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MARRIOTT

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

FALL 2017







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PUBLISHER Lee T. Perry
MANAGING EDITOR Robert G. Gardner
EDITORS Kellene Ricks Adams
Emily Smurthwaite Edmonds
ART DIRECTOR Jon G. Woidka
COPY EDITORS Krista Holmes Hanby
Ashley Young
Aubrey Zalewski
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Nina Whitehead
ASSISTANT EDITOR Katie Olson

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS, EDITORS,
DESIGNERS, & PHOTOGRAPHERS** Jordan Christiansen
Andrew Cook
Alec Francis
Tessa Haas
Todd Hollingshead
Madeleine Lewis Smith
Chadwick Little
Angela Marler
Maren McInnes
Tessa Smith
Laura Spilsbury
Heidi Zundel

MAGAZINE DESIGN BYU Publications & Graphics

ALL COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE SENT TO

Marriott Alumni Magazine

490 Tanner Building

Brigham Young University

Provo, UT 84602

PHONE: 801-422-7696 FAX: 801-422-0501

EMAIL: marriottmag@byu.edu

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◀ EACH FALL BYU MARRIOTT WELCOMES THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS BACK
TO THE TANNER BUILDING, WHERE WE PREPARE THE KIND OF LEADERS THAT
THE LEAN, AGILE ORGANIZATIONS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW DEMAND.

I'm like a dog. I see a ball, and I just go for it. • It's fun to win. But based on the season so far, that's not going to happen. • No losing your voice. This is not *The Little Mermaid*. • Don't send me an email and say, "I need your course description in forty-five minutes." • My sister says I'm insane at networking. • Most people do not take this class as a freshman, so you're very brave. • I had a companion who would fall asleep in twenty seconds. We'd be having this great conversation, and suddenly he was out. • You're just a baby now, but talk to me again in a few years when you're a senior. • I don't know if there is a perfect balance of working, making money, and having a life. • We need a chill day so that we don't get burned out in Paris. • Wish me suerte. • I will study enough to go to that concert. But if I fail my chem test, it's OK. • They are the funniest pair. Not sure how it happened, but it's perfect. • Where do you work? A startup company. That sounds nice and trendy. • I've been home for three weeks now. You're so new to the world! Holy cow! • That's not family friendly. They could do way better than that. • I just heard a little sound, and I wanted to make sure that no one was passed out in here. • He's going to throw something at us that will be about accounting. I can feel it. • I've been reading your blogs. I know what your voice sounds like. • Everywhere we go, we're going to see beautiful things. •

I was that guy who fell asleep in your class. The night before that, I met this girl who is a nerd like me, so I got really excited, and we talked for nine hours. • The world needs more of her. She's great—also intimidating. • I didn't like the food in London very much. But you know, I'm a creature of habit. • This is such a nice building. That's why I come here every day. Not for class. • Yes, I've been telling you: I want to go to Primark. • She's like the Ballard Center's golden child. • I thought you had a bike. It got stolen. I left it unlocked—amateur mistake. • I'm basically just going to teach them how to value stuff. • I can't control all the charges that come out of this office. Actually, you're the controller; that's your job. And that's why I have control issues. • I make everyone laugh. They laugh when I say hello. • You should probably stay and make money. I'd really love to see you though. • I had elk running on either side of me. It was like *Dances with Wolves* or something.

OVERHEARD
IN THE
TANNER



4



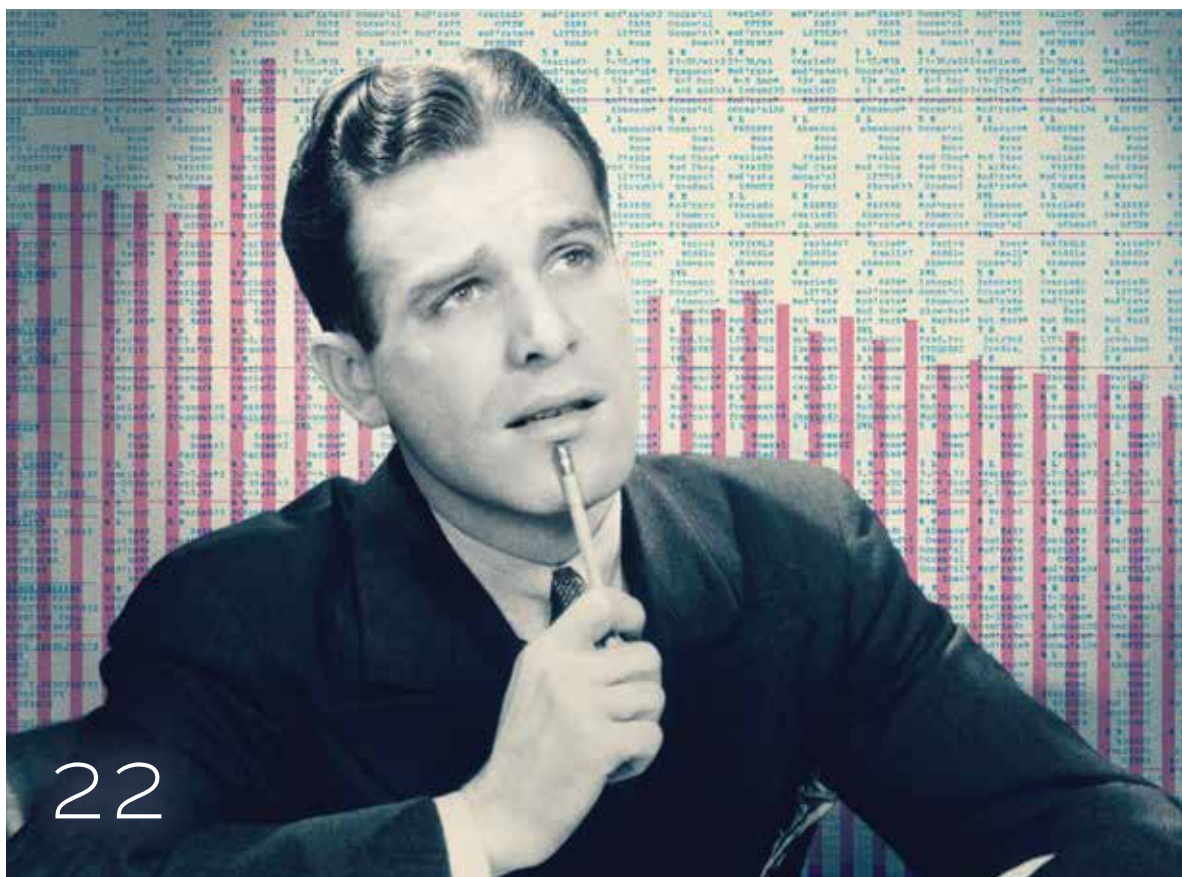
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Cover illustration by Nick Lu

OUT

JACKSON, WYOMING—THE GATEWAY TO THE GRAND TETONS—IS ALMOST ALWAYS BUSTLING.

SNOW-CAPPED PEAKS AND EXPANSIVE HORIZONS DRAW CROWDS TO THIS TINY OUTPOST IN THE AMERICAN WEST. EACH SUMMER, OUTDOOR THRILL-SEEKERS AND HARD-CORE HIKERS, CITY SLICKERS AND SELF-PROCLAIMED GASTRONOMES DESCEND ON THE TOWN TO SOAK UP THE VIEWS, SAVOR THE LATEST CUISINE, AND, OF COURSE, PULL ON SOME COWBOY BOOTS.

BUT IN THE SUMMER OF 1984, JACKSON WAS ABUZZ WITH SOMETHING DIFFERENT FOR FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD SHANE JONES: *opportunity*.

SIDE CHANCE

By Megan Hendrickson Photography by Bradley Slade



Shane Jones
MBA, 1997

LEADING
ALUMNI



Jones was fascinated by the development of home computers and wanted his own—an 8-bit Commodore 64. But his parents—a Forest Service ranger and school lunch worker—wouldn't splash out \$600, the equivalent of nearly \$1,500 today, for a hobby. So Jones took matters into his own hands.

"I went and knocked on doors of businesses and said, 'Hey, I don't have any experience, but I have a lot of desire, and I'll work really hard for you. Will you hire me?'" Jones recalls.

His sincerity paid off. He scored a busboy job at the Cadillac Grille, adjacent to the city's antler-festooned town square. After a summer's worth of work, he purchased the computer. The next summer he picked up a disk drive, adding component by component until he had the full setup.

"That experience was formative for me," Jones says. "I was not going to sit back and wait for other people to tell me what to do. I was going to have to forge my own way, piece by piece."

That can-do spirit has carried Jones far. After earning an MBA from BYU Marriott in 1997, he crisscrossed the country working for some of the biggest names in business: Koch Industries, Limited Brands, and Amazon. Along the way, he and his wife, Nanalee, supported each other through the highs and blistering lows that accompanied building their family. In 2015, Jones brought things full circle by returning to the Mountain West to take on the role of CFO at outdoor retailer Backcountry.com.

It's his biggest adventure yet.

DESTINATION KNOWN

When Jones first heard about the Backcountry gig, he was vice president of finance and strategy at Nexeo Solutions, an industrial chemicals and plastics distributor in Texas.

Backcountry offered the opportunity to get back into retail—which Jones missed—with a fast-growing company. And the focus on outdoor gear? "That was the icing on the cake," says Jones, an avid mountain biker who has never shaken off his childhood love for the great outdoors.

Most importantly, the job spec was exactly what Jones had been working toward for nearly two decades.

"From the start of my MBA, I knew I wanted to be a CFO of a middle-market company," Jones explains. "I didn't know how I was going to get there, but I knew that's what I wanted to do."

Just like his quest to nab that first computer, Jones has stayed laser-focused on his goal. In fact, each move was calculated to propel him closer to his target. "My wife says I plan too much," Jones jokes.

Needless to say, he took the Backcountry job.

INTERNAL COMPASS

Jones and his family made the move to Draper, Utah, in 2015, and in the nearly two years he's been with Backcountry, he's made big strides—and hit a few roadblocks.

"One of the toughest things we've dealt with as a leadership team is recruiting really good talent to help us accomplish some of our great goals," he says.

A key objective: transforming today's \$600 million business into tomorrow's \$2 billion company with the potential to go public.

That type of change, Jones says, requires finding strong leaders. "We want people who not only have a passion for the outdoors but who also want to make an impact," he explains.

Passion and grit feature heavily in the copy on Backcountry.com. And for Jones, those words aren't just the fluff of marketing hacks; they've got real-world implications.

As an MBA student, Jones interned at Chrysler in Auburn Hills, Michigan. One of his coworkers was the kind of person who radiated on-the-job excitement, and he said something to Jones that stuck: "If you can find a job that you're passionate about, everything else will work out. That passion will feed your success."

Jones's passion for analysis, data, and planning paid off. "It took me twenty years of work to reach my goal, and there was a lot of being in the right place at the right time too," he says. "I've been blessed tremendously. But it helps if you have a deliberate plan and go after it."

TEAM PERSEVERANCE

Dedication has also played a large part in Jones's family life.

As he was nearing the end of his LDS mission in Anaheim, California, Jones promised a family he'd grown close to that he would meet up with their daughter when he returned to BYU to finish up his finance undergrad.

The rest is a tale as old as BYU: Boy met girl. Boy married girl's roommate.

Shane and Nanalee have supported each other ever since—managing job changes, cross-country moves, and the difficulties of infertility.

After trying a myriad of medical options, the Joneses decided to build their family through adoption. It turned out to be a heart-wrenching endeavor, with seven adoptions falling through after months of anticipation.

In one particularly painful instance, the Joneses got the call that a baby was available. When the couple arrived at the hospital, the birth mother's family was gathered in the recovery room. "It was really awkward," Jones remembers. "There was a lot of crying and back and forth."

That night the Joneses took the baby back to their hotel room, spending their first joy-filled night as parents of a newborn.

The next morning there was a knock at the door. The birth mother had changed her mind.

"It's amazing how quickly you can get attached," Jones says. "Even before you get that baby in your arms, you get attached."

During this difficult period, Jones was working for Yum Brands, managing financial planning and analysis for the Pizza Hut division in Dallas, when a recruiter contacted him about a position at Limited Brands in Columbus, Ohio.

He wasn't sure he would be interested—moving to another state would mean starting the adoption process

over—but he decided to fly out for a chat with the CFO of Bath and Body Works anyway.

The interview changed his mind. The role was exciting, and most of all, Jones felt like it was the right move for his career. "On the flight back, all I'm thinking about is how I'm going to explain to Nanalee that I think we need to move," Jones recalls.

But when Jones got home, Nanalee directed him to sit down and said, "We just got a call, and we need to go get a baby tomorrow."

That baby was their son, Rayden, now seventeen.

"I started my new job about a month later," Jones says. "It was a miracle the way it came together."

HEADING WEST

The family spent seven great years in Columbus before an up-and-coming website, Amazon.com, came calling.

The job came with big risks: the cost of living was higher in Seattle, the company's potential to be anything more than an online bookshop was unproven, and the job—senior director of worldwide financial planning and analysis—was outside of Jones's comfort zone.

And then there was Kairi.

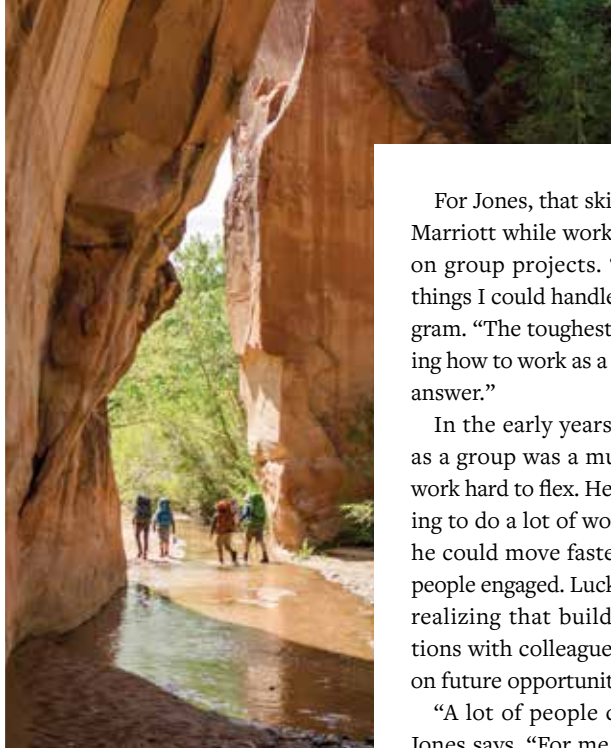
A few years after adopting their son, the Joneses started talking about adding to the family again, but the thought of more adoption setbacks was unbearable.

So they turned their attention to international options. At the time, an adoption in China was more expensive and time-intensive than in the United States, but the Joneses wouldn't have to experience another baby being taken from their arms.

After completing the two-year process, the couple traveled across the globe to collect their daughter, Kairi. A local doctor gave the little girl a clean bill of



"It took me twenty years of work to reach my goal, and there was a lot of being in the right place at the right time too. I've been blessed tremendously. But it helps if you have a deliberate plan and go after it."



For Jones, that skill was honed at the BYU Marriott while working with his MBA peers on group projects. “The academic side of things I could handle,” Jones says of the program. “The toughest thing for me was learning how to work as a group to get to the right answer.”

In the early years of his career, working as a group was a muscle that Jones had to work hard to flex. He often found himself trying to do a lot of work on his own, thinking he could move faster if he didn’t get other people engaged. Luckily, he course-corrected, realizing that building long-term connections with colleagues could have an impact on future opportunities.

“A lot of people do what their dad did,” Jones says. “For me, it was a very different path. My mentors absolutely gave me the confidence and assurance that I was going in the right direction.”

For instance, Jones’s first boss at Koch Industries, a former investment banker named Colin Myer, appreciated that Jones had talent and worked to help him cultivate it. It’s been twenty years since they first met, but Jones still reaches out to Myer when he’s looking for advice.

“One of the biggest things that mentors can do is show you that they believe in you,” Jones says. “It’s easy to lose that confidence in those early years. Colin made sure I remembered what I was trying to accomplish and where I was going.”

