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Meet Tim Wright, WP&M Chairman

Tim Wright has always believed in building and maintaining relationships. That devotion—to business, to the community and to his family—was what made Tim a clear choice for the position of WP&M chairman. Ours is a firm that believes in productive relationships, and Tim learned about relationship management at an early age—when he worked at a Peoples Bank branch as a high school junior. He stayed with Peoples throughout his years at Butler University, always focused on his career while majoring in business with a marketing minor, serving as president of his Phi Delta Theta pledge class (and later social chair and treasurer) and running on the Bulldogs' track team.

Upon graduation from Butler, Tim started full-time at Peoples as assistant manager of their branch at 33rd and Meridian streets in Indianapolis. There he learned about his clients' diverse needs, ranging from establishing quarter-million dollar lines of credit to cashing AFDC checks. His warm smile and friendly handshake caught the attention of bank leadership as he rose through the ranks to become corporate marketing director and secretary to the bank's board of directors.

After 15 years of excellence at Peoples, Tim redirected his

relationship management skills down Market Street to manage marketing and advertising at American Fletcher National Bank, then the state's largest financial institution. While at AFNB, Tim guided numerous advertising and marketing campaigns that showcased the bank's customer service, experience and financial strength in a highly competitive marketplace.

Shortly after American Fletcher's acquisition by Bank One, Tim moved further west on Market Street to the Indiana State House. As deputy treasurer of state under then-treasurer Julian Ridlen, Tim moved from soliciting to allocating state deposits as director of investments and maintained contact with bankers throughout the state.

Following two years in the state treasurer's office, Tim returned to the private sector as director of marketing for Ameritrust National Bank, Indiana (now KeyBank). While at Ameritrust, Tim coordinated the marketing efforts of the flagship office with those of 12 statewide affiliates. Additionally, Tim managed employee benefits, trust, and public sector lines of business for the bank. After weathering two more mergers, Tim decided to retire from banking to serve as president of SYM Financial Advisors, a financial advisory firm.

These credentials and his numerous business achievements were a major factor in our decision to ask Tim to be

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WP&M chairman. But Tim wears many hats, and his stature as a civic leader in the Indianapolis community also contributed to this decision.

During a career in financial services that spans more than three decades, Tim learned more than building solid relationships with his clients. He also learned the value of servant leadership, when one takes his leadership experience beyond the executive suite to serve the needs of the community. Tim's involvement reads like a *Who's Who* of Indianapolis cultural, educational and charitable organizations. For every one of these he has served, Tim has relied on the many friends he has made throughout his career to recruit new donors and new board members, thus reinforcing these groups' reputations in the community.

Among his civic achievements are raising the first \$100,000 to open the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art and reorganizing and stabilizing Ballet Internationale and Dance Kaleidoscope as president of the board of these companies. He also initiated and supported major gift campaigns for other organizations, including the Indianapolis Museum of

Art as trustee. Overall, Tim's servant leadership has resulted in raising millions of dollars for volunteer and nonprofit organizations in Indiana.

Tim attributes his good fortune in business and community service to a desire to never stop learning. After graduating from Butler, Tim went back to school while working full-time at Peoples Bank, taking evening classes through the American Institute of Banking. Later in his career, he was chosen to participate in the Stanley K. Lacy Leadership Series, one of the nation's most prestigious community educational programs of its kind.

Like his father before him who raised five children, Tim is also a devoted father. He and his wife, Cathy, an interior designer, have been married 31 years. Their oldest, Joanna, chose to attend college at her parents' alma mater, Butler. Daughter Elizabeth goes to North Central High School while Christian, the youngest, will begin high school next year.

If you asked Tim about his most fulfilling community service, he would probably name the Leukemia Society of Indiana. Tim served as president of the Leukemia Society shortly after the death of their son J.D. at age 6. The ordeal led to the entire family's deeper respect for the value of life, to a more enduring personal faith, and to a larger sense of personal support throughout the family.

All of us at WP&M are enthusiastic about his leadership, and we look forward to offering our clients a broader scope of services and a level of service that will fulfill the expectations of those we serve.

—By Jon White

Good Economics? Or Impatience?

The customer presented merchandise, unmoving as the cashier processed and totaled. On presentation of the final bill, he began searching pockets for a checkbook. He wrote the check and passed it to the cashier, who then asked for identification, apparently obtainable from his wallet in a different pocket. He pulled out his driver's license, and the clerk took it to a manager for approval. The clerk returned, saying that another piece of identification is required, prompting another search in the wallet and, finally, location of a credit card. She stamped the check and filled in information from the driver's license and the credit card, then again moved to locate a manager for final approval. When the transaction was completed, an injudicious, intemperate (and impatient?) waiting customer told him: "You could have saved almost five minutes by paying with your credit card." This entirely unwelcome comment elicited an intense scowl, the look of "It is none of your business." Being overly proud of his thorough intellect and careful rationalizations, the observing customer elected to formulate his reasoning, as follows:

The cost of a printed check can be as high as 20 cents, depending on how it is ordered. Some banks charge a per-check processing fee, say 15 cents. Checks clear promptly, eliminating potential interest income, probably only a few cents at today's low money market fund interest rates. (If cash earns one percent in a money market fund or bank deposit, the deposit earns \$1 per year per \$100, or approximately three cents per day.)

