

Trendsetters

[Entrepreneurs]

By Mike Vogel



Beverly Raphael

RCC Associates

President, CEO
Deerfield Beach

Not denied: Raphael's high school guidance counselor told her she wasn't suited to higher education. She got a bachelor's from Southern Illinois anyway. She started an apparel business and sold it before her first husband's death.

Married: To developer Joel Altman since 2004

Recreation: Flying to meet their boat in the Caribbean and visiting islands such as Mustique, the Exumas, Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Bart, where they snorkel, ride their personal watercraft and kayak. They also have four grandchildren between them.

Workload: "From August to Thanksgiving it's crazy."

Inside Job

Get your good economic news while you may: Beverly Raphael reports her general contracting firm, RCC Associates, this year is "not far off" last year's record \$105 million revenue.

Raphael knows how to work from tough spots. After her husband, Richard, died 10 years ago, she stepped in to run his RCC, a general contractor with \$19 million in annual revenue that did interior buildouts for high-end retailers, spas and restaurants. She had considered selling the business, but employees convinced her that all they needed was someone to lead it — Richard had been the firm's rainmaker. They could teach her construction. "I always believed if you're in sales, you can sell anything," she says.

Evidently so. She was Florida's Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of

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the Year in the real estate and construction category last year.

RCC works in 22 states. Longtime clients include The Cheesecake Factory, Morton's, The Limited, Tiffany & Co. and Louis Vuitton. She can rattle off a list of employees who have been with the firm for more than 20 years, including Senior Vice President Rick Rhodes, who's now a partner in the company. She did lay off a few people this year to cut overhead while gauging demand. The firm employs around 80, rising to 100 at peak times. "I take calculated risks every day, but they are calculated," Raphael says.

Compound Interest

"This is one of the best businesses to be in," says Derek Hennecke, 42, CEO of drug development services company Xcelience. Drug companies hire Xcelience to take their discoveries and turn the compounds into formulations and manufacture them for use in clinical trials. Pharmaceutical companies increasingly outsource such work. The business was part of Ontario-based healthcare multinational MDS Pharma Services until 2006. Hennecke, a Canada native who had worked as a manager in Egypt, Canada, Holland and Mexico for a Dutch conglomerate, and his managers bought it. "Oh, there's been a learning curve," he says of being on his own after a career in multinationals. Xcelience's staff now numbers 80, up from 45 at the buyout. Its seven Ph.D.s, along with master's degree holders, chemists and other scientists, handle 40 to 50 compounds a year for clients. "We want to keep growing but grow at a rate that doesn't affect the most important things for our clients, which are quality and speed."



Derek Hennecke
Xcelience
CEO, President
Tampa


Entrepreneurial Ambassador



Bobra Bush, 44, owner of telecom consulting and contingency-based bill auditing firm Telcare and customer retention company Telcare in Boca Raton, was honored as a "small business champion" by

the National Federation of Independent Business for her activism in Tallahassee on behalf of entrepreneurs.

Hire Ground

Florida natives Chad Perce, 37, and Clint Drawdy, 36, co-founded Hire Methods in Jacksonville in 2004. Hire Methods is the parent company of healthcare staffing company Medical Methods, which is focused primarily on physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists, and technical staffing company iMethods Technical Recruiting, which is focused primarily on healthcare technologists. They expect \$4 million to \$4.5 million in revenue this year. 



Chad Perce



Clint Drawdy

Andrew Duany top left