At his core, Jones has always remained that working-class kid from Jackson, Wyoming—the one who would do whatever it took to plug in that 8-bit computer.

In fact, his advice to other career climbers is as rugged as the terrain he was raised on: Decide what you want to do and push for it; don’t settle. The only way you don’t get to your goal is if you give up. **M**

health, and the family flew home to check in with their own health professionals.

It wasn’t good news.

Kairi was severely underweight and had a quarter-size hole in her tiny heart. The insufficient circulation had caused global brain damage, and their baby girl would need open-heart surgery to repair the defect as soon as she was large enough to handle the operation.

That news was incredibly difficult on its own. But facing the move to Seattle, the Joneses wondered how they could find the right doctors, juggle new health insurance, and even manage hauling their stuff 2,400 miles west.

“We found out that Seattle had one of the best hospitals in the world for cardiac catheterization,” Jones says.

Instead of invasive open-heart surgery, this technique involves inserting a long, thin tube into a vein or artery in an arm or leg and then threading it up to the heart.

“When I told our doctor about our move, he was like, ‘Yes, absolutely go. This is the best thing that could ever happen for your daughter,’” Jones remembers.

So the family moved, and Kairi received the lifesaving treatment she needed. Today she’s twelve years old, and though she still requires specialized care, for the Joneses, it’s a miracle to have her.

Things worked out well for Jones’s career too.

“Going to Amazon was the best thing that ever happened in my career,” he says. “It was one of the toughest jobs I’ve had, but I grew tremendously better because of it.”

Jones witnessed the birth of the Kindle, helped guide the company’s international expansion, and ushered in the growth of the company’s signature subscription service, Amazon Prime.

LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE

Another perk: getting to watch Amazon founder and tech visionary, Jeff Bezos, at work.

“Even in the early days, he never worried about financial results on a quarterly or even an annual basis,” Jones says. “He was always looking to the future.”

For example, when Jones joined the Amazon team, the company was worth \$15 billion. But at that time, Jones remembers, Bezos was talking about what things would look like when Amazon was a \$100 billion company. “The companies that do really well are the ones that have visionaries leading them,” Jones says.

Vision isn’t the only thing that Jones believes makes a quality leader: “I think you’ve got to be in touch—emotionally and intellectually—to help bring out the best in the people around you.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Megan Hendrickson’s childhood dream: work for a real-life magazine. Following editorial stints at Family Circle and Marriott Alumni Magazine, the 2010 BYU grad crossed that goal off her to-do list. She currently lends her red pen to a Los Angeles-based tech company, where she oversees content marketing and social media efforts.



Thinking Like Leaders

REDUCING THE COMPENSATION OF A CEO BY HALF is not an easy decision. But for board members with shareholders to consider, tough decisions like these are sometimes necessary.

Corporate boards of directors deal with situations like this all the time. Students, on the other hand, do not. But in MBA 623, Corporate Governance, grad students get the chance to practice making high-level decisions under the tutelage of professionals who've been there in real life.

"It was helpful to go through the process and think like a leader, think like an executive," says Kirk Snider, who took the course before graduating in April with his MBA. "It's a lot harder than I thought it would be."

Accounting professor Steve Albrecht used his extensive experience to develop the course. He has served on nine boards of directors, including those of SkyWest Airlines, Red Hat Inc., Cypress Semiconductor, SunPower Corporation, and the Larry H. Miller Group of Companies. Albrecht taught the course up until

his retirement in April. Rich Herlin, National Advisory Council member and retired Deloitte partner, is taking over the class beginning this fall semester and will be using Albrecht's curriculum and text. Students say the professors' backgrounds in the business world make the class particularly informative.

"We would look at the theoretical side, but then Professor Albrecht would talk about his actual experience with the situation," Snider says. "He could tell us about the outcomes and whether they were right or wrong from his perspective. It gave a depth that you don't often get with classes."

Students work through decisions such as how and when to issue stock, when to sell a corporation, and how to finance acquisitions. The class also incorporates subjects that students have learned throughout their academic

In MBA 623, students get an exclusive look into decisions usually reserved for those in the boardroom.

careers—including finance, strategy, marketing, and supply chain management—to form a full picture of running a corporation.

Herlin says he enjoyed collaborating with Albrecht to take over the course and hopes his teaching will have a positive impact on students as they enter the business world.

"As a result of my exposure to boards, I'm sharing some of my experiences and insight, as well as some well-known examples of how people may have unintentionally gone wrong," Herlin says.

During his time at Deloitte, Herlin worked with clients such as Dow Chemical Company, Abbott Laboratories, Orbitz Worldwide, and Comcast Corporation. Dealing with the audit committees of so many boards has given him a unique perspective on what it takes to run a company ethically and efficiently. Herlin also serves on the board of the nonprofit Rising Star Outreach and plans on using the knowledge he has gained there to discuss the differences between for-profit and nonprofit boards.

As for Snider, he is hoping to someday be nominated to sit on a corporate board. In the meantime, he recently entered the workforce in a consulting position in Salt Lake City.

"As a young professional who wants to be successful, it's always good to hear about that type of experience and apply it to my career," he says. "I would love to work in a board setting. After taking the class, I can understand the path to get there and the challenges that come with it."

—ANGELA MARLER

"He could tell us about the outcomes and whether they were right or wrong from his perspective. It gave a depth that you don't often get with classes."

—KIRK SNIDER



RUBBER TREE



CROTON



AIR PLANT



CACTUS



ASPARAGUS FERN



SPIDER PLANT



CAST IRON



LUCKY BAMBOO



CACTUS



MARIMO MOSS BALL



SUCCULENT



CROTON



BOSTON FERN



PEACE LILY



ALOE



PONY TAIL PALM





Office Greens

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PLANT FOR THE JOB

BY KATIE OLSON ILLUSTRATIONS BY CAROL CRAMER

Remember that bad acquisition? The one who couldn't handle the office environment and left all dried up in the middle of busy season? Or that great candidate who needed a lot of attention but really brightened up the place? Acquiring the right office plant has a lot more to do with fit than with the color of your thumb. To cultivate a mutually beneficial working relationship, scan the résumés of these office plants for a skill set that aligns with your organization's goals.

LET'S TALK LIGHT

Every plant has its place, and that place depends on sunlight. Give that swivel chair a spin to assess lighting conditions.

#1	#2	#3	#4
Would you consider your office to be a cave? No light? No hope either? Well, then you definitely need a plant. Go to SECTION #1 , on windowless offices, ASAP.	Is the nearest window north-facing or more than seven feet away? Is the light coming in usually obscured by a tree? Don't fret; just proceed to SECTION #2 , about low light.	Do you sit next to a west- or east-facing window? Or are you five to ten feet from a south-facing window? Then SECTION #3 , medium light, will best lead to plant-office synergy.	Are you beside a south-facing window? Are you practically blinded by the sun through that window? If you've answered yes, SECTION #4 , bright light, is the one for you.

#1 WINDOWLESS

Maybe you landed your dream job but not your ideal office space. If so, it's up to you to make your corner of the building a happy place. Though no succulent would last a day in a basement, you can still add some greenery.

Q: *Do you love to drown your plants or leave them out to dry?*



A: Drown them

MARIMO MOSS BALL:
Deep Thinker

Considered a national treasure in Japan, this soft, green moss ball is actually made of algae. Marimo grows at the bottom of

cold lakes, where the currents preserve its circular shape. If your office could use high returns on a small investment, consider a simple terrarium with shells and sticks. Marimo moss balls are low maintenance, and best of all, you can't possibly overwater them. Do, however, change out the water weekly and give each marimo a little squeeze (it can double as a messy stress ball). For serious investors, a small aquarium could be just the thing to brighten a dark office space. Marimo gets along swimmingly with most fish.

A: Dry

SNAKE PLANT: Self-Starter

Designed for drought, the snake plant doesn't mind if you vacation every once in a while; it will keep doing its job with only a monthly watering paycheck. Its reaching leaves need very little light, though it may need to be passed to a sunnier desk once a month for a vacation of its own. Snake plants look great lined up in a long, skinny box, accenting their unique verticality and maximizing your desk-top plant factor.



#2 LOW

Just a touch of natural light is all it takes to grow several fantastic plants—and reap the benefits of their hard work. Even better: most low-light plants are also low maintenance and withstand lighting changes fairly well.

Q: *Since you can't go wrong with either of these plants, do you prefer variegated leaves or a deep green color?*

A: Variegated leaves

POTHOS PLANT:
Productivity Powerhouse

Once you know the basic shape of a pothos plant, you'll spot it everywhere: office buildings, the mall, and nearly every photo taken in 1975. But don't knock it; pothos deserves all the hype it's gotten through the years because of its tolerance for low light and its high visual interest. Give it room to grow—down from a bookshelf or a hanging pot—and a thorough drink whenever the leaves droop, and the pothos plant can liven up your office for decades. Some are quite the overachievers, with vines trailing up to ten feet.



B: Deep green

ZAMIOCULCAS ZAMIFOLIA:
ZZ Does It

There's no companion quite like *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*—ZZ for short. It is the epitome of low maintenance and always looks its best. ZZ can tolerate very low-light conditions, and adding light only makes it grow faster. It doesn't mind cramped working conditions, though its stems may stretch up and gracefully arc over into your desk organizer. As far as watering goes, just forget about it. ZZ needs only the occasional drink every few weeks.



Plant Perks

Adding a live plant to your desk comes with an attractive benefits plan. Though there's no 401(k), check out this healthcare package.

- A Washington State University study reported that participants performing a computer task were more productive and less stressed when plants were added to the lab.

- Texas A&M reports that people who care for nature are more likely to care for others. Studies listed on their site also indicate improvements in memory and retention.

- Kansas State researchers found that patients with plants in their hospital rooms reported less anxiety and pain and experienced more positive feelings during their recoveries.

#3 MEDIUM

When it comes to light, moderation makes for many a happy plant—and often a faster-growing one.

Q: *Do you have medium light but occasionally like to close the blinds? Maybe you have medium light most of the year, with some bright light during summer? Or is your light situation consistently medium?*

A: Occasionally close the blinds

SPIDER PLANT:
Life of the Office

With cheerful, bright leaves, the spider plant is a forgiving and fun coworker. A spider plant that is happy in its pot will produce small spiderettes—mini protégés that shoot off from the main plant. Don't let brown tips concern you; they're typical in even the healthiest of spider plants. If you want a more manicured look, however, you can trim them off. Spider plants aren't picky and will work well in many different light levels and locations.



B: Some bright light

UMBRELLA PLANT:
Cost Effective

For those with floor space to spare, the umbrella plant, or *Schefflera*, can reach up to six feet when properly staked. Though the plant flourishes best in bright, indirect light, it can still grow well—only slower—in medium light. One other perk: *Schefflera* offers more bang for your buck and is often cheaper than other plants its size.



C: Consistently medium

PURPLE WAFFLE PLANT:
Great Communicator

The purple waffle plant sends clear signals. As soon as it needs water, its leaves collapse, looking a bit like the plant has fainted. With hydration, it pops right back up and keeps growing. Its deep purple color makes it stand out beside the average houseplant. Purple waffle tends to be low growing and can work well in a tight space.



#4 BRIGHT

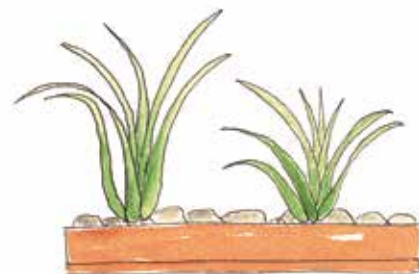
When it comes to light, many plants accept nothing less than the C-suite: lots of natural light and a great view. For these sun-seekers, finding the right watering routine will require patience and, perhaps, careful note-taking. But once the relationship is established, these plants pay dividends with their out-of-this-world looks.

Q: *Do you have a sink in the vicinity? Or is filling up your water bottle—let alone a watering can—a lengthy chore?*

>> We have a sink just down the hall

AIR PLANT: *Unique Talents*

As its name suggests, the air plant, or *Tillandsia*, draws nutrients from the air around it, rather than from soil. This means there are endless ways to accommodate it: in a small glass cup, wired to a frame, or even hung upside down. *Xerographica*, often called the “queen of air plants” because of its large size, even works as a casual paperweight. Don't be fooled by the lack of soil though. Bright, indirect light is a must-have as well as water—and lots of it. The easiest way to water an air plant is to place the entire plant in a bowl of water for a few minutes, remove, and place upside down on a towel. Once completely dry, return the plant to its holder. When it begins to look and feel dry, it's bath time again.



>> Other than the distant water cooler, it's a desert here

SUCCULENTS AND CACTI: *Dressed to Impress*

Succulents certainly have stylish colors and shapes that would fit right in at a tech startup. But while their hipster look is appealing, their claims to ease-of-care are overhyped. They require little watering, which may be simple for some, but proceed with caution and place succulents only in the sunniest of spaces. For those desiring a succulent who are less seasoned in plant care, start with an aloe vera plant, which tends to be less temperamental. Though

harder to handle physically, cacti may be easier to care for. To meet their needs, think desert conditions: well-draining soil, a little drink, and lots and lots of sunshine. **M**



ON Failing AND finishing

Address by Cassy Budd

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NICK LU

[The stories I have chosen to tell are not easy for me to share. These are not my proudest moments, and I usually prefer to wear my confident, professional persona for public consumption. However, I have come to appreciate the value of weakness and the strength that comes from acknowledging it. I hope that by sharing a couple of my failures, you can find some appreciation for your own.]





show up and try

Three years ago a few faculty in our department decided to take a ski-instructor class together. The idea was that we could spend Friday afternoons learning how to teach something completely outside of our expertise while also enjoying some recreation together.

When we met for the first time, we played a couple of simple games together, and I remember feeling somewhat confident about my place in the group. All was going relatively well for me—until we rode the lift to the top of the resort.

I made my way without much trouble, but when I looked to see my classmates skiing to the rendezvous point, I froze. If I were to follow my peers, I would have to ski at what appeared to be an impossible angle. I had never skied on something quite like that before and immediately started looking around for other options.

I determined that rather than ski directly down the mountain, I would simply ski the mountain horizontally, back and forth, allowing me to take a less severe descent to the desired location. I took a deep breath and skied to the right and then forced as sharp a turn as I could manage to head back to my class. Unfortunately, my calculations were off, and I could see that I would be well below the rest of the class upon completing my epic return across the face of the mountain. Flustered from this realization, I fell.

Mark, one of the course instructors, hurried over to try to give me a couple of pointers. After what must have been a few frustrating moments for him, he hollered up to the group that the others should go ahead. The class had been divided into three groups: the advanced skiers, the intermediate skiers, and me. I was humiliated.

Mark stayed with me and did his best to coach me down the mountain, and given that I had no other options, I did my very best to listen to his counsel. Much of that day is a blur to me. I was constantly switching focus between Mark's patient instruction and my own thoughts about the futility of the whole endeavor.

I left that Friday unsure if I would ever

return. I even worried about what would happen when I had to face my colleagues Monday morning. I fully expected some good-natured teasing, but instead everyone simply talked about how much fun it was to do something different together.

No one focused on my inability; rather, they talked about their own improvements and their desire to keep learning. Their enthusiasm was contagious, and I privately resolved that I would finish the class.

I didn't become an incredible skier overnight—or ever. I did join the intermediate group for a few runs toward the end of the course, but I was always the last one down the mountain. Still, even I could see that I had improved.

This experience gave me a deep appreciation for the value of the “try.” Simply showing up and starting where you are is all that can be asked of you. Regardless of your level of experience, your failures, or your perception of your own potential, wherever you are in life, you just need to show up and try.

Try to listen to the patient instruction of the Savior, try to imitate His movements, try to ignore the negative self-talk when your movements do not measure up, and try to focus on the joy in the learning instead of the defeat in the failure. And amidst your “try,” recognize that others around you are in the middle of their own “tries.”

In my own classroom I have seen that failure is one of the best ways to generate lasting, intellectual learning. The authors of *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* report:

Unsuccessful attempts to solve a problem encourage deep processing of the answer when it is later supplied, creating fertile ground for its encoding, in a way that simply reading [or being given] the answer cannot.¹

It is very satisfying as a teacher to witness the transition from failed attempt to recognition and understanding.

