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In this issue: [Afterthoughts on Demoulas Market Basket](#) | [Do you OODA Two?](#) | [2015 United States Federal Budget](#) | [MDL Partners Member Network](#) | [Selected Success Stories](#) | [Thought for the Day](#)

Afterthoughts on Demoulas Market Basket

Many of you have followed the Market Basket saga, where Arthur T. Demoulas was ousted by the Market Basket Board of Directors and replaced by co-CEOs selected by Arthur S. Demoulas. What followed was an uprising by employees and customers in an effort to return Arthur T. to his position. Thousands of employees essentially went on strike and protested in front of the stores and corporate offices. Customers joined in with a boycott of the stores and their own protests. Eventually, Arthur T. was able to regain his position in part based on employee and customer leverage and in no small part to a \$1.5B financing for majority interest in the company.

All of this received day by day and even hour by hour coverage in the press which consistently praised Arthur T. and his management style. Whether these protests were spontaneous as indicated in the media or carefully orchestrated to exert pressure on the board, there are some interesting implications. First, the media will support "good" CEOs and employees who appear to be battling corporate greed. Second, a leadership philosophy and management style that puts customers first is worth a lot in the marketplace. Demoulas was noted for saying the customers need the money more than the investors as his reason for maintaining low prices. He also obtained a lot of good will with employees through better than average salary and benefits packages and through his efforts to know as many employees as possible on a personal basis.

This appears to be a case where a CEO was able to take good will to the bank. It also appears to be part of a growing trend toward real corporate social responsibility and enlightened capitalism. Other companies with similar philosophies include Apple Computer, the most valuable company in market capitalization in the world. Tim Cook, who took over for Steve Jobs is quoted as saying, "I don't consider the bloody ROI. If you want me to do things only for ROI reasons, you should get out of this stock." Instead, he is pushing corporate responsibility, transparency, diversity and engaging in causes that are important to customers.

Another example is the recent IPO of Alibaba, a company founded by Jack Ma in 1999 which is now worth \$220B. Ma's mantra is "customers first, employees second, and shareholders third." Despite this, a pretty good record of investor value creation.

In the past, companies have worked to do good despite the potential negative impact on investor value. Now it appears that companies with a strong sense of corporate social responsibility and a mission to improve the world are able to recruit better people, have employees work harder, and attract customers more easily.

We may be entering an environment where enlightened companies really do perform better in the marketplace.

Do You OODA Two?

In the last newsletter, we talked a bit about situational awareness (SA), knowing what's happening around you in order to understand how information, events and your own actions will impact goals and objectives for you and others. It is knowing what is going on so you can figure out what to do. SA involves learning and practicing OODA: Observe, Orient, Decide and Act, leading to faster, more effective decisions and better actions.

Understanding the importance of SA and applying OODA to your career and job search distinguishes you from others and gives you a competitive advantage.

As you manage your career, it is critical to understand the landscape in your industry and your profession. Keep track of major drivers and trends, and build a model to understand and predict where the industry and profession is going, how you can take advantage of these trends, and what you need to do to stay eminently employable.

Speaking of staying eminently employable, you should maintain a strong SA about the job market and employment trends, understand better than most people how the employment process works (or in many cases, how it doesn't work) and what your potential competitors are doing to give them an employment edge. Doing this, by the way, involves a disciplined, at least once-a-month, one-on-one networking meeting and an occasional checking-in with your friendly MDL Partners consultant.

If you are actively searching and interviewing, you can apply OODA to the interview process. Understand the interview process and model and its variations, if necessary, by revisiting the MDL Partners Interviewing Workshop. Understand yourself, your normal business modus operandi, and have supporting example stories ready for the interviewer.

In the interview itself, carefully observe the interviewer. Try to determine his or her interview style, comfort level with interviewing, pace and depth of conversation, and personality style so you can predict upcoming questions and actions and decide how to approach your answers. If you understand the interview model and dynamics, you will be able to execute the interview more effectively.

Congratulations, by reading this article, you are now more situationally aware and can OODA your career to the next level.

2015 United States Federal Budget

I'm sure you all noticed the 2015 United States Federal Budget which went into place on October 1st, 2014 and runs through September 30th, 2015. There are, however, a couple of minor problems with this budget. The first is that it hasn't actually been passed and gone into effect. Second, is that no politicians are talking about this fact until after the election on November 4th. Fortunately, the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2015 will fund the federal government through December 11th, 2014 by appropriating \$1T. What happens around that time, however, is up for grabs depending on the election.

The standing budget proposal is now as follows:
Revenue: \$3,340,000,000,000

Expenditures: \$3,900,000,000,000
Deficit: \$564,000,000,000 (3.1% of GDP)
Federal Debt: \$18,690,000,000,000 (102.6% of GDP)
To put all this in perspective, a family budget might look like this:
Revenue: \$33,400
Expenditures: \$39,000
Deficit: \$5,640
Debt: \$186,900

Both the President's and the Republican Party's proposals include reductions in science, space and technology, energy, income security including federal unemployment insurance, and community and regional development. Despite the silence, you might want to pay attention to the budget and its implications before the election.

MDL Partners Member Network

LinkedIn Members list the LinkedIn Groups capability as one of the most valuable aspects of the site. There are over 2.1 million LinkedIn Groups and 8,000 new groups formed per week. The average LinkedIn member participates in seven groups with a maximum allowable of 50 groups.

You should be aware that MDL Partners has a number of LinkedIn Groups which can be a highly valuable resource to your career and job search. Make sure to take advantage of this resource.

