill has sponsored six approved applicants and is still working hard on his recruitment efforts. **Dave Bookbinder, Anthony Carlozo, Matt Levy, Alan Myers** and **Lesley Tewnion** have earned benefits of complimentary event

registrations. Quite a few members have sponsored one successful new member and have plenty of time to join the leaders.

You - the members - are the key GPSEG's remaining a vibrant, growing network. When you offer to sponsor a qualified applicant, you give to that person a key that opens their network to a truly extraordinary generous and knowledgeable group of select peers. The next time you have coffee with a nonmember or meet a guest at an event, talk with them about membership...your next subgroup event - or even your next year's membership - could be complimentary too!

Members in the News

Ford R. Myers, President of Career Potential, LLC, was the featured guest on the radio program "Career Talk" on April 18, 2016. The show is carried on SiriusXM Business Radio, and sponsored by The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. This was Ford's third appearance on the program. For additional information, please visit www.careerpotential.com.

Have news to share? Please send it to maureen.waddington@gpseg.org for inclusion in the next newsletter.

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