Failure is useful in physical development as well. Strategically working a muscle to failure—the point at which you can no longer lift or push or pull whatever you are lifting, pushing, or pulling—and then allowing proper time for the muscle fibers to repair is one of the most effective ways to build strength. This process of failing and repairing eventually results in stronger, more efficient muscles.

If failure is important to our intellectual and physical improvement, perhaps it is important in our quest for perfection as well. Could it be that our moments of extremity are necessary for our spiritual progress and that our Savior knows that only then are we ready to learn? Regrettably, accepting help when we need it most can be difficult.

Try to listen to the patient instruction of the Savior, try to imitate His movements, try to ignore the negative self-talk when your movements do not measure up, and try to focus on the joy in the learning instead of the defeat in the failure.



accept help

In March 2008 two of my former students, Mike and Taylor, invited my family to go spelunking in Spanish Moss Cave. We were all excited, though we were not experienced rock climbers. After a little training at an indoor gym, we hiked five miles into Rock Canyon and up to the cave entrance.

The initial descent into a corkscrew-shaped crack in the rocks twists downward for fifteen to twenty feet before it finally opens into the domed roof of the cave. Once through the crack, we each rappelled approximately fifty feet down to a sloped floor that continued into the belly of the cave.

We spent a couple of hours exploring, marveling at the oddly shaped formations along the way. At the bottom of the cave, just before we turned around, Taylor took a picture of my family. I remember feeling charged with the exhilaration of a great adventure with my family. I felt triumphant, like I had accomplished something different, something unique and special. But I would not carry that same feeling with me out of the cave.

We clambered back up to the domed room, but the real challenge remained: we still had to navigate the rope that hung from the ceiling and disappeared into the winding rock exit above. And this time we would be climbing up (with the assistance of ascenders) instead of dropping effortlessly down.

Mike ascended first and positioned himself in the corkscrew to coach me through the process, while Taylor stabilized the bottom of the rope. I had only learned to use the ascenders that morning, and although it had seemed simple in the climbing gym, I struggled to get my arms and legs to work together now.

I managed to inch about halfway up the rope before I had to stop, slumping down in the climbing harness to rest my legs. But fear would not let me rest my arms. I clung tightly to the ascenders, refusing to let go and unable to relax. I spent several minutes dangling twenty-five feet above the ground, mustering the strength to keep climbing.

I gathered myself and continued up the remaining visible length of rope until the top ascender would move no further. I had reached the rock above and needed to let

go of the ascenders. This was the only way I could find handholds and continue climbing.

Again, fear took hold of me. Every muscle in my body shook, and I began to contemplate what living in a cave might be like. In this panic-stricken state, I heard Mike talking above me. He was telling me to relax and to stay calm, giving me instructions on where to reach.

Unable to see any suitable holds, I told Mike, "I cannot do this."

I looked up hoping to see him, but because of the curvature of the rock, I could only hear his voice. He tried different instructions, but there was no way I was letting go of those ascenders. I didn't trust the rock, I didn't trust myself, and I didn't trust my ability to leave the perceived safety of the gear to



which I clung. I remember hearing some movement above me, and then Mike told me to take his hand.

This time when I looked up, I could see Mike's forearm, with his hand open wide. I laughed out loud.

"You are just going to pull me up one-handed?" I asked.

"Sure!" he said confidently.

We argued the relative merits of this idea for a time. Given that I am not telling you this story from inside Spanish Moss Cave, you can guess who won that argument.

Looking up again, I was seized with the realization that I really didn't want to stay in the cave forever. I wanted to go home. This awareness gave me the courage to trust Mike and to reach for his hand. One moment I was dangling from the dome, and the next moment I was wedged into the crevice, still clinging to one ascender with my other hand. I could finally relax my arms.

Mike's steady and confident voice guided me farther up the twisting exit until we encountered one last challenge: I was too

short to reach the next hold and too timid to make a swing for it. Mike suggested that he try to pass me in the crevice, get beneath me, and then boost me up to the hold. I was not sure the maneuver would work, but by this point I was humbled enough to listen to his advice. Mike managed to find a way around me and secured himself against the wall just below me.

When he told me to use his back as a step stool to reach the next hold, I had visions of me standing on his back, his hands slipping under my weight, and his body falling through the hole in the cave ceiling. We again argued over the merits of his crazy idea, but I finally gave in and stepped on Mike, who held firm so I could reach the hold I needed. From there it was a relatively easy climb to the open air.

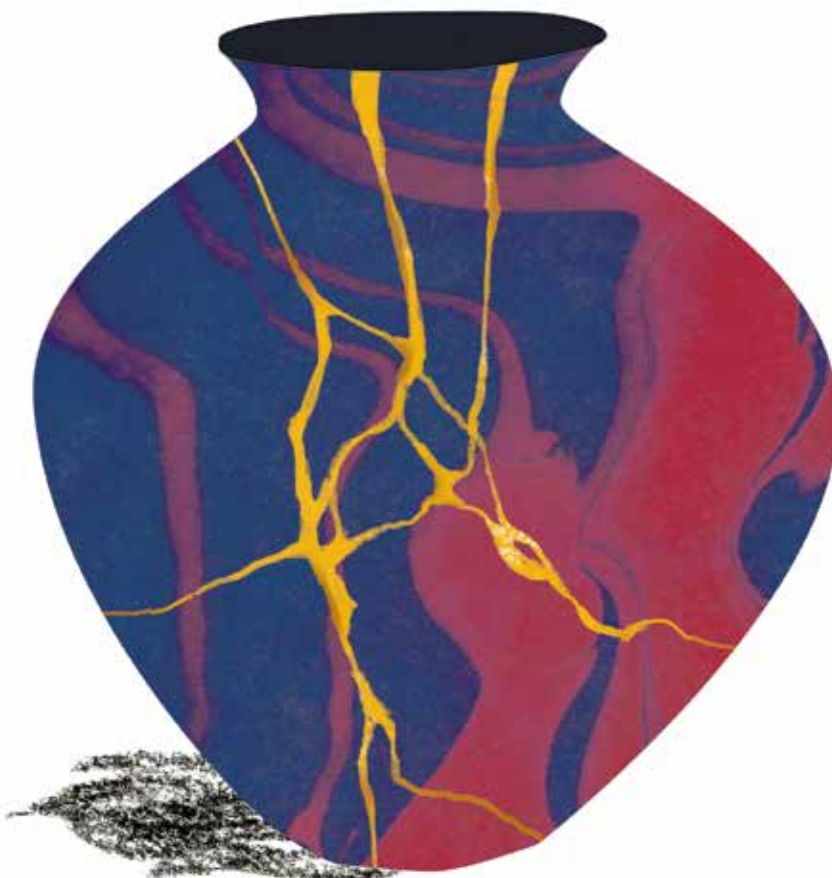
Looking out over the valley, I couldn't suppress a nagging feeling of defeat that contrasted starkly with my proud moment at

the bottom of the cave. I replayed everything that had just happened. Did Mike really pull me up from the top of a fifty-foot drop? Did I really step on him? Was I really that needy? Yes, yes, and yes.

We are all that needy. Perhaps you would have fared better than I did in Spanish Moss Cave, but we all, at one time or other, will be in a situation in which our strength or knowledge or skill or perhaps even our desire is not enough. These are the times when your Savior pulls you up out of the darkness—if you will let go and take His hand. These are the times when His voice guides you to safety—if you will listen carefully. And it is for these times that He descended below all things—to become your stepping-stone.

I love these words from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

When [the Savior] says . . . "Come unto me," He means He knows the way out and He knows the way up. He knows it because He has walked it. He knows the way because He is the way.²





When we turn our broken pieces over to the Savior, our gaps are filled with Him—with His perfection—and we are made complete; we are finished by the Great Creator through the restorative power of “the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2).

I recently asked Mike whether he was ever concerned about getting me out of the cave that day.

Without hesitation, he replied, “No, there was always a plan. I carried all kinds of gear you never saw. There is always a way. Sometimes it is 5 percent me and 95 percent the other person; sometimes it is 99 percent me and 1 percent the other person. But I know I can work with whatever the person has to give.”

Our Savior is the same. He can work with whatever you have to give if you are willing to accept His help.

becoming finished

Brian K. Ashton of the Sunday School general presidency reminded us that “repentance is not a backup plan just in case our plan to live perfectly fails.”

He also said, “[Repentance] is not just for big sins but is a daily process of self-evaluation and improvement that helps us to overcome our sins, our imperfections, our weaknesses, and our inadequacies.”³

Living perfectly is not the plan. Repentance is the plan. Jesus Christ is the plan. I

think we erroneously equate perfection with living a perfect life, with never failing or falling short, but Jesus Christ is the only one who ever did or ever will do that. Perfection for us, then, must be about something else.

John S. Robertson explained in a BYU devotional that our understanding of the word *perfect* has changed during the last four hundred years: whereas we use *perfect* to mean “flawless” today, its Latinate root meant something closer to “finished.” Furthermore, the Hebrew word that was translated as “perfect” in the Bible might have been more accurately translated as “complete.”⁴ Perfection is not about being flawless; it is about being finished.

Artists who practice the Japanese art form *kintsugi* repair broken pottery by filling the cracks with a lacquer made from gold, silver, or platinum, restoring the damaged piece to something beautiful and whole. Kintsugi teaches that scars are not something to hide; rather, they are to be celebrated for the unique beauty they exhibit. The scars themselves are considered precious and therefore are mended with precious metals to honor their value. The finished piece is even more beautiful than the unbroken original.

Similarly, we honor the scars of our Savior, for He has graven us on the palms of His hands (see Isaiah 49:16). He is not ashamed

of His scars. On the contrary, He has given us this invitation:

Arise and come forth . . . that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am . . . the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. (3 Nephi 11:14)

When we turn our broken pieces over to the Savior, our gaps are filled with Him—with His perfection—and we are made complete; we are finished by the Great Creator through the restorative power of “the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). We come to know the Savior not just by recognizing and reverencing His scars but by recognizing and reverencing our own. We are bound to the Savior through our mutual scars, “and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

I echo the words of Elder Holland:

*[When] you are lonely, please know you can find comfort. [When] you are discouraged, please know you can find hope. [When] you are poor in spirit, please know you can be strengthened. [When] you feel you are broken, please know you can be mended.*⁵

Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, desires to mend your broken pieces, fill your empty spaces, and make of you a vessel that is more beautiful and whole.

May you each find the strength to fail and, in the hands of your Savior, the power to finish. **M**

NOTES

- 1 Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 88.
- 2 Jeffrey R. Holland, “Broken Things to Mend,” *Ensign*, May 2006.
- 3 Brian K. Ashton, “The Doctrine of Christ,” *Ensign*, November 2016.
- 4 See John S. Robertson, “A Complete Look at Perfect,” BYU devotional address, 13 July 1999.
- 5 Holland, “Broken Things to Mend.”

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Cassy Budd is a professor in the School of Accountancy. This text is adapted from her BYU devotional address given 14 February 2017.

around the COOLER

BY EMILY EDMONDS

1. THE LEARNING LEADER SHOW

Leadership is a broad and evolving topic, so it naturally makes a great podcast centerpiece. You don't have to be a supervisor or CEO to enjoy *The Learning Leader Show with Ryan Hawk*; its topics—ranging from the practical (e.g., hiring right, working smart) to the psychological (e.g., being self-aware, showing gratitude)—cover skills for any level of leader. In episode 207, “How a Rookie Can Become a Multiplier,” BYU Marriott alumna Liz Wiseman is the featured guest.



1



3



2

Podcasts for Business Minds

Learning has never been so entertaining—or so cheap. Whether you're one of the 67 million Americans who listen to podcasts regularly or are just now tuning in, sorting the many subscription options can be overwhelming. If you're in the business of business, check out these programs to keep you on the cutting edge of issues, ideas, and innovations. They're the perfect companions for commuting, finishing weekend chores, or filtering through your Monday-morning emails.

Source: niemanlab.org

2. BUILDING A STORY BRAND

If you have customers of any sort, you need to listen to *Building a Story Brand with Donald Miller*. Many of those interviewed are household names, and all are experts in getting people talking about their brands. The topics will spark ideas for both your professional and personal pursuits. Check out episode 24, “The Best of 2016,” to sample this podcast.



4



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6



2

3. HOW I BUILT THIS

Want to hear the backstories of Patagonia, Clif Bar, or Five Guys? It may sound like a podcast for DIYers, but NPR's *How I Built This* is aimed at the entrepreneurially minded. Episodes feature recognizable brands and business leaders, such as Kate Spade and Richard Branson. Millennials will appreciate the 27 March 2017 podcast: "Power Rangers: Haim Saban."

4. MARKETPLACE

If short and sweet is your style, *Marketplace with Kai Ryssdal* is the podcast for you. In less than twenty-seven minutes, this podcast catches listeners up on business news and stories that make great conversation starters for your next awkward pause. Bonus: it's published every weekday. The episode "Cracked Phone Screens Are a \$4 Billion Business" (7 June 2017) is sure to hook you.

5. FREAKONOMICS RADIO

When *Freakonomics* debuted in 2005, it quickly became a must-read book. Now listeners are embracing the *Freakonomics Radio* podcast with equal enthusiasm. Stephen Dubner hosts weekly conversations that dive into the sociology of money. "Why Are We Still Using Cash?" (29 September 2016) will make you look at hundred-dollar bills in a whole new light.

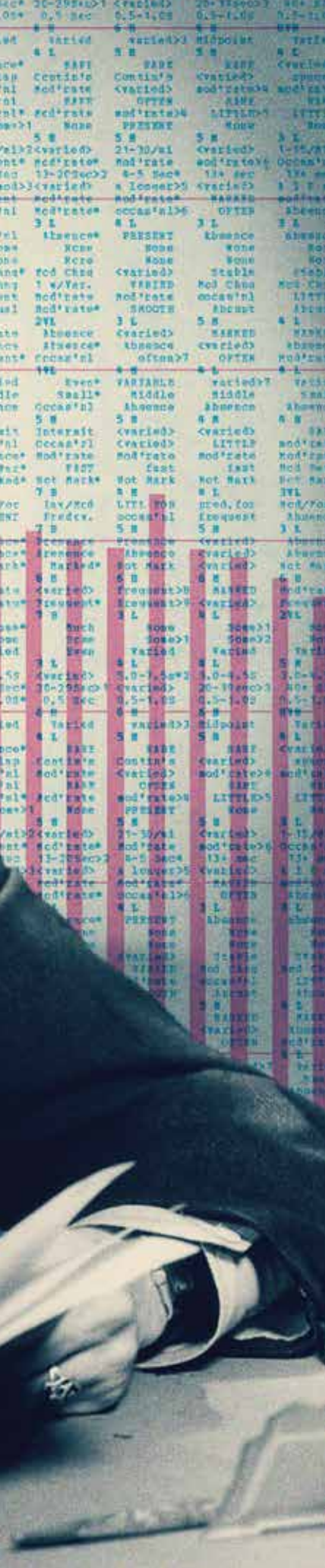
6. HBR IDEACAST

With its captivating academic angle, *IdeaCast* from the *Harvard Business Review* lets listeners be students again. Even better? There won't be a test on it at the end of the semester. Check out episode 568, "Break Out of Your Managerial Bubble," which features BYU Marriott alum and former professor Hal Gregersen. Another notable episode: number 345, "Can You 'Manage' Your Family?"

2. MANAGER TOOLS and CAREER TOOLS

Created by management consultants, *Manager Tools* and its sister podcast, *Career Tools*, cover day-to-day office tips: how to scan a résumé, run a staff meeting, and give a perfect handshake. Check out the *Career Tools* episode "Working with Interns" (26 May 2016) or the *Manager Tools* episode "No Second Emails" (11 September 2016).





The **SEVEN PITFALLS** *of* **DATA-DRIVEN** **DECISION-MAKING** (And How to Avoid Them)

BY LISA ANN
THOMSON

The promised powers of incorporating data into decision-making read like an advertisement: Make decisions better, faster, and more accurately! Minimize uncertainty and maximize returns! Gain agility and accountability! Facilitate innovation and disruption in all the right ways!

And in reality all the hype is as advertised—when data is done right. But when data is mishandled, ignored, or even tortured, it no longer delivers the same superlative benefits.

