



Upstate New York Chapter of TMA Promotes Pro Bono

What is TMA?

The Turnaround Management Association (“TMA”) is a professional organization dedicated to Corporate Renewal and Turnaround Management of companies in distress. Established in 1988, the TMA has approximately 7,000 members in 38 chapters located throughout the United States, Canada and the international business community. This group of diverse professionals shares a common commitment to help businesses manage and improve their performance. The Upstate New York chapter includes members from Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and areas surrounding these cities.

TMA is composed of many top-level executives of well-recognized firms in the fields of turnaround management consulting, accounting, lending, legal and other related fields.

TMA’s original mission continues today:

- To serve as a forum for convening turnaround executives and professionals from various disciplines to exchange information, ideas and knowledge.
- To promote high standards of practice and improved methodologies in turnaround management.
- To foster professional development opportunities for turnaround executives.
- To serve as a clearinghouse for research and information pertinent to the turnaround industry.
- To promote the image of the TMA and professional commitment to the highest standards of practice.

The Upstate New York Pro Bono Program

The Pro Bono Program is a volunteer effort supported by the members of the Upstate New York chapter of the TMA. Pro Bono work builds community and business relations by providing nonprofits or other deserving organizations access to free services offered by volunteers, who derive satisfaction from “giving back” to their local community.

The mission of the program is to provide turnaround consulting and other necessary services at no charge to non-profit organizations and small for-profit businesses experiencing serious financial, operational or other problems.

Eligible Not-for-Profit organizations include those that have a significant positive impact on the community, but whose agenda is neither political nor religious. Eligible For-Profit companies have job retention or creation potential of at least four employees but are not start-ups. Annual revenues must not exceed \$2 million or \$3 million for Not-for-Profit and For-Profit organizations respectively.

Qualified candidates are assigned a "lead" TMA volunteer who has the necessary skills appropriate to the demands of the project. The lead volunteer will work with management and be responsible for bringing the special skills of other TMA volunteers into the situation as required.

Pro Bono Program successes include companies ranging from machine shops and garment manufacturers to schools for the hearing impaired and organizations to help troubled youths. In all these situations the goal of restoring and/or improving the viability and performance of the company while creating employment opportunities was achieved.

An Example of the Upstate Chapter's Pro Bono Work

Visual Studies Workshop, Inc. ("VSW") is a nationally recognized non-profit media arts organization. In addition to its public programming, VSW offers a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Visual Studies through a joint program with the State University College at Brockport. In March 2003 our chapter Board of Directors was alerted to the fact that VSW's loan had been transferred to the workout department within their bank. One of our directors, Jim Schnell, a Principal in the firm of Sardone Robinson & Schnell, LLP, offered to contact VSW.

Mr. Schnell first met with VSW's Executive Director, Chris Burnett and his bookkeeper. With additional meetings and consultations with Mr. Schnell, Mr. Burnett was able to develop some strategic priorities for VSW including:

- i) development of a Strategic Long Range Plan;
- ii) use of certain assets for unrelated business income potential;
- iii) formalization of monthly and quarterly financial statements for VSW's board;
- iv) a formal budgeting process; and,
- v) re-financing the entire debt structure.

These actions resulted in:

- i) new financing with a new lender;
- ii) a new operations agreement with SUNY Brockport;
- iii) adoption and implementation of a strategic plan;
- iv) consistent financial reporting and discussion at the Board level; and,
- v) new contracts and additional revenues for outside use of VSW's auditorium and facilities.

In Mr. Burnett's letter to the Upstate Chapter's President, Garry Graber, he thanked the chapter for its donation of Mr. Schnell's time and services to VSW. Mr. Burnett indicated that, with Mr. Schnell's consultation and suggestions several initiatives were developed and implemented. The letter continues with the following statement; "These initiatives have culminated in key strategies within the transformation plan for our organization."

More Information

For more information on our chapter's Pro Bono program please view our website at www.unyturnaround.org or contact our Chapter Administrative and Marketing Assistant, Sharon Graber at (716) 440-6615 or by e-mail at smgraber@msn.com

Co-authored by the following members of Upstate New York TMA Chapter:

Linda Budinski, Key Bank NA and Vice-President and Co-Chair of Public Affairs/Media Relations of UNYTMA

Donald Fleischer, Trimmingham Americas Inc. and Vice-President and Pro Bono Chair of UNYTMA

James Schnell, Sardone Robinson & Schnell LLP and Director of UNYTMA