First, be sure you are a member of the MDL Partners Networking Group. Go to your LinkedIn Page, select Groups from the drop-down search menu and type in MDL. The first group listed is the MDL Partners Network. If you are not a member, click the Join button. Further down the list are a number of additional MDL Partners subgroups. These include the IT and Telecom Special Interest Group, the Merger and Acquisition Special Interest Group, the Consultant Network Subgroup, and the Healthcare and Biotech Special Interest Group. If you would like to start an additional MDL Partners Subgroup, please contact your friendly consultant.

The MDL Partners Network Group can be an excellent resource for your search efforts. Obviously, if you become aware of opportunities, growing companies, potential consulting gigs, or business opportunities, post them to the group. If you need connections to a particular company, background information on an industry, or other information, post your request to the group. If you find interesting articles, websites or other groups, post them also.

Be sure your LinkedIn Group settings are set so that you will receive emails directly from the group so you don't miss something interesting or relevant.

Here are some directions to do so (courtesy of Christopher Stock, an MDL client):

Move your cursor over your photo in the top right of your home page (even if you don't have a photo) and select Privacy and Settings.

You may be prompted to sign into your account to get to your settings.

Click the Communications side tab next to the envelope icon near the left side of the page.

Click the Set the Frequency of Emails link to select the emails you'd like to receive and how often you'd like to receive them. Alternatively, you can go to the Groups, Companies and Applications section, with a little gear at the front and set the frequency of your group digest emails to daily for MDL Partners.

When making a lot of changes to your profile, turn off activity broadcasts temporarily in the

Privacy Controls section.

Take a few minutes to realize the value of LinkedIn and the MDL Partners LinkedIn Group.

Selected Success Stories

Dan Cole has taken a position as Senior Portfolio Manager at Columbia Management where he will be managing a smallcap fund.

Bob Gohn has joined NEC Energy Solutions in a Senior Product Management role.

Paul Hovsepien is now VP, Contracts for Parsons Corporation, one of the world's largest engineering and construction organizations.

Jeremy Pemberton is now Managing Director at Waypoint Residential, LLC, a national real estate investment management company specializing in apartment properties.

Bob Armour has joined PTC as Senior Vice President, Global Services Operations.

Kathleen Murphy has taken a position at Northern Bank and Trust as Chief Retail/Marketing Officer.

Lou Liuzzo is now Director, Contracts, Oasis Systems, a provider of IT, system engineering, enterprise applications and program management services to the Department of Defense.

Prem Balagangadhor is now Senior Director - Data Architecture & Strategy at The College Board based in Reston, VA. The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity.

Ray Chattman is Senior Proposal Writer at L-3 National Security Solutions, a prime mission partner to defense, intelligence and government agencies based in Reston, VA.

Richard Lee Doty is Cyber Operations Program Manager at ActioNet, Inc., where he leads a sophisticated, technically focused team which provides cyber operations for the Department of Energy (DOE).

David Horton is now at Northrop Grumman in Herdon, VA, where he is responsible for the business development and capture strategy for all aircrew training--with special emphasis on large mobility airframes (tanker/cargo/commercial derivative/etc).

Arun Mallikarjunan is now a Solutions Architect at Amtrak in the Washington, DC area.

Ken Mehrling is CEO and Founder of Mehrling & Associates, Inc. in Gaithersburg, MD, where he is working with various companies to increase the individualization of medicine from diagnostic assessment to drug regimens. He is also interested in working with a startup company (or turn-around) to provide commercial and marketing leadership.

Ty Prettyman is a Senior Aviation Engineer at SAIC in the Washington, DC area, Supporting the FAA on the NextGen program.

Aswin Rajappa is Senior Vice President, Marketing at LendKey, a cloud-based technology company that provides the essential infrastructure for any party to quickly, securely, efficiently, and profitably lend to anyone else.

John Reinemann is now a Consultant at NCI, Inc. in Reston, VA. NCI is a leading provider of enterprise solutions and services to U.S. defense, intelligence, health care, and civilian government agencies.

James Robertson is Vice President, HR at World Duty Free Group US in Bethesda, MD.

Paul Ruppert is a C-Level Advisor, Strategic Partnerships for A2P Enterprise Mobile Messaging at mBlox, the world's largest Application to Person (A2P) mobile messaging provider.

Robert Singleton is now at Booz & Company in the Washington, DC area.

Ray Summerell is Senior Manager at Secretariat International in the Savannah, GA area. Secretariat International performs construction project-related consulting, including program and project management, project controls, scheduling, contract and claims review, cost estimating, lender construction reviews, and delay and disruption analytics on domestic and international projects.

Larry Wolter is now Director of Product Marketing at CyberIQ Services in Arlington, VA. CyberIQ Services accelerates cyber threat detection and response through innovative software and service solutions.

Thought for the Day

An executive was interviewing a candidate for a position in his company. He wanted to learn something about her personality, so he asked, "If you could have a conversation with anyone, living or dead, who would it be?"
She quickly responded, "The living one."

MDL Partners

Boston - 20 William Street - Wellesley, MA 02481 | 781-237-3777

Stamford - 6 Landmark Square, 4th Floor - Stamford, CT 06901 | 203-359-5623

DC/VA/MD - 2111 Wilson Blvd., Suite 700 - Arlington, VA 22201 | 703-516-6688

Hartford - 10 Talcott Notch Rd. - Farmington, CT 06032 | 860-269-0291