Through BYU Analytics, a consultancy run by MBA students, BYU Marriott is preparing grads who know how to best make data-driven decisions. Check out these cautions from professors and alumni to ensure that your data is living up to its promises.

Pitfall No. 1

NOT USING ANY DATA

Guts are good at telling us when we're hungry or when we've made a mistake, but when it comes to making changes that affect profits, performance, and people, it's better to rely on something a little more tangible.

Jeff Dotson, BYU Marriott associate professor of marketing and faculty advisor to BYU Analytics, is perplexed by the many companies that still do not use data in their decision-making processes. "There are a lot of managers who still operate in a mind-set that existed twenty years ago: making decisions based upon gut

reactions and not necessarily harnessing the value of data to make those decisions," he says. "I don't know that business has fully embraced the benefits of data-driven decision-making."

Pointing to the vast amount of data available in the digital age, Jeff Dotson finds the slow adoption of good data practices surprising. "There was a big shift [in available data] once social media achieved scale," he says. "People are not using the internet to provide information to marketing researchers; they are using it to buy, to research, and to share information."

In other words, the internet is not just a medium to get people to answer survey questions but also a place where actual consumer

behavior can be observed, tracked, and better understood. That quantifiable information allows managers to look beyond their guts to make evidence-based decisions.

“Humans are really incredible, capable computers,” says Daniel Snow, associate director of BYU Marriott’s MBA program and associate professor of global supply chain management. “But we sometimes think we know more than we know.”

Snow notes that this hazard is particularly acute in the aspects of business in which human judgment or assessment is constantly required. “In human resources, for example, people are trying to predict who would be good at something, but people are notoriously bad at predicting. All kinds of biases creep in,” he says. “So in some ways data helps us look past our biases.”

Of course, data can’t solve everything, but it can provide a push in the right direction. “Data-driven decision-making does not guarantee the correct decision, nor does it guarantee that decisions aren’t still biased in some way,” echoes Jeff Larson, BYU Marriott associate professor of marketing. “But well-reasoned decisions based on good inferences from the right data should lead to more accurate decisions most of the time.”

In short, if you aren’t leveraging data, you should be.

Pitfall No. 2

ASSUMING MORE IS BETTER

“Some people feel you can gather everything and then parse it out later,” says Joanie Westwood, a data-science consultant and 2016 MBA alum. “But this can be challenging and overwhelming.”

And, frankly, unhelpful. Issues can often be illuminated by smaller amounts of good data, says Marc Dotson, BYU Marriott assistant professor of marketing and Jeff Dotson’s brother. “The amount of data does not determine the potency of the insight you can gain from it. People often think that data alone has value, and that is an expensive misconception,” he says. “You shouldn’t just collect all information. You should decide what would be relevant in the decision-making process.”

A little planning before collecting data can go a long way, particularly when it comes to

communicating the results. “Sometimes people show data for the sake of showing data. They assume the more data, the better,” says Jorge Ramirez, a 2015 MBA alum and product manager for InsideSales.com in Provo. “But a better approach is to tell a story with the data. It’s not how much data you have but how well your data is connected.”

Pitfall No. 3

NOT ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Collecting good data—and digging into it—starts with asking smart questions. “If you aren’t asking the right questions, looking in the right places, or doing things the right way, the data can be useless or, even worse, misleading,” says Shayla Barber, a 2016 MBA grad who is now an event marketing manager for Adobe in Lehi, Utah. “Define your questions and goals for your data very clearly before you start to collect and analyze. Making sure you have a clear objective can help you stay focused and help you avoid the ‘garbage in, garbage out’ downfall.”

To avoid this, Marc Dotson recommends starting with a specific problem and gathering data that informs that problem.

Ramirez suggests managers follow the pain points to find and define problems. “The more pain you experience with a certain problem, the more valuable the solution for it. To get the most out of your data, you need to find the painful problems,” he says.

According to Ramirez, that means developing a habit of curiosity and being willing to learn from the data of areas that are not your own.

Pitfall No. 4

FAILING TO CONNECT THE DOTS

Though too much data can muddle good decision-making, it’s vital that companies share their data across core competencies. Looking beyond a data set’s initial label can yield surprising discoveries.

“Sometimes people think about data in silos: financial data, HR data, sales data, product data, operations data, etc. The truth is that the most interesting questions are

answered by combining different data sets,” Ramirez points out. “Unfortunately, often companies don’t combine data, or if they do combine it, they don’t make it available to other teams.”

Ramirez offers an example from a time when he was working in a business strategy and operations role. He was tasked with improving a particular metric that the company had identified as high priority. Using a time-series analysis and leveraging top-down statistical methods, he found a distinct negative trend for the small-business segment of the company’s customer base.

When Ramirez and his coworkers dissected the data, they discovered that the trend started shortly after a large internal organizational change had taken place. They were able to reverse the negative trend by connecting two seemingly unrelated dots: small-business clientele and internal company processes.

“A great analysis usually prompts interesting questions. If you’re inspiring insightful discussion with the data, you’ve succeeded,” Ramirez says.

Pitfall No. 5

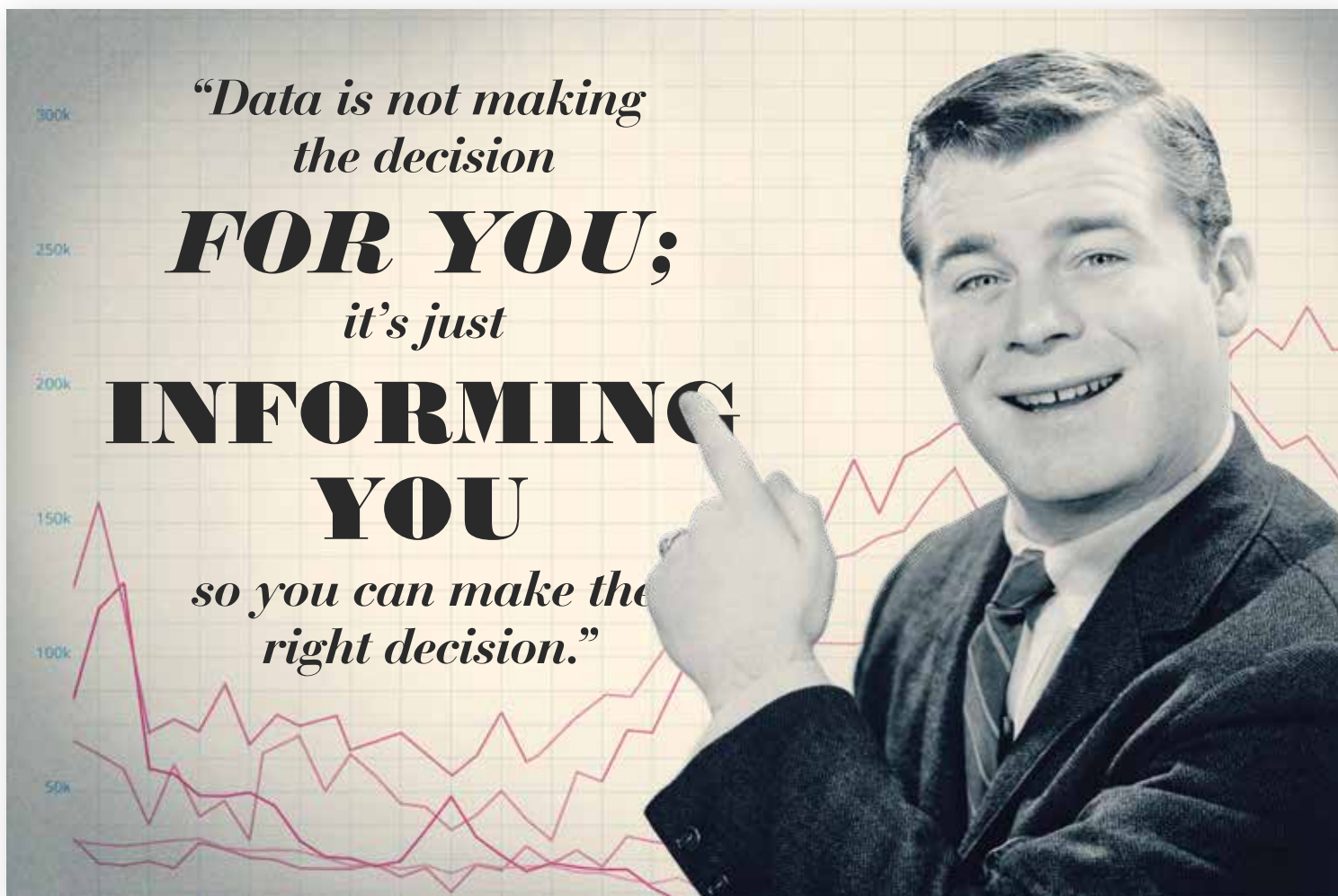
FOCUSING ON THE WRONG METRICS

In the age of big data, the most readily available data sets aren’t always the most informative. “The most-common pitfall I see is focusing on ‘vanity metrics’ over substantive key performance indicators,” says Larson, who coauthored the textbook *Internet Marketing Essentials*.

Key performance indicators—also known as KPIs—are the critical measurements of successful performance, such as the percentage of visitors to a website who actually make a purchase or the average value of each order. Vanity metrics, on the other hand, track the number of Facebook page likes, retweets, or page views.

“KPIs should line up with the steps of a customer journey, and the customer journey needs to be followed all the way to the end purchase—not just through the discovery stage, in which people visit the website or like the Facebook page,” Larson says.

He recommends examining what behaviors are crucial to achieving the desired



*“Data is not making
the decision
FOR YOU;
it’s just
**INFORMING
YOU**
so you can make the
right decision.”*

outcome and then analyzing the data that most accurately gauges whether or not this behavior is happening.

Pitfall No. 6

TELLING THE DATA WHAT TO DO

When it comes to managing data, 2016 MBA alum Collin Burton, now a data scientist at Pluralsight, remembers one experience in particular that he had as an intern. Burton’s manager at the time had a hypothesis about an underperforming factory and wanted to find data to support his assumption. Burton was given the task.

“When I brought data that showed the opposite of his hypothesis, he rejected it because it didn’t support the story he was trying to tell,” he recalls.

This kind of attitude toward data is a slippery slope, Westwood warns. “Companies should be very careful not to use data-driven

decision-making to try to validate decisions they’ve already made but rather use it to come to conclusions based on what the data is telling them,” she says.

Pitfall No. 7

LETTING DATA DOMINATE

For all the promise of data, it is ultimately only as useful as the humans delving into it. “Lots of data does not substitute for smarts or for using it correctly,” Snow says. “You can’t take humans out of this completely. Having lots of data and a few people is not a substitute for knowledge.”

Westwood says that a manager’s experience and knowledge should support and guide the data-gathering process to ensure that the right data is gathered in a consistent and usable format.

That’s the correct balance, Snow says. “If the decision could be made only on the data,

we wouldn’t use managers,” he explains. “We would just plug the data into an algorithm to make the decision for us.”

Marc Dotson affirms that running a business isn’t a process that can be automated. “Data is not making the decision for you; it’s just informing you so you can make the right decision,” he says.

And in the end, that’s all business leaders want: to make the right decisions for their shareholders, customers, and employees. **M**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisa Ann Thomson is a data-driven freelancer based in Salt Lake City. As a writer for more than twenty years, she has long understood that her final products are no better than the data she amasses, analyzes, and synthesizes into stories and articles. Her work has appeared in a wide range of local and regional business, travel, and lifestyle magazines and websites. Closer to home she has written extensively for BYU Magazine and the Ensign.



Get a **LIFE**

BY FREDY GANTNER



I feel a deep sense of gratitude for Brigham Young University and its noble purpose. It has been at the very root of my conversion to the gospel and has laid the foundation for my private happiness and my professional progress.

Most likely, it is my career that qualifies me as the convocation speaker today. However, I would be mediocre at best if my personal journey were centered on business success alone. We cannot be first-rate in our professions if our work is all we are. We need balance in our lives; therefore, my advice for you today is this: get a LIFE.

Let me spell this out for you: *L*, be loyal; *I*, be inspired and inspiring; *F*, be family focused; *E*, be eternally minded.

Be Loyal

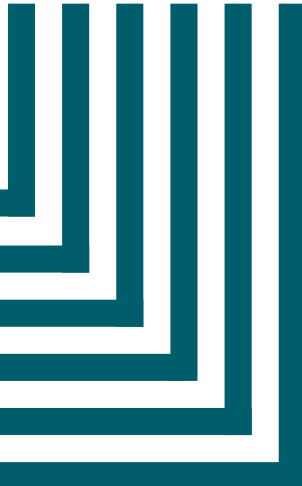
I am convinced that at the root of successful individuals is a high degree of loyalty. Loyalty is multidimensional and must be applied to every aspect of our life. Be loyal first and foremost to God. He gave you life and provided you with gifts and power that you have wisely cultivated, getting you to where you are today.

As a bishop, I see an increasing number of members, as well as people of other faiths, who forsake loyalty to their churches, to their values, and even to their families. Often such individuals are troubled by unanswered questions. Do not become disloyal because you have a question!

I was a convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the age of twenty-three and was baptized in the Jesse Knight Building. I had unanswered questions then, and I'm grateful to still have unanswered questions today. Without questions and intellectual curiosity, you can hardly increase your knowledge of God and the universe. "Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things" (Alma 32:21). In his book *The Lord's Question*, former BYU philosophy professor Dennis Rasmussen wrote: "Into man's spiritual shell God places his question like a grain of sand. And man's work, daily renewed, is to make of it a pearl of great price."¹

Have questions, but remain loyal to your faith. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said, "I *am* not asking you to pretend to faith you do not have. I am asking you to be true to the faith you *do* have."²

As you are loyal to the faith you have, naturally you will also be loyal to your spouse. Swiss farmers like to say that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. What an awful and pessimistic principle!



The lush, green, and vibrant beauty of your own garden is almost always within your sphere of influence. Follow the counsel of the prophets and make the garden of your marriage the most beautiful.

In a professional context, loyalty means you choose wisely and then you stick to that choice. Successful businesses need loyal partners. The responsibility is on you to carefully select an employer who will provide you with new assignments, projects, and advancement in return for your loyalty. After you have wisely selected your employment position, stick to that choice for a number of years. You will surely face challenges and hardship, but such obstacles construct character and will mold your professional career.

Be Inspired and Inspiring

To be successful, you must not only be inspired but also inspiring. Steve Jobs, the visionary cofounder of Apple, said, “The only way to do great work is to love what you do.”³

Most of your waking hours will be spent at work. Find something that will require a piece of your heart. Persevere and press forward, making sure that you are being edified and uplifted by what you do. Then ensure you are a daily inspiration to those around you.

One day at Partners Group, the investment company I cofounded, I went to our client dining facilities. To my surprise, I saw extremely detailed pictures of place settings posted on the


kitchen walls. Curious, I asked Evelyne, my colleague responsible for the client dining experience, what these intricate images were used for. She responded with a confident smile, “You know, I’m dyslexic and not good at writing. But I do know how to set a perfect table. I’ve taken pictures of the place settings so my team members will understand what is expected of them.”

This woman’s innovative and inspiring way of guiding her team was an inspiration to me and to all her colleagues. She took pride in her work and found creative ways to fulfill her role. This exemplary woman chose to never settle for mediocrity. I have heard more clients rave about our catering team than about any other team in the firm.

Surround yourself with inspirational colleagues, and inspire others on a daily basis. It is not hard; it starts with small things. It might be as simple as an extra smile, an unexpected compliment, or a motivational pat on the shoulder, but uplift those around you on a daily basis. Avoid complainers, don’t participate in politics, don’t compete with your colleagues, and embrace an abundance mentality. Think contribution not career.

Be Family Focused

Our world is fast-paced and brimming with instant gratification. We live in a culture where many feel not only like they *can* do anything but also that they *must* do everything and anything at any time. This phenomenon takes its toll on families, as both parents are striving for careers simultaneously.



