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Accounting Alumni Hall of Fame

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Marketing Graduate Builds Business Success

Valerie R. Hornik is a 1977 Seidman School of Business marketing graduate who took advantage of her education and experience to begin her own company five years ago. The company's sales have grown from \$252,000 in its first year to a projected \$1,500,000 this year. In recognition of her success, the Seidman



Valerie Hornik markets her training programs to businesses across the country.

School of Business gave her the American Marketing Association's Outstanding Alumni Award this year. The award recognizes the contributions and accomplishments Grand Valley alumni have made in the marketing field and is awarded annually by GVSU's student chapter of AMA.

How did a Seidman B.B.A. graduate become a highly successful entrepreneur in just ten years? Intelligence, hard work, a strong dose of marketing savvy, and a supportive husband made up the ingredients. "I paid my way through Muskegon Community College and Grand Valley by working as a hairdresser," said Valerie. She had originally planned on a mathematics and science degree but switched to a business major when she discovered how much she enjoyed her business classes.

With her B.B.A. in hand, Valerie saw herself climbing the corporate ladder within a large company. Since acquaintances in business had advised her to start in sales, Valerie targeted four companies to consider for her first sales position.

She was familiar with hair care products from her work as a hairdresser, so Clairol was one of the companies she considered. When they had an opening for a sales representative in west Michigan, Valerie took the position.

After two successful years there, she accepted a position as a sales and marketing manager for Industrial Training, Inc. (ITI). The position was a step up to management for me," she says. "I was convinced, after two years in a large corporation, that I could do better in a smaller company."

ITI was a new company that specialized in producing and marketing slide and tape training programs for sales personnel. "I had always been taught and I firmly believed that business success is gained through the general marketing principle that says, 'Find a need out there and fill it,'" said Valerie. In her contact with ITI clients, she saw their need for more expanded sales and management training. She also became aware of the ease and convenience of modern video technology, and she realized how much that method of communication would benefit the clients ITI served. When she wasn't able to sway company management toward her convictions, she decided to strike out on her own. "I had an eighteen-month-old daughter and two sons in school at the time," she says, "so I began my business from my home. I remember jiggling the baby on my knee while my ear was glued to the telephone listening to a customer. Without the support of my husband, I wouldn't have been able to do it."

For the first one and a half years, Valerie focused her business on distributing video training materials for other companies. But her marketing philosophy soon led her in a different direction. Customers were requesting training programs that none of her suppliers carried. She knew she could fill those needs.

Valerie hired a video filming crew and produced her first product—a video tape on supervisory training. One thing led to another, and today Valerie has a business address on east 28th Street in Grand Rapids. Her firm is called Summit Training Source (STS) and she has found a market hungry for training programs on safety in the workplace. "We recently produced a program on asbestos handling for ARCO," she says. Valerie added a partner to her business three years ago to expand her areas of expertise. "With my marketing background and Karen's training in accounting and law, we complement each other nicely" she says.

The standard "find a need and fill it" marketing philosophy continues to guide Valerie in her business decisions. "We constantly monitor our market," she says. "When we get ten requests for a program we don't carry, we produce it." STS has produced six new programs this year.

With the successful business she has built, Valerie fulfills a major eligibility requirement for the award: "Candidate must be a person of such integrity and stature that the business students at Grand Valley State University will take pride in and be inspired by his or her accomplishments and recognition in marketing."

Accounting Alumni Hall of Fame

John H. Boone, C.P.A., a 1970 graduate of Grand Valley State and a partner in the Grand Rapids office of Seidman and Seidman/BDO, has been inducted into the Accounting Alumni Hall of Fame at the Seidman School of Business. The purpose of the Hall of Fame Award, according to Donald J. Klein, chairman of the Accounting Department, is "to give academic recognition to our accounting alumni who have excelled in their profession and to motivate current accounting students and other alumni by showing them the opportunities that are available to them." John received his award at the sixth annual Accounting Awards Banquet held last spring.

John was born and raised in Grand Rapids. He graduated from Grand Rapids Christian High and received a B.S. in economics from Grand Valley State. He earned his M.B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1972. He began his career in public accounting and has remained in that field for over 15 years.

John has been an audit partner at Seidman & Seidman/BDO since 1983, and last year became the company's Director of Microcomputer Services. He is also Chairman of the National Microcomputer Users Committee and a member of the National Audit and Accounting Committee.

Previous Hall of Fame inductees are David T. Olman, in 1985, and Ronald LaMange, in 1986.

Olman is a 1970 GVSU graduate with a B.S. in Business Administration and Economics. He went on to earn his M.B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1971. He began his accounting career in the Grand Rapids office of Ernst & Whinney in 1972 and is now a Tax Partner for the firm in Columbus, Ohio.

LaMange was one of the first four M.B.A. degree recipients at GVSU, graduating in 1975. He is part owner of Clipper Belt Lacer Co. in Grand Rapids and teaches on an adjunct basis for the Seidman School of Business.