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**June 10, 2016**

**Dear Maureen ,**

*All the news from GPSEG in less than 3 minutes!*

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## **Socials and Summits and Subgroups - Oh My: Taking Stock and a Deep Breath**

*By Diane James, Executive Director*

I recently passed my third anniversary as GPSEG's Executive Director. It gave me an opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments and changes that have occurred in that time and reflect on what lies ahead.



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What does GPSEG have in common with Hewlett-Packard, Disney, Hyatt, MTV, CNN, Microsoft, Burger King and GE? All were started in periods of economic recession. All have offered a unique contribution to business. And all have offered unique contributions in their industries and continue to be relevant because they have adapted to a changing business climate and clientele.



An audacious comparison to link GPSEG with these major corporations? I don't think so. It took the same combination of sweat equity, ideation, innovation, and paying close attention to the "customer" - our members - to build and constantly reinvent GPSEG...and we have never rested on the status quo.

In the past few years, GPSEG's leaders have observed that members now network differently, have different challenges demanding their time and attention, want and need different things from this exceptional organization, and are adjusting to an economic reality of shortened job tenures, less available time for volunteering and attending events, and increasing diversity of needs. Honoring the past; positioning for the future. Networking to help others can be a hard case to promote when the prevalent question is "what's in it for me?" We saw membership spike during the recession and drop as the market has improved. We've seen that people who join to get a job or new clients can be short term members.

Members have been creating stronger governance, new programs, leadership development programs, new member onboarding and Guide programs, newsletters and online interactions, and - later this year - anticipate both a strong, clear brand and new strategic plan to be adopted. The CEO Summits, Business Networking Roundtables, Women's Network, Executive Leadership Institute, Delaware Subgroup, changed technology, a Speaker's Bureau, and the Guide Program are all new initiatives that have emerged in the last couple years.

In our last issue of ConnEx, we featured the story of Ernie Inmon, one of those special people who was there from the beginning and who shared some of that history of a small group of friends organized by Chris Pavlides to help and support one another.

Now - 14 years later - the region, its economy, our reach and the needs of our members have all changed. With more than 20 subgroups and a substantial team of volunteers generating the work of committees for our membership, marketing, events, governance, sponsorship, technology and financial matters, GPSEG is a vibrant community that is still unique. Yes, it's true that a lot of organizations are organized to provide networking. Many are community-focused to address unique challenges. But none are exclusive to senior level executives with a primary goal of mutual support and help in achievement of professional and personal goals that spans all disciplines and industries. We often get the question, "is there something like GPSEG in other locations?" Not that we know of. My peers in other organizations and regions have never heard of one. And all are amazed at how extraordinary we are. Members who relocate miss us and want to start their own versions of GPSEG.

I hope you are as proud as I am to be associated with this unique and vibrant, engaged, passionate group committed to helping each other. All have had their share of lemons. Now that it's

getting warm, sit back and pour a TALL glass of lemonade; and keep noticing just how full that glass is ....way more than half full.



*GPSEG member Barry Dornfeld moderated a panel on Smart Growth: Getting it Right - Lessons from Successful Philadelphia CEOs at the CEO Summit June 1.*

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## Members in the News

**David Bookbinder** has published a series about the impact of people on the valuation of a business. He was also featured in [Inc.](#)

*Have news to share? Please send it to [maureen.waddington@gpseg.org](mailto:maureen.waddington@gpseg.org) for inclusion in the next newsletter.*

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GPSEG is an association of senior-level executives throughout Greater Philadelphia and the states of New Jersey and Delaware, providing professional and leadership education and business networking. GPSEG is committed to the exchange of business contacts and ideas to foster business.