I could not have accomplished what I did without the uncompromising loyalty and inspirational support of my wife. My wife, Cornelia, graduated summa cum laude from the broadcasting program the same year I earned my MBA from BYU Marriott. Postgraduation we moved to New York, where she worked with the *Dateline* team at NBC while I was trained at Goldman Sachs. My assignments with Goldman moved us to London and to Zürich during the time

when our first children were born, and Cornelia decided to stay home with our children. For the next fifteen years, we have continued to mainly divide responsibilities between homemaking and moneymaking. We always considered the former to be the most important job and fully shared the benefit of the latter.

When Jonas, our youngest of five, began school, Cornelia picked up part-time work and has been excelling ever since, now traveling the world regularly as a documentary filmmaker. She just returned from Africa last week; when she was gone I made sure that Jonas Skyped into seminary at six in the morning.

I'm not advocating that women need to stay home and that only men can be the breadwinners; there is not one right way to balance family and career. Develop the appropriate model for your

individual situation. It might make economic sense to specialize one spouse's career for a season at the peak of life's demands with a growing family. Don't sacrifice the relationship with your spouse and your children for the sake of two simultaneous, ambitious career tracks.

Be Eternally Minded

Live deliberately, maintain an eternal perspective, and all your life decisions will come more easily. I had the great privilege to be taught in my MBA strategy class by Stephen R. Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. The second habit he discusses in his book is to begin with the end in mind. If we keep our eternal perspective, we will follow BYU's admonition to "go forth to serve." On the job, in our family, in our community, and in our church callings, we must not forget to follow the Lord's example and keep our eyes open for the needs of those around us.

Russell M. Nelson, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, once asked, "What would you like said about you at your funeral? Or, if you were to write your own eulogy and you could have only three sentences . . . , what would you want to say?"⁴

As I reflected on this question, I quite easily formulated my own little list. I want to be remembered as (1) a loving husband and father; (2) a caring son,

brother, and friend; and (3) a worthy priesthood holder.

You have spent your time at BYU learning about yourself and creating the person you want to be. You are diligent and intelligent workers—but remember to find balance. Remember to get a LIFE. Continue to create yourself; continue to learn.

You are the one who has control over your own life. As you become the person you desire to be and the person Heavenly Father needs you to be, your life will be a blessing and you will truly leave your mark on the world. **M**

- 1 Dennis Rasmussen, *The Lord's Question: Thoughts on the Life of Response* (Provo, Utah: Keter Foundation, 1985), 11.
- 2 Jeffrey R. Holland, "Lord, I Believe," *Ensign*, May 2013.
- 3 Steve Jobs, Stanford University commencement address, 12 June 2005.
- 4 Russell M. Nelson, "Begin with the End in Mind," BYU fireside address, 30 September 1984.



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Fredy Gantner is the chair of the Global Investment Committee and a member of Partners Group's board of directors. He cofounded Partners Group in 1996 and served as chief executive officer until 2005, when he became executive chair. In 2014 Gantner stepped



down as executive chair and took up his current role. Prior to founding Partners Group, he worked at Goldman Sachs. Gantner holds an MBA from BYU Marriott. This text is adapted from his convocation remarks given 28 April 2017.

BY KELLENE RICKS ADAMS

by the NUMBERS

Class of '17 Goes to Work

In business, it's often about the numbers. At BYU Marriott School of Business, however, the bottom line adds up to a lot more than simply profits minus losses. Behind every student ID number is an individual with unique abilities, and it is part of our mission to help place these men and women of faith, character, and professional skills in jobs that launch their careers.



Deloitte.

50

KPMG

pwc

**THE NUMBER OF BYU MARRIOTT 2017 GRADUATES
WHO SIGNED ON THE DOTTED LINE TO WORK FOR
TWO OF THE BIG FOUR**

Deloitte and EY tied this year as the No. 1 employer of BYU Marriott graduates. In fact, EY has been at the top for at least the last five years. And all the Big Four (Deloitte, EY, KPMG, and PwC) are consistently among the top ten recruiters of BYU Marriott students. Other companies that show up regularly in the top-ten list include Goldman Sachs, Amazon, Adobe, and Qualtrics.

\$102,584

**THE AVERAGE STARTING SALARY OF BYU MARRIOTT
FULL-TIME MBA STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED IN 2017**

Along with that impressive six-figure average salary, 69 percent of BYU Marriott MBA graduates received a signing bonus; the average signing bonus for these graduates was \$19,825. The BYU Marriott graduating class of 2017 also included more than six hundred undergraduate degree earners who landed jobs, with an average salary of \$55,273.



96%

THE PERCENTAGE OF BYU MARRIOTT GRADUATES WHO HAVE JOBS

In 2017, 1,295 students graduated from BYU Marriott. Of those, 1,023 wanted full-time employment after graduation. Within three months of earning their degrees, 965 (94 percent) had found the jobs they were looking for. Since then an additional 18 have received—and accepted—a job offer.

59%

THE PERCENTAGE OF BYU MARRIOTT GRADS WHO HEADED OUT OF STATE TO WORK

More than half of our students who were looking for full-time employment started their postgraduation careers outside of Utah. States where our 2017 grads are making their mark include California, with 109 grads;



Texas, with 85; Arizona, 34; Washington state, 29; New York, 27; Virginia, 16; North Carolina, 14; Ohio, 13; and Illinois, Washington, DC, and Minnesota, all tying with 12 each. While the majority of students left Utah, 424 grads chose to stick around. Of those, 146 are working in Salt Lake City, 95 were hired by Provo companies, and 36 headed to Lehi for work.



27

THE NUMBER OF BYU MARRIOTT 2017 GRADS WHO OWN THEIR OWN BUSINESSES

Not all our grads are looking to work for someone else after graduation. Many have a plan in place to become their own boss even before they earn that coveted diploma. In addition to the twenty-seven '17 grads who started new businesses, seventy-two are continuing their education while ten are full-time homemakers.



RÉSUMÉ

123456789 Ave • New York, NY • 10017
CEL (212) 555-1212 • E-MAIL [jane@johndoe.com]

OBJECTIVE Entrepreneurial Manager with over ten years of sales, business development, customer relations and project management experience in the customer products and services industry with effective communication and leadership skills.

EDUCATION Bachelor of Arts, Information Systems
New York University, New York, NY 10017

SKILLS Microsoft Suite (Access, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Outlook)
Design database structures using Microsoft Access
Computer-aided design on PC and MAC platforms: Quark Press, Illustrator, Photoshop, Streamline, and PageMaker

EXPERIENCE **SPB Company** New York, NY
Owner/National Sales Director (2005-Present)
Started Company to provide low cost, quality CD manufacturing services to musicians and multimedia studios. Conceptualize, negotiate, and develop new business relationships with value-added resellers across North America. Speak at industry conferences to potential clients interested in designing and manufacturing their own compact discs. Highlights include:
Managed all aspects of product cycle and total quality control, including supervision and coordination among clients and manufacturing companies.
Designed and implemented customer specific databases to meet clients' pricing needs.
Directly responsible for over \$650,000 in sales with a 30% gross profit per year due to pricing management, lower internal cost structure, individualized customer focus, and quality control measures.

Lincoln, Beale & Frank New York, NY
Information Technology Associate (2002-2005)
Supported operation of mainframe and mid-range computing equipment. Led three-person data storage team during large due diligence process. Maintained data archives and conducted migration and consolidation of backup systems, resolving problems.

400

THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY RECRUITERS IN THE FIRST SIX WEEKS OF FALL 2017 SEMESTER

BYU Marriott's Business Career Center is a hub of activity all year long, but increasingly recruiters are coming to campus early in the fall to vie for talent. The center has eighteen interview rooms, seventy-six student workers, and fifteen full-time employees to make sure the recruiting process runs smoothly. In addition to formal interviews, companies conducted 261 on-campus recruiting events with our students before mid-October.



Moments That Matter:

How Pivotal Experiences Change Us and Our Careers

December 1975. A woman in her fifties and her twenty-something-year-old son sit down to lunch at Ma Maison, a popular restaurant in West Hollywood, California. The meal is exquisite: fish soup, warm lobster salad, *poulet à la moutarde*, and crepes with chocolate and chestnut puree.

As the two enjoy their meal, something remarkable happens. The family is greeted by the restaurant's owner, who recognizes the woman from previous visits, pulls up a chair, and begins to chat. After several minutes, the woman says to the owner, "I'd like to become a good French cook. What do you think I should do?"

The owner answers, "Come to work in our kitchen three times a week. We won't pay you, and you'll basically be our slave. But after a year, you'll be a real French cook."

To her son's surprise, the woman says, "OK."

Over time, Judy Gethers, once a housewife with no professional cooking experience, rose from the crucible of Ma Maison to culinary stardom: teaching alongside Julia Child, mentoring Wolfgang Puck, and publishing seven cookbooks before her death in 2016.

"That turned out to be my mom's LC Day—Life-Changing Day," writes her son Peter in his memoir,

Written by
Bremen Leak

Illustrations by
Michael Byers

My Mother's Kitchen, published earlier this year.

For the rest of us, such defining moments can be just as book-worthy, but with their own unique flavor. Career-defining moments—those points that substantially alter our trajectories—can influence our decisions, affect our organizations, and shape our lives in extraordinary ways.

So how can we better recognize these moments, cultivate them, and thrive as a result? There's no secret recipe, but research from BYU Marriott School of Business offers clues.

Momentous Metaphor

If you happen to be reading this article inside the N. Eldon Tanner Building, look up. BYU Marriott's campus home rises seven stories to a sprawling lattice of metal and glass. Notice the angles, the clean lines. Now scan the interior supports—smooth white beams running vertically, horizontally, and diagonally around its bright and bustling atrium. Let your eyes travel up the massive staircase toward classrooms, offices, and study spaces all designed to guide, assist, and inspire tomorrow's business leaders.

For a student, it's a comforting sight. No wrong turns. No dead ends. Only clear trajectories.

Now take a look outside. The mountainous horizon is craggy, uncertain. Paths diverge, loop back on themselves, or crumble away completely. Figuratively speaking, it's an untamed landscape that every graduate must eventually navigate.

Associate professor Troy Nielson gets the metaphor.

In 2007—the year before he joined BYU Marriott's faculty—the management professor published a textbook, *Career Trek: The Journey Begins*, with the image of a wind-tattered alpinist on the cover. A decade later, that comparison still holds true.

"Most people today don't join an organization out of school and stay there for their career trajectories like they did thirty years ago," Nielson says.

Instead they pivot and shift, experiencing career-

defining moments as they go. These could be peaks. These could be valleys. But they are all transformative.

Hoping to learn more, Nielson teamed up with Professor Ellen Ensher from Loyola Marymount University and Wesley Kading from Santa Clara University. Together they identified five broad categories for career-defining moments: (1) unanticipated events, (2) anticipated events, (3) personal insights and reflection, (4) relationships with others, and (5) spiritual experiences.

Dealers and Duels

Behind those general categories, their research, published in early 2017 in the *Journal of Career Development*, unearthed tales of trial and triumph that only real life could turn up. One interviewee's story, for example, gives new meaning to the idea of "career-defining."

In the 1980s, a U.S. crackdown on illegal drugs included sting operations in Miami, New York, and Los Angeles that intercepted millions of dollars in cash and put the nation's most-notorious drug traffickers on the run. At the heart of this drama was the Grandma Mafia, named for its cast of "middle-aged, middle-class ladies, some of them grandmothers, who wanted to make a lot of money," as one U.S. prosecutor described them.

Tony, a criminal defense lawyer whose last name was withheld to protect his anonymity, represented the Grandma Mafia in court—and almost wound up on trial himself.

As Tony tells it, he was tipped off by a friend that his key contact at the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, a man named Garcia, was stealing millions of dollars from the agency. To make matters worse, Tony learned he was being set up by corrupt agents on a litany of charges, including obstruction of justice. After doing some research, he decided to kill Garcia in a duel. According to an obscure law dating back to the 1800s, that wouldn't technically constitute murder.

The plan was set. Not even Tony's pastor could deter him.

Tony left his church one night and found Garcia at

Fast Facts about the Study

Participant pool	Data pool	Sample questions	Where to find
10 men, 8 women Avg. age: 56 All were senior leaders drawn from a variety of industries, recruited for their successful and multifaceted careers.	97 experiences Avg. number per person: 5.4	Please describe in detail several of your most pivotal career-defining moments. What are key lessons you learned from your career-defining moments? How did a mentor or other important relationship impact your career-defining moment?	PDF download available online from the <i>Journal of Career Development</i> : "Causes of Career-Defining Moments: Development of a Typology," vol. 44, no. 2 (April 2017): 110–26.

a bar in downtown Los Angeles, slid a loaded handgun his way, placed a second in front of himself, and said, “You’re going to have three seconds to go for that gun, because I’m going to kill you or you’re going to kill me. Because I know what’s happening now. All your agents and you are testifying against me.”

Just then, the barmaid, wiping down the counter, knocked the second firearm to the floor—it’s unclear whether the act was intentional. “[Garcia] got up, put his hands up in the air, and backed right out of the bar,” Tony says. “I didn’t shoot him. That moment in my life obviously changed everything.”

Tony says divine providence saved him from the gallows or the grave. A pastor’s prayer, it seems, had been answered. Of the eighteen participants in the study, Tony was one of ten who attributed a career-defining moment to God.

It was “jaw-dropping” for Nielson to hear Tony’s story of violence and corruption. “It was so different from the kind of career-defining moments I’ve had,” he notes.

Tracking Transformations

How do you categorize a story like Tony’s—and the ninety-six other accounts included in research? With plenty of thoughtful analysis.

“The interviewees in our sample were no strangers to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” wrote the researchers in their article. “Interviewees often spoke of being ‘gobsmacked’ or completely surprised by unanticipated transition events that became career-defining moments.”

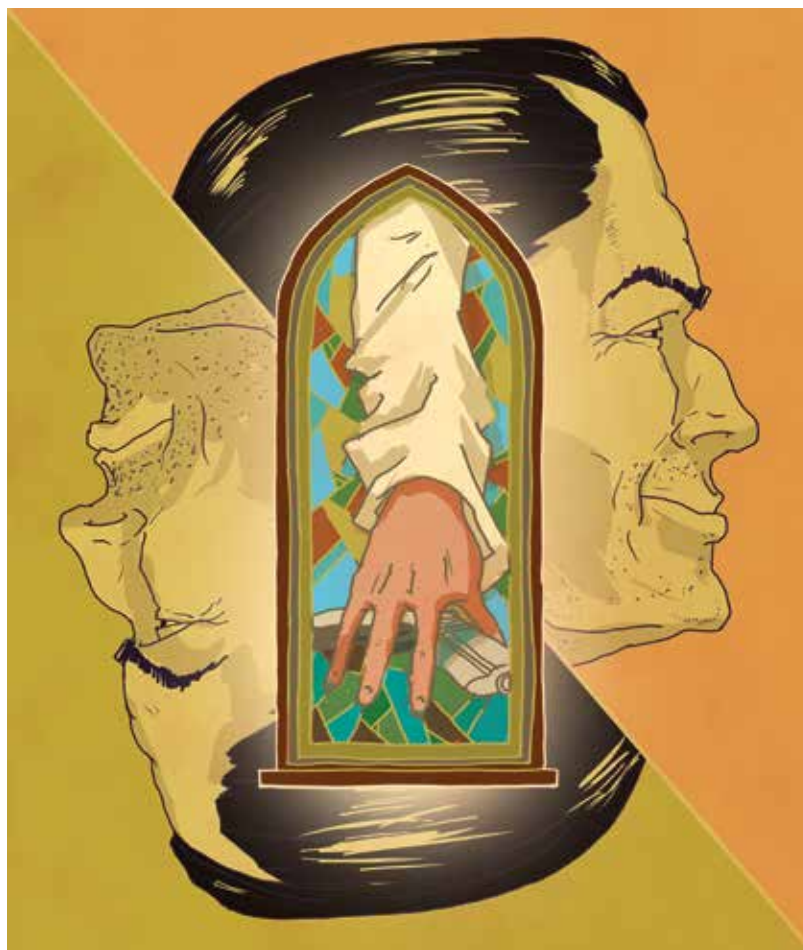
Layoffs. Cancer. The death of a child. In the typology, unexpected events of both a personal and professional nature composed the first type of career-defining moment. Career changes, relocations, and other anticipated events composed a second.

