

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

PRIDE MONTH

The San Diego Business Journal and the Community of Business™ proudly support LGBTQ+ Pride Month.



Pride in the Public Sector

Consulting Company Cultivates Diversity in Utilities Field

■ By KAREN PEARLMAN

Few companies felt more seen, heard and validated than San Diego's **Pride Resource Partners** when earlier this year the **California Public Utilities Commission** opened the doors for greater opportunities for lesbian-, gay-, bisexual- and transgender-owned businesses.

For nearly a decade, Pride Resources has been a certified LGBT-owned diverse business enterprise and its leaders have been at the forefront of a push for more equitable opportunities through the CPUC.

Headed by CEO **Joachim Maak**, Pride Resource Partners is a consulting firm that amplifies project management capabilities for mid-sized and large companies, as well as municipal, county and state agencies – including utilities under the CPUC's umbrella.



Joachim (Joe) Maak
CEO
Pride Resource Partners

Maak said that when the CPUC expanded its Supplier Diversity Program in April to include goal setting measures for hiring LGBT-owned companies

for those under its umbrella – energy, telephone and water utilities throughout the state – it validated “a lot of work a lot of us have been pushing for in this goal.”

While the CPUC for 30 years has encouraged its members to voluntarily



Joe Maak and his 1997 prototype of downtown San Diego, a model used by Center City Development Corporation to show how a coming ballpark (the precursor to Petco Park) would look. Maak was attending the New School of Architecture when he interned at Di Donato Associates, which was commissioned to build the model. Photo courtesy Joachim Maak

contract with LGBT businesses – as well as those owned by women, minorities and disabled veterans, it wasn't until this year that the commission increased the specific procurement goal for the next three years, from 0.5 percent in 2022, 1 percent in 2023 and 1.5 percent in 2024.

The new order means a bigger piece of project pies and a more even playing field are now coming for LGBT-owned businesses like Pride Resources. The change will even the playing field for historically marginalized groups.

While “there's still a lot of growth to be done, a lot of room for change,” Pride Resources Director of Operations **Andrew Yoshimura** said the dividends in the foreseeable future will be tremendous with the new regulation.

\$600M for LGBT-Owned Businesses

“It means from only spending \$40 to \$60 million, there will now be \$600 million in procurement in LGBT businesses from California investor-owned utilities based on that 1.5 percent in 2024,” said Yoshimura, who has been with the company since 2018.

Pride Resource Partners has been at the forefront of LGBT legislative changes since its beginnings, working with other groups like **BuildOUT California**, which Yoshimura founded.

BuildOUT California is an industry association dedicated to the sustainable growth of LGBT-owned/certified firms and its allies in the fields of architecture, engineering, construction services, real estate development and other industries.

Pride Resources launched in 2015 when Maak discovered that the CPUC had added an LGBT certification program as part of its push to have those utility companies it oversees reach minority-owned businesses.

Maak had been working for engine maker **Pratt & Whitney** for several years, but when the certification program started, he decided the time was right to go out on his own.

Starting his own business wasn't the first time Maak, now 59, has made life changes. **➔ Pride page 57**



Andrew Yoshimura
Director of Operations
Pride Resource Partners

Pride Resource Partners



FOUNDED: 2015

CEO: Joachim Maak

HEADQUARTERS: Kearny Mesa

BUSINESS: Project management consulting firm

REVENUE: \$12 million

EMPLOYEES: 80

WEBSITE: priderp.com

CONTACT: (858) 430-6630

NOTABLE: CEO Joachim (Joe) Maak is a native of Germany who won a scholarship to attend college in America, and landed at Illinois State University, but warm weather has kept him in San Diego.

San Diego's 'Prints Charming'

Consolidated Concepts Focused on Commercial Printing, Promotional Products

■ By KAREN PEARLMAN

Walking in his maternal grandfather's footsteps was not the plan **Todd Cazin** had in mind for his career, but for more than 20 years, the San Diego native has partly “copied” what has worked for his family's nearly 70-year-old company.

Cazin has owned and operated **Consolidated Concepts** since 2002, a company that helps businesses with their commercial printing and promotional item needs.

The company, which prides itself on being “your total print resource,” helps connect clients to vendors, screen printers, embroidery outfits and graphic designers. It also helps with mailing needs, offset printing and helping with design ideas.

Consolidated Concepts specializes in printed items for customers – emblazoning companies' logos and businesses' mantras on popular items like pens, magnets and business checks as well as shirts, banners and vehicle wraps. But personalized jigsaw puzzles, tools and jewelry are also part of the company's offerings.

“I never saw myself in this business,” said the 1993 graduate of Mira Mesa High School. “But I definitely inherited the entrepreneurial gene from my grandfather. And here I am going down that same road.”

