

minnesota BUSINESS

Steven Schussler Steals
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*We're restyled,
retooled and
better than
ever»*

2nd Annual MINNESOTA FAMILY BUSINESS AWARDS

2009 winners
revealed p.26

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Your Office
For H1N1

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DON HELGESON, FORMER
CEO OF GOLD'N PLUMP,
WINNERS OF THE 2009
LEGACY AWARD

NOVEMBER 2009

\$2.95



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Schussler Speaks

We've asked Steven Schussler, the entrepreneur and theme restaurant guru behind Rainforest Cafe, to take his larger-than-life personality on the road and interview some of his most interesting pals for our new section, BackTalk. Here's his plan for the months ahead:

IT IS AN HONOR AND A PLEASURE to become a columnist for the redesigned *Minnesota Business Magazine*. Each month in BackTalk, I will be interviewing entrepreneurs from all walks of life—business executives, politicians, celebrities and sports figures, as well as those aspiring to be such people. I have had the unbelievable opportunity over the course of my career to meet and learn from some of the most successful, highly visible people in all facets of business and life, and a prime motivator behind my decision to pursue taking control of this page was to tap into my vast network and share their insights with you.

« **Steven Schussler** (steven@schusslercreative.com), is the Founder, Chairman and CEO of Schussler Creative, Inc., which specializes in creating, designing and developing theatrical attractions, restaurants, retail stores and entertainment venues worldwide.

In introducing you to some of these fascinating people, I will be ever-mindful of a few important things. First, each BackTalk has to, in some way, connect back to Minnesota. Second, no subject can be ordinary. Third, the shared lessons learned need to be inspiring, educational, funny and largely untold.

As an entrepreneur, I know first hand what it takes to pursue a dream. The journey is similar to a puzzle in that you must look at all of the pieces in order to figure out

how it all truly fits together. I believe that the defeats and hardships are just as important as the triumphs. In the end they work together to give an entrepreneur the knowledge and understanding of how his or her background and experience contributes to the on-going success of the business.

I always laugh when people ask me what it's like to be an "overnight" success. The fact is, I am no such thing, and I attribute my success to a lifelong passion for building friendships and relationships, and to being on a never ending quest to learn from others with firm attention to detail. And I never forget to trust my gut, which is one of the most important internal mechanisms anyone possesses. If you trust your gut and follow your instincts, you will rarely go wrong.

I hope to hear from the readers of *Minnesota Business* with suggestions on who you would like to see interviewed in the upcoming issues. And, of course, I look forward to your feedback!

—Steven Schussler

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My vision is to extract lessons and stories during the course of these interviews that might not typically be told in a business magazine or by a business columnist. This column will reflect my unique perspective and is written in the spirit of sharing inspirational stories that ignite your passion to keep pursuing your dreams.

BackTalk interviews will be about the quirky, funny, offbeat stories of successful people, as well as personal insights into how others have picked themselves up from the depths of despair and defeat, and risen to the top.

« The writer with some of his many notable acquaintances



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVEN SCHUSSLER