Surprisingly, the researchers recorded twice as many unplanned events as planned ones—a subtle argument for resilience, among other leadership qualities.

Take the story of Denise, the president of a major interior design firm. After expanding her business into China, she discovered that her trusted partner in Beijing was embezzling funds. Stunned and betrayed, she made the painful decision to close her Chinese operations. In her interview with the researchers, she said she had learned valuable lessons and that her business was thriving as a result.

As participants’ stories grew more personal, they also shifted inward, revealing individual perceptions of meaningfulness and purpose.

“9/11,” says one participant, “led me to a defining moment as I realized my entire identity was about work—and I wanted a child. So I decided to adopt a child and become a single mother.”



“You’re going to have **three seconds to go for that gun**, because I’m going to kill you or you’re going to kill me.”

The researchers categorized these career-defining moments as insights or reflections. Developing gradually over time or in a flash, these moments provide “an important sense of clarity and truth for an individual,” they write.

Finally, the fourth and fifth types of career-defining moments—influential relationships and spiritual experiences—proved wholly transformative for many in the study. “I don’t think any of us really get to where we are in our careers without a lot of people influencing us and practically helping us in certain situations,” Nielson says.

School of Life

Here’s some universal advice: learn from the bad guys and move on. That’s what finance alum Britt Berrett did when he left a bad boss early in his career, a relationship he still describes as horrible, painful, and life-changing.

Today Berrett is a member of BYU Marriott's National Advisory Council. When he was in his twenties—a married and aspiring health-care executive with two kids—he worked for a woman who disparaged her employees to the point of tears.

“When I got another job, I went down to her office, popped the name plaque off her door, and took it. I keep it in my den,” he says. “Throughout my career, I’ve looked at that and asked myself, ‘Am I inspiring? Am I motivating? Am I encouraging? Am I allowing people to become better, or am I treating them as I have been treated?’”

After nearly three decades in healthcare, Berrett says he hopes he has made a difference. His book, *Patients Come Second: Leading Change by Changing the Way You Lead*, became a New York Times best seller in 2013, laying out his argument for cross-functional teamwork in

healthcare facilities. He has also coached executives, lectured abroad, and—thanks to his latest career-defining moment—mentored students.

After more than twenty years as a hospital president, Berrett is now a professor at the University of Texas at Dallas. The shift came with an “ah-ha moment,” as he describes it, where he felt he was being directed into education.

During office hours, he sometimes hears bad-boss stories from students. “What are you learning from this? What’s the story to be told here?” he asks them. “Are you taking notes?”

And it turns out, they are.

“Millennials are desperate for that kind of mentoring. And I love it. I think that’s a calling in my life,” he says.

Preparing to Pivot

Nielson and his colleagues agree. In a discussion of their findings, they write that people can prepare for and recognize career-defining moments by taking certain steps.

Recommendation number one: Carve out time to reflect upon your career circumstances.

Nielson says it’s helpful to have a Plan A, a Plan B, and a Plan Z, an idea that LinkedIn cofounder Reid Hoffman and coauthor Ben Casnocha suggest in their book, *The Start-Up of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career*. At a minimum, have a three-year plan, Nielson says. Update your LinkedIn profile regularly. Assess yourself annually—or more frequently if you’re just starting out.

Recommendation number two: Get a mentor or two and discuss your career progress regularly.

“Good mentors are really good at asking questions that cause us to think, such as ‘Do you know what you want?’” Nielson says. “If we haven’t really asked ourselves that question, we may just keep rolling along with whatever we majored in or whatever career path is paying us decent money. We may not have really thought about what brings us joy or where our skills might make a difference.”

As for his own plans, Nielson says he’d like to pursue more research on the role of inspiration in career-defining moments. “I certainly feel like the Lord’s hand has been in at least a few of my important career decisions,” he says.

Like the housewife-turned-chef, we all have a higher calling. If you haven’t yet found yours, keep looking. It may only take a moment. **M**

About the Author

Bremen Leak studied journalism at BYU. He is a communications officer at Yale University, where he has déjà vu each time he sees a blue and white Y.

“When I got another job, I went down to her office,
popped the name plaque off her door,
and took it. I keep it in my den,”



School News

Top Cash Prize Goes to NVC Survivor



First-place winner Lee Chang presents at the New Venture Challenge.

Eight entrepreneurs entered the waters at this year's Shark Tank-themed New Venture Challenge (NVC). There was only one survivor.

After presenting to five judges, **Lee Chang**, a strategy senior from Sedona, Arizona, and his company, Venga, came out with \$22,000 as this year's winner of the NVC, sponsored by the Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology.

Chang baited the audience with free T-shirts, clever commercials, and an enticingly practical app for renters and landlords. Through the app, property owners can create a profile with listings and photos and then set filters that include only renters who fit their criteria. Renters then scroll through the properties, swiping left to reject and right to accept. When a renter and a landlord match, they can message each other via in-app messaging.

"Winning tonight came with a balance between confidence and humility," Chang says. "You see all your hard work pay off, but at the same time you realize how far you have to go and how small you are."

In addition to the \$15,000 awarded to each of the eight finalists, Chang won \$5,000 for Founder's Choice and \$2,000 for Crowd Favorite.

Other finalists included Trash Talk, a technology that detects whether or not a trash bin is empty, increasing pickup efficiency; Neiybor, the "Airbnb version"

of renting storage space; Torque AI, a technology that helps predict when your car needs maintenance; and OmniEarth, a fertilizer made from specially bred and fed worms.

"You can see that the students at BYU are innovative and have a good program that allows them access to mentors and early capital," says **Scott Petersen**, executive director of the Rollins Center and chairman of the board at Omadi. "It allows them to learn the right way to start a company so they don't lose capital. There are few places on the planet where you get all of these things right out of the gate."

BYU Ranked No. 4 on Top Tech Transfer List

BYU is one of the top five universities in the country for turning research discoveries into new technology, products, and companies, according to a recent report.

In "The Best Universities for Technology Transfer," the nonprofit think tank Milken Institute ranks BYU number four out of twenty-five research universities—ahead of Stanford, MIT, and Caltech. In fact, BYU has the highest startup score of the top ten universities ranked on the list.

"BYU performed admirably across all metrics, standing out in its ability to spawn startup companies," the report

Y-Prize Winners Help Cambodian Infants

After nearly a year of competition, judges declared Team Cambodia the winner of the Ballard Center for Economic Self-Reliance's Y-Prize Newborn Challenge, awarding \$50,000 to a team of BYU students that presented the strongest business plan to improve and market a BYU-engineered, low-cost infant ventilator for hospitals in developing countries.

"We're so passionate about this project, and to get some validation from a team of judges that sees the value that we offer is motivating and humbling," says Kindall Palmer, an economics major and Team Cambodia member. Palmer and his wife, Erica, are the nucleus of Team Cambodia and were joined in the competition by fellow BYU students Stetler Eppley, Rob Brown, **Ryan Moffet**, and Pierce Bennett.

The competition began with teams conducting research to recognize and establish evidence of the need for the respirator device. Team Cambodia's research indicated that more than three thousand infant deaths in Cambodia could be prevented by the proper use of a ventilator.

As the team evaluated ways to distribute the device, its members worked to form relationships with others who were willing to lend a hand. One such partner was Stephen Minton, a neonatologist at Utah Valley Hospital, who brought a qualified understanding of the medical industry and the training required to ensure that hospital staff would use the ventilator correctly.

With the additional funding, the team plans to finish product testing and place the ventilator within Cambodian hospitals by the end of 2017. To learn more about its efforts, visit neonatalrescue.org.



Stephen Minton, director of the Utah Valley Hospital Newborn Intensive Care Unit, introduces the NeoLife ventilator to a group of doctors and nurses in Cambodia.

BYU Marriott Honors Faculty, Staff



BYU Marriott personnel are honored at the 2017 BYU Marriott Awards Luncheon.

BYU Marriott honored **Michael Thompson**, associate dean and director of undergraduate programs, with the Outstanding Faculty Award at the school's annual luncheon. In addition to Thompson, eleven other faculty, staff, and administrators were recognized with awards.

"Michael Thompson's support to three BYU Marriott deans is unparalleled," says **Lee Perry**, current dean of the BYU Marriott School of Business. "It is a tribute to him that three different deans have found his wisdom, vision, and selfless service indispensable. His contributions are significant, varied, and even heroic."

Thompson has been at BYU Marriott since 1988. Prior to becoming an associate dean, Thompson taught management communication in the MBA, MPA, and MAcc programs. He also served for six years as chair of the organizational leadership and strategy department.

Other members of BYU Marriott staff, faculty, and administration were also honored at the luncheon. **Shane Allred**, director of technology, received the N. Eldon Tanner Award. First presented in 2010, this award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the integrity, leadership, and humility of the late N. Eldon Tanner.

"During the past nine years that Shane has served as the school's director of technology, he's improved the quality, organization, and sophistication of our systems and IT processes," says **Robert Gardner**, BYU Marriott assistant dean. "He acts with the utmost integrity, keeping true to his values and his word."

Darron Billeter, associate professor of marketing, and **Kristen DeTienne**, professor of organizational leadership

and strategy, were both awarded Teaching Excellence awards for their outstanding efforts in the classroom.

Paul Godfrey, the William and Roceil Low Professor of Business Strategy in the organizational leadership and strategy department, and **Brad Owens**, associate professor of public management in the Romney Institute of Public Management, received Scholarly Excellence awards in recognition of their outstanding research and publications.

Andrew Holmes, associate professor of finance; **Todd Manwaring**, director of the Ballard Center for Economic Self-Reliance; and **Jeff Wilks**, EY Professor and director of the School of Accountancy, received BYU Marriott Citizenship awards for their commitment to furthering the school's mission through service.

Debbie Auxier, MBA event coordinator; **Jennifer Fitzgerald**, scholarship coordinator; and **Stephanie Graham**, program coordinator for the marketing and global supply chain department, each received an Excellence Award for demonstrating proficiency in management, professionalism, character, and initiative to improve.

The event also recognized retiring faculty members and staff for their years of service: **Steve Albrecht**, the Andersen Foundation Professor in the School of Accountancy; **Ned Hill**, the National Advisory Council Professor of Finance; **Marshall Romney**, the John and Nancy Hardy Professor of Information Systems; **David Whitlark**, the JCPenney Professor of Marketing; **Bob Kellett**, an information technology professional; **Laura Leseberg**, department secretary for the aerospace studies department; and **Roger McCarty**, director of experiential learning and field studies.

states. “BYU has a highly entrepreneurial culture and some of the strongest incentives available for faculty.”

The rankings focus on four key indicators of success: patents issued, licenses issued, licensing income, and startups formed. The Milken Institute used data from the Association of University Technology Managers to assess scores and build its rankings.

The report points out that BYU’s fourth-place finish is an especially noteworthy achievement considering that its research expenditures (\$32.2 million) pale in comparison to institutions such as Johns Hopkins University (\$1.55 billion) and Stanford (\$946 million).

KLOS Guitars Serenade Judges for Win



Jacob Sheffield pitches his business, KLOS Guitars, at the SEOY competition.

Jacob Sheffield, a native of Highland, Utah, majoring in mechanical engineering, put on quite the show at this year’s Student Entrepreneur of the Year competition, sponsored by the Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology. After blowing away the judges with a presentation that included swinging his guitar like a baseball bat to smash a ball into the audience, Sheffield won both first place and the crowd favorite award to take home a total of \$11,000 in cash.

Sheffield and his team wanted to create a sturdy yet smooth-sounding guitar that could be taken on the road or out for a hike. Their product—a hybrid of wood and carbon fiber—is also durable enough to hit a baseball.

KLOS has come a long way in just a year and a half. With a growing presence on social media, the guitars have been reviewed by famous musicians and appreciated by customers from Utah County to France.

“No matter what would have happened, just the opportunity to pitch in front of everyone was a great learning

experience,” Sheffield says. “The Rollins Center has provided a great platform for funding and mentorship.”

Taylor Tanner, a second-year law student from Orangeville, Utah, and his company Bookroo won second place and \$5,000. Tanner and his family created Bookroo to help parents build their children’s book collections through curated monthly book deliveries.

In third place, Zach Estiva, a biotechnology senior from San Jose, California, was awarded \$2,500 for creating Dentium Club, an online teeth-whitening company designed to save people a trip to the dentist.

These three winners were chosen from this year’s forty applicants. Each competitor had five minutes to pitch an idea and five minutes to answer questions from the judges.

Make-A-Wish CEO Named Administrator of the Year



David Williams, CEO of Make-A-Wish Foundation, was named 2017 Administrator of the Year by the Romney Institute of Public Manage-

ment. The program recognized Williams at a banquet on campus.

The Administrator of the Year Award honors outstanding public management professionals for their ethical and moral service in the public sector and for the example they set for BYU MPA students.

“David exemplifies this award through his history of work in the nonprofit sector,” says **Rex Facer**, associate professor of public finance and management. “The effect of Make-A-Wish Foundation on people in very difficult times is the kind of organizational effort that we want our students to emulate.”

Williams described his initial discomfort accepting the award due to his belief that working in the nonprofit sector is about service—not recognition. “What really changed my mind was learning more about George Romney,” Williams says. “He was a great business leader and an amazing public servant, and he valued his family and his faith. As I looked at some of the people this school

has honored in his name, it felt like I should take another look at it. I’m glad I did because he was a great man, this is a great institution, and this is a wonderful award.”

Williams, who has served as CEO since 2005, did not always plan to work in nonprofit. After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in accounting at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Houston, Williams realized that he wanted to pursue nonprofit work. After thirty-four years in the industry, including time with the Houston Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity, he has found great satisfaction with his work and the people he works with.

“In my job, I get to see people at their best,” Williams says. “Whether that’s a celebrity granting a wish to a kid or whether it’s a corporation or executive that’s come to us happy to be partnering with us, I get to see people at their best.”

Friendly Competition

College students from around the world gathered at BYU to both compete and work together at the annual Association for Information Systems (AIS) conference.

Students from the BYU Department of Information Systems excelled in the various AIS conference competitions, including a first-place finish in the security case competition. First-year MIS students **Drake Loud** from Liberty, Utah, and **Jason Smith** from Forest Grove, Oregon, joined IS juniors **Matt Rose** from West Des Moines, Iowa; **Remington Steele** from Bloomfield,

Students participate in a classroom activity at the AIS conference.



2017 Hawes Scholars Announced



2017 Hawes Scholars are honored for their academic performance, leadership, and commitment to high ethical standards.

BYU Marriott named ten MBA candidates as 2017 Hawes Scholars, an honor that carries the highest distinction given to MBA students at the school and a cash award of \$10,000.

"These ten Hawes Scholars personify the BYU MBA brand," says **Grant McQueen**, BYU MBA program director. "Yes, they are smart and hardworking, but they are also men and women of great character. I was humbled as I read what fellow students wrote about them in the nomination process. The stories of sacrifice, integrity, and excellence were inspiring. I'm confident that these students will be impressive professionals as well as influential ambassadors of our brand for years to come."

The 2017 Hawes Scholars are second-year MBA students **Kyle Ahrendsen** from Rexburg, Idaho; **Christopher Barnes** from Eugene, Oregon; **Andrea Houchens** from Bellevue, Washington; **Angela Hui** from Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada; **Chace Jones** from Centerville, Utah; **Rodrigo Ortigoza** from Bogotá, Colombia; **Jordan Roper** from Highland, Utah; **Melanie Sander** from St. Charles, Missouri; **Carrolyn Sands** from Coconut Creek, Florida; and **Autumn Wagner** from Fairview, Texas.

Students and faculty members nominate and vote on each year's Hawes Scholars. Final selection is made by the Hawes Scholar Committee and is based on academic performance, leadership maturity, and a commitment to high ethical standards.

Named for successful corporate executive Rodney A. Hawes Jr. and his wife, Beverly, the award was created in 1998 to recognize the accomplishments of graduating MBA students. The Hawes Scholar Award is one of many initiatives made possible by the Hawes Endowment, a gift of more than \$2 million used to facilitate the growth and enhancement of BYU Marriott's nationally ranked MBA program.

New York; and **Dylan Eastman** from Enoch, Utah, on the winning team.