Cazin's grandfather, **Frank Reed**, and later his grandmother, **Gwen**



Todd Cazin
Owner
Consolidated Concepts

Reed, ran a company that is still in business today, **Capitol Blue Print**. Launched in 1954 in Springfield, Ill., the company originally was a one-machine operation, but later expanded to include color, Xerox, oversize color, blackline and finishing services.

Before his 1998 graduation from **Cal Poly San Luis Obispo**, where he majored in graphic communication and concentrating on print management, Cazin even had an internship

at his grandfather's company. Cazin said he was working for other printing companies for several years but became bored with sales work and decided to go into business for himself in 2000.

Working with the LGBT Community

A large and important part of his business has become working with local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender companies. He said when he first moved his office from Scripps Ranch to the heart of the Hillcrest area, it coincided with the time he said he was “coming out of the closet.” He said he joined the LGBT Chamber of



Consolidated Concepts created the banner and table used at The San Diego LGBT Community Center's Open House celebration. Photo courtesy The San Diego LGBT Community Center

Commerce in 2008 and began to get more involved with the LGBT community.

“Around that time I started connecting with graphic designers doing nonprofit work with places like **Mama's Kitchen** and **Serving Seniors**,” Cazin said. “Even now, most of my clients are nonprofits. I started working with the LGBT Community Center. The LGBT community helped get my name out there and got me more comfortable in my business.”

Cazin said that he has been working remotely and out of several sites since before the COVID-19 pandemic and his “ultimate plan” is to create a working space called where people in the LGBTQ+ business community would feel safe and find business-focused services and collaborative partners.

“It would be a place where people could do their business and be around... **➔ Concepts page 57**

Consolidated Concepts



FOUNDED: 2000

CEO: Todd Cazin

HEADQUARTERS: San Diego

BUSINESS: Commercial printing

EMPLOYEES: 1

WEBSITES: ytpr.com and ytprpromo.com

CONTACT: (619) 295-9877

NOTABLE: Cazin is a second-generation San Diegan whose father graduated from Mission Bay High School.

Lemon Grove Company Focuses on Tech Challenges

The Computer Admin Finds Solutions with Managed IT Services

■ By KAREN PEARLMAN

The orange-rimmed eyeglass frames with googly eyes in its company logo has a nerdy Clark Kent vibe, but don't let the fun look fool you. **The Computer Admin** acts far more like Superman for hundreds of businesses that find themselves knee-deep in Information Technology and Information System challenges.

The Lemon Grove-based company run by CEO **Tim Fronczek** and his son, **Kevin Fronczek**, offers around-the-clock remote and on-site support for 2,000 end points for businesses small and large, local and national.

Not just for emergencies – although the company stays busy with those – The Computer Admin also helps businesses proactively with data backup and recovery, phone and communication needs, connectivity issues and networking needs moving forward.

“We like to take over everything for a company so there is no finger pointing,” Tim Fronczek said. “Some companies hire us after something breaks to fix it. But we also catch things early – before the processor overheats, fixing security issues now before they cause an increase in insurance rates.

“We spend time filling out insurance audits, backing information up and explaining how to get information back from the Cloud. We have conversations with people. Our goal is to guide our clients with our experience through everything the company needs.”

The Fronczeks established the company in 2009. The orange eyeglasses logo was suggested by a friend of Tim Fronczek's younger son, Kyle.

The Great Recession of 2008 and IT

Tim Fronczek said he saw a need for outsourced tech services after the Great Recession of 2008, knowing that many companies had cut back or completely cut out in-house IT services to save on personnel costs.

Fronczek said his company as an outsider is able to do the work for one-eighth the cost. The Computer Admin currently takes care of about 120 companies' IT and IS needs.

Originally in the commercial printing business, Tim Fronczek, a native of upstate New York who moved to San Diego with his parents when he was 15, has made several stops along his career path through the decades.

After graduating from Mount Miguel in 1978 and attending classes at **Cuyamaca College**, he started part time work at a commercial print shop.

At 18, he started his own commercial printing business, “bootstrapping my way through it,” he said.

Fronczek later married, moved away

and owned an envelope manufacturing shop in Montana. He then worked for **The Home Depot** and **Creative Touch Interiors** doing commercial homebuilding design in Atlanta.

But his life took a West Coast turn about 15 years ago when during a busy work day, Fronczek heard from his father in California with news that his mother had breast cancer. “When I got the call from my dad, I was on a conference call,” Fronczek said. “He told me what was happening and I gave my notice right then and there.”

Family Business Begins in Earnest

When he moved back to San Diego to be close to his parents, he was out of work for a short time. Then 45, Tim Fronczek's son Kevin broached the subject of starting an IT company together.