Another group of BYU students took second place in the same event, thanks to the efforts of **Grant Dexter**, an IS senior from Shelley, Idaho; **John Lim**, an IS junior from Renton, Washington; **Ben Nelson**, an IS junior from Nampa, Idaho; **Andrew Sanford**, a first-year MISM student from Pleasant Grove, Utah; and **Brent Smith**, a second-year MISM student from Smithville, Missouri.

"We wanted to represent BYU well, especially since we were the hosts," Smith says. "We wanted to prove that we aren't just good hosts, we're also good competitors."

Another noteworthy feat for BYU was a second-place finish in the video competition by **Matt Brown**, an IS junior from Vancouver, Washington; **Alex Pratt**, an IS junior from Fountain Valley, California; and Steele.

For BYU, however, this year's conference

was about more than just the competitions. The department hosted multiple events throughout the course of the week, including a kickoff activity at a ropes course to teach team building and enable students from various schools to get to know each other.

STUDENT NEWS

BYU Supplies Site, Winning Team



BYU MBA students James Pao, Susannah Hertz, Matt Phillips, and Kyle Burton celebrate their win at Deloitte Consulting's fourth annual Supply Chain Challenge.

Deloitte Consulting's fourth annual Supply Chain Challenge pulled together some of the country's elite global supply chain MBA students for a competitive two-day series of proposals and presentations held at BYU Marriott.

While hosting the competition was honor enough, BYU's team also clinched the first-place title and a \$5,000 prize.

"This was such an incredible experience," says **Susannah Hertz**, a BYU MBA student from Salt Lake City who interned at Deloitte this past summer. "Deloitte has been great to us. We're so excited."

Hertz was joined by teammates **Kyle Burton** from Riverton, Utah; **James Pao** from Taipei, Taiwan; and **Matt Phillips** from Midvale, Utah.

"They did an outstanding job of thinking through the issues of the case, summarizing them, and explaining visually and verbally how they would solve the problem," says Mark Quinn, Deloitte Consulting director and a member of BYU's Global Supply Chain Advisory Board.

Georgia Tech came in second place, and Penn State finished third, winning \$3,000 and \$2,000, respectively.

"This competition gives us an opportunity to see some of the top talent at the institutions where we recruit," Quinn says. "Where we've found outstanding talent, we've gone back to those schools to improve our brand, to support our practice, and to better serve our clients."

IMA Club Lauded for Elite Performance



IMA Club leaders bring prestige to the BYU School of Accountancy.

With a competitive pass rate and record scores, BYU's student chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) brought home the elite Clark Johnson Achievement Award and a \$5,000 grant.

The BYU IMA Club's efforts yielded three of the world's top-ten scores on the CMA, a grueling test for certification in the fields of accounting and finance. Their efforts also resulted in a CMA passing average roughly 30 percent higher than the international average.

"The School of Accountancy is very proud of the IMA Club and its accomplishments in the few short years since it was founded," says **Jeff Wilks**, director of the BYU School of Accountancy. "In many ways, this club has become the benchmark for all IMA clubs across the country."

The IMA, a professional organization for management accounting, gives the Clark Johnson award to a student chapter that demonstrates its focus on student needs, leadership, innovation, organizational development, and interdependent partnerships.

MBA Students Named Stoddard Scholars



The 2017 Stoddard Scholars pose with Stoddard family representatives at this year's luncheon.

Eleven students were honored with the George E. Stoddard Prize, a \$5,000 award given to exceptional second-year MBA finance students.

"These students will be great ambassadors for BYU, BYU Marriott, and the BYU MBA program," says **Grant McQueen**, MBA program director. "We appreciate

the George E. Stoddard family and his employer, W. P. Carey, for their generosity and their support of our MBA finance students."

The 2017 scholars are **Carson Allen** from Midland, Texas; **Jacob Brock** from Atlanta; **Kevin Couch** from Cameron Park, California; **David Gordon** from

South Windsor, Connecticut; **Randall Hulme** from Santa Barbara, California; **Haidyn Knuteson** from Billings, Montana; **Dane Nielson** from Las Vegas; **Holly Preslar** from Sugar City, Idaho; **Lydia Shen** from Shanghai; **Alyssa Smith** from Elko, Nevada; and **Kris Willenbrecht** from Yorba Linda, California.

Sweet Heart Wins First Place



Eric Andrew Stopper (center) holds his four-month-old son, Grayson, after receiving the crowd favorite award.

Sweet Heart, a wearable baby monitor for pregnant women, won first place and won the hearts of the audience as crowd favorite at the Business Model Competition (BMC), sponsored by the Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology.

Eric Andrew Stopper, CEO of Sweet Heart, took home \$5,000 to his wife, Kamali'i, and their young son, Grayson. Stopper created the product after analyzing the pain points his wife had during pregnancy. He and his wife woke up more than five times every night to count her baby's kicks after a recommendation by their doctor to prevent medical conditions such as intrahepatic cholestasis.

Stopper's fetal activity monitor is comfortable to wear at night and can monitor the baby's position, kicks, and heart rate. "I wish we had this technology when my wife was pregnant," Stopper says. "But the whole experience has humbled us greatly, and the founders of the Rollins Center are great mentors to me."

The BMC is an annual competition in which young entrepreneurs present ideas to several judges. Judges evaluate teams based on principles such as cost structure, customer feedback, market channels, and key partners.

Five companies presented at the competition and took home a share of the prize money. In second place with a \$4,500 prize was ScanFactor, a technology that uploads résumés and LinkedIn profiles digitally for recruiters to use at career fairs. Okular, a marketing technology created using data from security cameras, took third place and was awarded \$3,500.

Each year a faculty committee selects students for the award based on excellent academic performance and commitment to the finance program. The Stoddard Prize was established in 1985 by George E. Stoddard, a 1937 BYU alumnus.

MBA Candidates Receive Eccles Awards



The 2017 Eccles Scholars enjoy the fruits of their labors.

BYU Marriott recently recognized ten first-year MBA candidates as Eccles Scholars, an award presented by the school's Whitmore Global Management Center. Each recipient was awarded up to \$9,000 of financial aid for schooling expenses, international projects, and global career exploration.

"This award clearly distinguishes each student as a future leader in the global business community," says **Bruce Money**, Whitmore Center executive director. "To be chosen as an Eccles Scholar signifies that you will represent BYU, BYU Marriott, and the Eccles name with distinction."

The 2017 Eccles Scholars are **Andrea Ascione** from Verona, Italy; **Zachary Brough** from Gilbert, Arizona; **Spencer Goodrich** from Tridell, Utah; **Alexandra Hirst** from Salt Lake City; **Colin Ludlow** from Spanish Fork, Utah; **Olivier Munn** from Chambéry, France; **Sam Swamynathan** from Bangalore, India; **Joshua**

Tidwell from Poway, California; **Tiago Uhlmann** from Florianópolis, Brazil; and **Lei Wang** from Yantai, Shandong, China.

A committee of faculty members interviewed applicants and selected the top candidates, who were chosen on the basis of academic performance and their trajectory toward a global business career. The Eccles Scholar Award is funded by the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation.

Students Bring Home Six Awards at AITP

Fingers flashed across computer keyboards and eyes skimmed screens as more than four hundred students participated in tech competitions as part of the annual Association for Information Technology Professionals (AITP) conference in St. Louis.

After three days of events, BYU students stood out among the forty-seven universities in attendance, claiming a total of six awards.

Only six students, all from the information systems program, represented BYU this year: **Brandon Buchanan**, a first-year graduate student from Centerville, Utah; **Dylan Eastman**, a junior from Cedar City, Utah; **Thomas Fisher**, a junior from Salt Lake City; **Ashton Murray**, a junior from Draper, Utah; **Spencer Price**, a junior from South Jordan, Utah; and **Jason Smith**, a first-year graduate student from Forest Grove, Oregon.



Brandon Buchanan and Thomas Fisher wowed the judges in the Visual Studio .Net and database design categories.

Fisher and Buchanan clinched the first-place title in the Visual Studio .Net category and second place in the database design category. Eastman and Price earned second place in the systems analysis and design category.

FACULTY NEWS

BYU Marriott Welcomes New Faculty

BYU Marriott welcomed three new professors to the Tanner Building this fall. The newest additions to the full-time faculty include **Ben Iverson** in the finance department and **Degan Kettles** and **Taylor Wells** in the information systems department.

Iverson received his PhD in business economics from Harvard University, taught at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and now returns to BYU as an assistant professor of finance.

Kettles earned a PhD in business with an emphasis in information systems at Arizona State University and graduated from BYU with a BA in communications. He was most recently an assistant professor in the information systems and operations management department at the University of Central Oklahoma.

After earning a PhD in information systems from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, Wells is back at BYU to teach courses in the IS core. Wells received both a BS in information systems and a MISM at BYU Marriott.

Dean Perry Names Three New Department Chairs

BYU Marriott dean Lee Perry announced three new department chairs: **Bonnie Anderson** in the information systems department, **John Bingham** in the organizational leadership and strategy department, and **Lori Wadsworth** in the Romney Institute of Public Management.

Anderson is a professor in the information systems department and has been the director of the MISM program since 2008. Anderson received the BYU Marriott Citizenship Award in 2015 and the Faculty Women's Association Citizenship Award in 2012. Since 2006 she has been the LeAnn Albrecht Fellow. Her current research focuses on the intersection of decision neuroscience and behavioral

CORRECTION: In the summer 2017 issue of *Marriott Alumni Magazine*, the name of the Paul Morris Marriott Scholarship was listed incorrectly. The scholarship was founded by Rebecca Marriott Champion in 2010 to honor her father, Paul Morris Marriott, who was a vice president at Hot Shoppes, Inc., which became Marriott International, and who helped grow the In-Flite Catering division at the company. We apologize for the inaccuracy.



Bonnie Anderson

information security and has been funded by grants from the National Science Foundation and from Google.

Anderson will follow Marshall Romney, who retired after forty years at BYU Marriott and twelve years as chair of the IS department.

Bingham joined BYU Marriott in 2005 and is a Donald L. Staheli Fellow. Prior to his new assignment, he taught organizational behavior and strategic human resource management courses to MBA and undergraduate students. Bingham



John Bingham

also served as the BYU MBA program director from 2013 to 2016. Bingham has received numerous awards for his accomplishments, including the Ascendant Scholar Award from the Western Academy of Management and the Merrill J. Bateman Student Choice Faculty Award.

Bingham will follow Jeff Dyer, the Horace Beesley Professor of Strategy, who has served as department chair for the past nine years.

Wadsworth, who will also serve as director of the Romney Institute of Public



Lori Wadsworth

Management, joined the BYU Marriott faculty in 1999 but has been at BYU since 1983. Before becoming an associate professor, she was an academic advisor for the university. Wadsworth has received several awards for her accomplishments, including a research fellowship from the Ballard Center for Economic Self-Reliance and the Work-Family Early Career Scholar Award from the Sloan Foundation.

Wadsworth will follow Jeff Thompson, who has served as the department chair for the past three years.

An Egg-cellent Win for GSC Program

It's 2–0 for the global supply chain program. Competing against some of the country's top programs, a team of BYU MBA students clinched the first-place title at the MBA/MS Supply Chain Case Competition hosted by Texas Christian University. This win came two weeks after another team from the BYU program won Deloitte Consulting's fourth annual Supply Chain Challenge.

"These wins are a credit to the MBA curriculum, instructors, and students," says **Tom Foster**, marketing and global supply chain department chair. "Our MBA students are wonderful."

Second-year students **Ross Andrus** from Houston; **Rodrigo Ortigoza** from Bogotá, Colombia; **Leslie Ostler** from Riverton, Utah; and **Josh Porter** from Spokane, Washington, developed a plan to change a company's supply chain for eggs—a surprisingly complex case involving the ethics of caged vs. cage-free chickens that ultimately affected every aspect of the supply chain.

For their work, the students won \$7,000 and four iPads. They finished ahead of teams from Michigan State University, Iowa State University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Maryland, and University of Arkansas.

"Competing in this case competition was the pinnacle of my MBA experience," Ortigoza says. "The competition tested my skills to solve a complex, real-world problem against the brightest students in the country. Winning it was a testament to the world-class education of the BYU MBA program and the high caliber of my teammates."



Ross Andrus, Leslie Ostler, Rodrigo Ortigoza, and Josh Porter pose together after winning the TCU Supply Chain Case Competition.

Alumni News

MANAGEMENT SOCIETY

Scholarships Funded, Utah Senator Orrin Hatch Honored at Gala



Photo taken by Jeffrey D. Allred, Deseret News.

The Salt Lake Chapter of the BYU Management Society held its twenty-fourth annual Distinguished Utah Award Gala on 1 June, honoring Senator Orrin Hatch and raising more than \$100,000 for scholarships.

“It was a great team effort,” says chapter president **Gary Snyder**. “It was an incredibly positive experience, and we accomplished our goal of raising funds for our needs-based scholarships.”

More than four hundred members of the public and the Salt Lake Chapter gathered at the Little America Hotel Grand Ballroom in Salt Lake City to recognize Hatch and fifty-four local students who had received scholarships based on their need, academics, and community involvement. The students—from twenty-five different high schools—will be attending nine different colleges and universities in Utah and one in Idaho.

Hatch was given the Distinguished Utah Award for his service to the state and to the country. “He has exemplified the BYU Management Society’s theme of moral and ethical leadership through his lifetime of service,” Snyder says.

Women in Business Webinars

Webinars presented by the Women in Business Chapter of the BYU Management Society are catching worldwide attention

with presentations that focus on the career needs of women. The monthly webinars, which began earlier this year, feature successful women who address topics such as time management, women in tech, and career development.

“We wanted to connect women of all ages and situations—professionals, students, recent grads, those who are re-entering the workforce, or those at home,” says Rixa Oman, the society’s executive director. “The webinars give women a way to share advice, learn, and be supported.”

Oman is part of a ten-woman committee that includes current working professionals and representatives from BYU–Hawaii, BYU–Idaho, the J. Reuben Clark Law Society’s Women in Law section, and BYU Marriott’s student clubs. The committee plans topics and chooses speakers for the webinars, which draw about three hundred participants every month.

The webinars are complemented by blog posts that offer tips and summaries of the sessions. Angel Zimmerman, an attorney and chapter member, says the webinars have already impacted her in a positive way.

“The webinars share the personal stories of women who are succeeding, including the struggles that they are overcoming,” Zimmerman says. “They give me more courage and excitement to move forward.”

Free to the public, the webinars can be found at byumswebinars.weebly.com/women-in-business. Find the blogs at byuwomeninbusiness.blogspot.com.

Seoul’s First Asia Pacific Regional Conference

More than two hundred BYU Management Society members gathered for the annual Asia Pacific Regional Conference held 12–13 May in Seoul, South Korea. The conference, which focused on the theme “Explore, Dream, Discover,” aimed to help recent grads find career paths and utilize resources to make their dreams reality.

Event highlights included presenters and mock interviews with HR directors from Qualcomm and Intel. “The speakers were great because everyone came from such unique, strong backgrounds,” says Ross Chiles, chair of the conference’s organizing committee. “A lot of successful BYU grads returned to share their experiences.” **Young-Kee Kim**, former executive vice president of LG Electronics, was a featured presenter.

Conference goers included Management Society members and leaders from fourteen countries; representatives from the LDS Church’s Self-Reliance Services; and BYU professors and administrators. On the first day of the event, society area leaders held a planning session prior to the general session fireside; the second day’s agenda included breakout sessions and opportunities for attendees to hone their interviewing skills.

Chiles says the event was met with so much enthusiasm that the Korea Chapter plans to hold mini conferences every six months.

CLASS NOTES

1955



Norene Dance

Thomas excelled in typing and shorthand in high school, so pursuing a degree in secretarial science

seemed like an obvious choice. In 1955, she earned her bachelor’s degree, which included bookkeeping as well; she also earned a teaching certificate. A native of Idaho, Thomas met her husband, Elmo Lewis Thomas, at BYU, and the couple eventually settled in Arizona. Thomas has spent much of her life involved in political work, serving as a deputy registrar, precinct committee chair, and secretary and vice chair of her local Republican club. Currently retired, Thomas has worked as an ordinance worker in the Mesa Arizona Temple and as a family history consultant at the Mesa Family Search Library. Her proudest accomplishment

is her family, which includes six children, thirty-one grandchildren, and thirty-three great-grandchildren.

1987



When **Sarah Blake Johnson** graduated in 1987 with a BS in business management, she had no idea that she would traverse the world with her husband, Richard, also a 1987 BYU grad. Richard's work as a

United States diplomat took the family to Brazil, Finland, Iceland, China, Germany, Nigeria, and Egypt. Johnson's focus throughout this time was on her family, but she also worked as an economic officer in the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria and wrote a young adult fantasy novel titled *Crossings*. Four of the couple's six children have graduated from BYU, and they have a daughter who is currently a student in the BYU Marriott program. Johnson, her husband, and their youngest daughter currently live in Russia.

In addition to writing, Johnson enjoys taking photographs, playing the piano, hiking, and traveling.

2004



Blazing the trail is nothing new for **Mike Gayan**. He grew up on a small farm in Wisconsin and was the first person in his family to go on a mission and to attend college. He served in Stockholm, Sweden,

The Core of Service



Jonathan DeGraff is quick to point out that his time in the Tanner Building not only gave him a great education but also left him with a strong desire to serve.

"At BYU Marriott School, learning is not an end unto itself but a means of empowerment to do more. There is an expectation that you will take what you learn and use it to make a positive impact on the world," DeGraff says. "I also remember being taught

to prioritize adventures over money, because money will come and go but adventures may only come once."

Last year DeGraff experienced an adventure that incorporated his career with his desire to serve. He works for IBM, which selected him to participate in a one-month experience-of-a-lifetime in Peru with fourteen other IBM employees from ten countries as part of its Corporate Service Corps.

DeGraff, who served a Spanish-speaking mission in Portland, Oregon, had to complete a rigorous and competitive application process to be considered for the opportunity, and he was elated to be selected. "When I got to work one morning, my manager excitedly said to me, 'You got in!'" DeGraff recalls. "I had to check my email to believe it for myself."

Having earned his undergrad degree in management in 2008, DeGraff now works as a senior business partner out of Coppell, Texas. Before that, he and his family lived in Mexico City from 2012 to 2013 while he helped lead IBM's operations for Mexico. He has also spent time in Shanghai, China, helping redesign IBM's worldwide performance management system.

The members of the Corporate Service Corps were split into three groups with specific missions. DeGraff, who also earned dual master degrees in industrial labor and relations and business from Cornell, worked on a team that focused on improving government-administered medical services for the 1.1 million low-income people in the region by overhauling its patient registry.

"This registry is how hospitals and clinics get reimbursed by the government for the care and prescription medicine they provide," he explains. "We discovered that only 24 percent of claims were being submitted and successfully processed, which resulted in massive funding gaps and triggered major issues with staffing and treatment."

DeGraff's group worked with local leaders, who anticipated a technological solution would fix the problems, but that was only part of the puzzle.

"While technology did factor in, most of our solutions centered on people and processes," says DeGraff. "As a result of our recommended changes, officials estimated they'll recover \$20 million USD per year in the region and are already fielding interest from other regions throughout the country that want to adopt similar solutions."

In addition to helping identify solutions to the patient registry problem, DeGraff says that witnessing Peru's challenges and culture was an eye-opening experience for him. "At one point I went to inspect the area's largest hospital with my colleagues, and the facility was full of people awaiting medical attention," he says. "We had to elbow our way through crowds of people who would wait all day just for a chance at being seen."

The local hospitals also lacked basic amenities. "Even though we were working in Peru's second-most populous region, only 40 percent of medical facilities there have internet access, and some do not even have telephone connectivity," DeGraff says. "My colleagues and I visited one primary care facility where, if a medical emergency comes in, one of the physicians must run to a hill several hundred yards away where there is cell phone reception to call for an emergency medical team to come."

DeGraff's global experiences, like being part of the Corporate Service Corps, and his consulting skills were recently highlighted when he was named one of *Workforce* magazine's 2017 Game Changers—twenty-five high-potential young professionals under forty.

Leaving his wife, Melissa, and his three children for the month-long excursion was challenging, DeGraff says, but his family decided together that the experience would be worth the sacrifice in multiple ways—and the results from the adventure seem to support that.

"More than anything, I feel my team was able to restore hope to the leaders we were working with, who initially expressed a bleak outlook for the region but who afterward appeared reinvigorated by the actionable insights we provided," DeGraff says.

Focusing on Faith

A strong relationship with the Savior and a keen sense of humor have helped **Kris Belcher** through the hardest trials of her life.

Her challenges began as an infant when doctors diagnosed her with cancer in both eyes. The radiation and treatments that followed left her with limited vision. Then, in 2003, a second cancer diagnosis—a tumor behind her eye—and the five resulting surgeries left her completely blind.

"Life has certainly taken me down unexpected and often unwanted roads," Belcher says. "I don't know why it is surprising, because that's what life is made of. But when those twists and turns come, I just try to hold on tightly to Jesus Christ and to the Father. They are the ones who have all knowledge, and They can see the path's end."

Belcher's unexpected challenges have also brought her unexpected opportunities. She shares her journey through speaking events—averaging three or four each month—and has written two books: *Hard Times and Holy Places* and *Facing the Son*.

"When I wrote my first book, it was like going through therapy," she recalls. "I had to deal with many feelings and questions as they arose during my writing. It seemed like a crash course in seeing the hand of the Lord in my life."

When writing, she felt that the cancer, surgeries, and blindness that had permanently changed her life were more difficult than she could describe. "I felt that no one could understand my feelings of pain and absolute despair, but Christ could and did," she continues. "As I wrote, I felt again that He understood and would continue helping me."

Belcher met her husband, James, soon after she returned from serving in the Kentucky Louisville Mission and says they have been best friends ever since. "James is an incredibly talented floral designer, and we own two flower shops with our partner, Holly. They do the designing, and I do the delivering," she jokes. "Not really. I leave the driving to those who can see."

The Belchers live in Lehi, Utah, and have two sons, Christopher and Benjamin. "We've been married for twenty-one years and have endured, overcome, and triumphed together through health problems, financial setbacks, parenting challenges, and normal life," she says.

Belcher, who graduated from BYU in 1997 with a degree in therapeutic recreation, says she became captivated with the field upon taking her first class. "I loved that I could be a part of helping people improve the quality of their lives," she says. "Having dealt with a disability all of my life, I have had times when something has just seemed too hard or out of reach."

But through taking small steps, Belcher has come to feel empowered. "Mastering those skills and feeling confident would transfer to other aspects of my life," she explains. "Wanting to give up slowly changed to feeling that I could overcome." And that transformation is a key to therapeutic recreation, Belcher says. "Recreation is a means of helping clients or patients master skills that can be used in other parts of their lives," she explains. "However, it is the pervasive feelings of confidence that change the person."

When Belcher went blind fourteen years ago, common responsibilities quickly seemed out of reach. But attending a program at the Center for the Blind in Salt Lake City helped her relearn everyday tasks, such as cooking and cleaning.

"I also learned to use a computer program that reads what is on the screen, so I can navigate on the computer with key commands instead of a mouse," she says. "This enabled me to be connected through the web and email as well as pursue my desire to write."

Through all her highs and lows, Belcher has felt strength come through faith. "Being honest in prayer is so important when these times of discomfort come. It is all right to tell [God] how we feel, how scared we are, how upset we are," she says. "Once we have emptied our hearts, He can fill them with peace, comfort, and courage. Then together we can make the first step and then the next. I am so grateful He will walk the unexpected path with me."



and then headed to BYU, earning a BS in finance in 2004. After working for a year, he attended the Boyd School of Law, earning a JD in 2008. He is currently a partner at Kemp, Jones & Coulthard, a law firm in Las Vegas. Gayan has received multiple pro bono awards that recognize him for the number of hours he's donated to help those who cannot afford legal services. His proudest professional accomplishment is winning his first class-action suit. Gayan likes to read, play golf and basketball, and keep up on his Swedish. He and his wife, Jennifer, have two children.

2008



Organizing and planning are just a couple of **Shawn P. Spendlove's** strengths, and throughout his career, he has used those

forward-thinking skills to help businesses grow. After earning a BS in planning and resource management from BYU in 1998, he worked for a startup for five years before returning to BYU for an MBA, which he received in 2008. Spendlove loves to define and present organization design plans and strategic ideas to improve effectiveness and efficiency. He has been able to do that with several different companies, including JCPenney, Wells Fargo, and Overstock.com. At Overstock.com, he developed a new supply chain strategy. Spendlove currently works as a lead consultant for the Arizona Organization Development Network. In this role, he consults with local nonprofits on leadership development and process management. He and his wife, Brooke, have four children. In his spare time, Spendlove enjoys playing soccer, mountain biking, and practicing photography.

2011



Although he graduated from BYU Marriott in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in entrepreneurship and in 2017 with honors from BYU

Law School, **Robert Ahlander** isn't done hitting the books. This year he started a master of law degree in taxation at New York University. He plans on combining his law and business experience to

practice tax law. After graduating with his bachelor's degree, Ahlander worked for three years at Qualtrics, an opportunity that allowed him to develop leadership and professional skills. In addition, he interned for Adobe's legal department, a U.S. federal court judge, and several law firms in Provo, Salt Lake City, and Las Vegas. He and his wife, Brooke, have one daughter, and they enjoy traveling and spending time together. When he's not studying, Ahlander also enjoys playing tennis and golf.



No matter what organization **Alex Avery** finds himself in, the 2011 alum enjoys influencing and empowering others as an HR professional.

Avery's career took him through mechanical engineering, music, public administration, and the Church Educational System before he finally connected with the content taught in OBHR courses. He earned a BS in management with an OBHR emphasis then nabbed an internship with GE Aviation in its Human Resources Leadership Program. He recently accepted a full-time position with the company. In his current role, Avery and his team are creating visualization tools based on data analytics. Last year he completed a master's degree in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University. Avery lives in Cincinnati and enjoys skiing, motorcycling, traveling, and serving others. Most recently he completed two humanitarian trips to Nepal and Malawi.

2013



Shaylynn Fuller has mastered the act of balancing multiple demanding schedules. As a student, she was a member of the BYU

track and cross country teams while also earning her BS and MACC degrees with an emphasis in tax. She graduated in 2013 and was hired at Tanner LLC in Salt Lake City. She worked there for three years before taking her current job at LifeVantage Corporation as a tax manager. Fuller and her husband, Taft, have one child and another on the way. Her current position has allowed her to

transition to part-time work, which she says has been a wonderful mix of being at home and developing her career. In addition to her jobs as tax manager, wife, and mother, Fuller enjoys running, weightlifting, mountain biking, and camping.



The most recent turn in **Brad Gulbrandsen's** career has taken him from the New York City finance world and put him back in the

classroom. Soon he will be hanging an MBA from Harvard next to his 2013 BYU bachelor's degree. It was a BYU Marriott connection that took Gulbrandsen—a major in management with a finance emphasis—to the Big Apple. He joined BYU's Investment Banking Club, which landed him a summer internship with Morgan Stanley. He paid that experience forward by cofounding the BYU Alumni Private Equity Club. He is also the founder of MY Bright Futures, a nonprofit dedicated to improving education in Malaysia. In addition to his employment at Morgan Stanley, he worked for Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, a private equity firm. Gulbrandsen and his wife, Katie, live in Boston and have one son.



In high school, **Chloe Jensen** didn't know what she wanted to major in, but she did know what she didn't want to major in: busi-

ness. So, of course, in 2013 she earned a BS in business management with an emphasis in strategy. As a junior at BYU, Jensen interviewed for a job at InMoment but was offered a different position, one that she found out was specifically designed for her. She counts the launch of a product that she pioneered at InMoment as one of her proudest accomplishments. After three years, Jensen accepted a job with Ancestry as the resident expert on Tableau, a data visualization tool, providing training, troubleshooting, and consulting. Before giving birth to twins, Jensen worked as a senior visualization engineer at Ancestry, blogged, volunteered at Utah Valley Hospital, and served as an administrator for the Pregnancy After Loss Support groups. Jensen is married

to Kameron Jensen and currently stays at home with their sons, which she calls her hardest—but favorite—job.

2015



Flint D. Gardner knew three years before he graduated with his bachelor's in business management that he wanted to work for

Dow Chemical. At BYU Marriott, Gardner had networked with hundreds of professionals and found a deep passion for technical sales. When Dow came to campus, the company fit all his criteria for a career. Gardner spent the next three years networking within the Dow organization and tailoring his experiences to fit the company's skill requirements and expectations. When he was rejected as a junior for a Dow internship, he was devastated

but stayed focused and was accepted into the company's commercial development program as a senior—one of only nine participants nationwide. Currently he manages a multimillion-dollar portfolio of key customers and works to develop and strengthen long-term relationships. Gardner and his wife, Sara, have one son. He is also involved in real estate investments, competes in Tough Mudder events, and works with Boy Scouts of America.

An Acute Journey



Almost every employee has a commute—whether it's a short drive through neighborhood streets or battling the 101 in Los Angeles. For **Phil Harrop**, his one-hour-and-45-minute drive takes him along the Snake River, through rural countryside, across a state border, and into a different time zone.

Harrop lives in Nampa, Idaho, and was promoted to president and CEO of Saint Alphonsus Medical Center in Baker City, Oregon, earlier this year after working for five years as executive director and COO for Saint Alphonsus in Nampa.

"When we moved to Idaho, our oldest was going into fifth grade. This fall we will have two teenagers in high school, and we decided it would be best to not uproot them," explains Harrop, who usually spends Monday and Thursday nights in Baker City, going back to Idaho midweek for system meetings.

"When I worked in Washington, DC, earlier in my career, I had a one-way commute that was just as long as my Baker commute," he says, "only there's much less traffic in eastern Oregon."

Harrop's journey to his current position started as a finance undergrad at BYU. But that was just the first step. He then earned a master of health administration and an MBA from the Ohio State University in 2004. In 2012 he returned to school to earn an MS in public health and a PhD in health services management and policy, also from the OSU.

"My BYU Marriott experience prepared me exceptionally well for graduate school," he says. "I sensed most of my graduate school peers weren't challenged as much academically by their undergraduate programs as I was.

From a career-application standpoint, BYU Marriott helped me appreciate the importance of accomplishing work in teams and seeking feedback from stakeholders."

Earning a PhD isn't a requirement for hospital administration, but it was a goal that was always in the back of Harrop's mind. "My parents emphasized the importance of education, as did the prophet of my youth, President Gordon B. Hinckley," he says. "On my mission in Siberia, I had a three-by-five card I kept in my journal. On it I wrote various life goals and objectives. One of those was to obtain a PhD or terminal degree in whatever field I pursued."

Harrop, who says that his interest in helping others began when he was a teenager working as a lifeguard at a South Carolina lake, now spends his days doing a variety of things, primarily involving communication and decision-making.

"There are many different stakeholders in healthcare: patients and their loved ones, colleagues and vendors, physicians and other providers, board members, and community members and leaders," he explains. "Balancing our mission of providing care and services with the need to be good stewards of our financial resources is the classic tension, and our hospital and clinics are no different. We are constantly evaluating how to best meet community healthcare needs while staying within budget constraints."

When Harrop took his new position in Baker City, the hospital was not meeting budget expectations. Within a few months, he was able to get it back on track. "The thing I enjoy most is feeling like I'm making a difference for someone—whether it's a staff member who needs support, a patient or visitor who I can assist in some small way, or a leader I am coaching," he says. "Helping people and feeling like value is being added is what brings me the most satisfaction."

Harrop has also worked as director of the Goshen Center for Cancer Care; executive director of the John Stoddard Cancer Center; and research associate and administrative associate at the OSU's Wexner Medical Center.

As enjoyable as his work is, Harrop says his family is his proudest accomplishment. He often speaks Russian at home, communicating exclusively in his mission language with his two youngest children. Harrop and his wife, **Heidi Roberts Harrop**, who earned her finance degree from BYU a year before her husband, have six children.

"She was a great tutor!" he says. "We now talk about our family finances, investments, and managing life with six children more than we talk about work. When it comes to stressful decisions or big career discussions, Heidi is the best counselor and sounding board."