The younger Fronczek had recently graduated with a degree in biomedical sciences from the **University of Montana** and had moved to San Diego and was working for a software developing company in La Jolla.

“I was young and dad was looking for something else to do,” Kevin Fronczek said. “During the recession, IT was one of the first positions to go

at many companies. They didn't see the value in computers, thinking, ‘This works fine, we don't need IT.’ As time goes by, of course, things break and they started to see, ‘We need IT.’”



Tim Fronczek
CEO
The Computer Admin



Kevin Fronczek
President
The Computer Admin

The company, which has seven employees, also includes Fronczek's younger son, Kyle. Tim Fronczek said he is on the path to retirement now as his sons are currently in the process of purchasing the company outright. “They're putting me out to pasture,” he said, laughing.

The Future for the ‘Orange Glasses Guy’

Fronczek didn't say what would come next after his sons take over The Computer Admin. He remarried eight years ago, and he and his husband live in Lemon Grove, in a home they also share with Fronczek's father, who moved in after Fronczek's mother passed away 10 years ago.

Tim Fronczek said the logo remains a big talking point with people. He said the company still gets work requests from people asking, “Is this the guy with the orange glasses?” ■

The Computer Admin



FOUNDED: 2009

CEO: Tim Fronczek

PRESIDENT: Kevin Fronczek

HEADQUARTERS: Lemon Grove

BUSINESS: Managed Service Provider

REVENUE: \$1.7 million

EMPLOYEES: 7

WEBSITE: thecomputeradmin.com

CONTACT: (619) 713-7422

NOTABLE: Racking up credits by taking myriad summer school classes, Tim Fronczek graduated a year early from Mount Miguel High in Spring Valley.

Walking the Walk, Talking the Talk

Milo Shapiro Teaches Others How to be Heard

■ By KAREN PEARLMAN

Improvisational theater is an art form that isn't for everyone, but local San Diego business owner **Milo Shapiro** has turned improv into a successful career for more than two decades.



Milo Shapiro
President and
Creative Energy
Officer
ImproVentures and
Public Dynamics

Shapiro, 57, is president and “Creative Energy Officer” at **IMPROVentures**, a company he started in 2000 that grew out of his love for and success in improv, which began a decade earlier. “I've always been a storyteller,” he said.

A 15-year **National Speakers Association** member and former **Toastmaster**, Shapiro delivers some of the most interactive motivational

keynotes in the market as he gets the whole audience playing games with him.

“We learn so much more when we're in play,” Shapiro said. “We all get that it's true for kids and think we're supposed to outgrow that need. But the brain still wants to play, especially when it gets the learning value, too.”

Shapiro started his company with team-building events called “TEAMprovising,” which has attendees laughing together through improv games that promote communication and problem solving.



Milo Shapiro of IMPROVentures says he's always been a storyteller. Photo courtesy of Milo Shapiro

That led to him being asked to speak at conferences, leading entire audiences in paired games within a program called “We Gotta Fail... To Succeed!” which looks at and why – and how – risk taking and failure help us learn, grow and succeed.

“When we try so hard to be perfect, we never learn the lessons we need to learn,” Shapiro said. “You have to be willing to make those mistakes. It's part of the growing process, but you have to give yourself that permission and that's where we stop ourselves.

“Life isn't rehearsed, it's improvised! Yes, teambuilding should be fun, but if the folks don't learn anything, it disappears in two days. TEAMprovising really gets people thinking, as the games I choose delve into my five C's: Creativity, Communication, Cooperation, Commitment and Community.”

Helping Teams Communicate

Shapiro has worked with financial groups and banks, universities, hospitals and hotels, U.S. military branches and companies from

Cox Communications to **Qualcomm**, helping colleagues connect and innovate.

“It's all about helping teams communicate with the audience, keeping it interesting and lively,” he said.

Shapiro allows for improv play during his events, even leading an adult version of “Simon Says” that drives home the importance of listening skills.

His coaching tools teach people how to convey their messages, “feeling prepared, polished and powerful,” with effective wording, controlled pacing, eye contact, voice usage, body language and more.

Public Speaking Coach

He has a dedicated website for his coaching of public speaking skills at publicdynamics.com

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ImproVentures and PublicDynamics



FOUNDED: 2000

PRESIDENT AND CREATIVE ENERGY OFFICER: Milo Shapiro

HEADQUARTERS: San Diego

BUSINESS: Consulting and Training

EMPLOYEES: 1

WEBSITE: miloshapiro.com, publicdynamics.com and freshenyourphoto.com

CONTACT: (619) 542-0761

NOTABLE: Milo Shapiro spent his vacation in 1989 job hunting, and landed a spot at San Diego Gas & Electric, where he stayed for 11 years before starting his own business.