Meanwhile, clerks usually clear credit card transactions in less than one minute. Interest can be earned

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Thoughtful Wealth Planning&Management

is published four times per year by Wealth Planning&Management, LLC, P.O. Box 40994, Indianapolis, IN 46240-0994. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is strictly forbidden. News services may quote from this periodical with proper attribution. This issue was completed March 21, 2005. The DJIA was 10,565.39 and the S&P 500 was 1,183.78.

Publisher: John W. Guy
Editor: Lois Sherman
Design: The Art Room

THE INSTANT CHARITY

“Instant charities” appear after such profound tragedies as the attacks on the World Trade Center, bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, hurricanes and the tsunami. Though motivated by the highest magnitude of human caring, instant charities create challenges and problems having no easy resolution. Lacking easy resolution, donors should think long before giving to instant charities or claiming a tax deduction for gifts to instant charities.

The charitable, or nonprofit, community has three components, each with benefits and deficiencies. These components are the traditional charities, new charitable organizations arising out of a unique circumstance such as a tragedy, and short-term fraudulent entities that come and go on whim.

United Way, the Red Cross, health-related efforts such as the March of Dimes and Heart Association, arts organizations, groups such as the Salvation Army, and private endowments are examples of traditional charities. These probably receive the bulk of annual nonprofit funding in the United States. They are large, well-staffed and well-advised. They have boards of directors, professional auditors, mission statements, and infrastructures or networks through which donated funds travel to meet designated needs.

To receive funding from a traditional charity, a social service provider must make a formal application that is carefully reviewed and monitored, or it must be a well-known and efficient organization, such as UNESCO. In other words, the provider must have a reputation for effectiveness. It must know what to do after a tornado, hurricane or tsunami, and it must have the people, equipment, banking connections and communications system to complete the task. The weakness of the major traditional funders and their large

service providers is expense. The cost of maintaining their staffs and infrastructures can be thirty percent or more of monies donated. Nevertheless, donors to these entities may be trusting and confident.

New charities, “instant charities,” seem to appear overnight following a tragedy that captures the hearts and sympathies of massive numbers of donors. The two most prominent tragedies of recent years are the 9-11 attack and the southeast Asian tsunami.

The Florida and Caribbean hurricanes also prompted significant eleemosynary support. Fortunately, most support for individuals and recovery operations has been provided by traditional charities, but dozens of instant charities also appeared after these events.

An example of an honest instant charity was a narrowly focused effort to raise funds for cruisers whose yachts were destroyed during the hurricane that devastated Granada in 2004. Almost overnight, a sailing organization published a solicitation for financial support, saying that many cruisers had “lost everything.” The conduit for donations was a fine businessman in Trinidad, a person who has earned the personal respect and loyalty of everyone who has done business with him. Donors were to wire funds to his personal business accounts. This effort, though, demonstrates the significant problems of instant charities, most of which are manifestly honest and well intentioned. The innocence and integrity of these fundraising campaigns foster their deficiencies, which are standard weaknesses of all instant charities. These weaknesses are:

- No pre-established system to

determine which beneficiaries (which yachts) will receive benefit, and to what extent

- No supervisory board or audit
- No system to report results to donors
- No established criteria for paying internal expenses, the inevitable costs of receiving and distributing funds
- No legal charitable status, meaning that tax deductions will be denied

In addition, the underlying assumption of the yacht-centered solicitation is questionable, at least in comparison to the larger need, which is to help the people of Granada to recover from their 90 percent loss. The dilemmas for donors are that cruisers “proceed at their own risk,” usually have various forms of life and property insurance, and commonly have other sources of support, such as Social Security or families at home. Perhaps, therefore, an instant charity should not be created to benefit this class. Equally important, once created, the instant charity is unlikely to be able to distinguish between cruisers who have “lost everything” and those who have natural support. The instant charity is unlikely to ask for the detailed personal financial information necessary to judge who should benefit because managers of the charity have no experience, and they honor personal financial privacy.

These dilemmas also were present after 9-11. After the attack, dozens of instant charities formed, usually inside an affinity group, such as “Friends of Food Servers” in the World Trade Center or, most prominently, police and firefighter organizations. In the days following, business entities such as restaurants, service organizations

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such as Boy Scouts, and safety locations such as fire stations, either facilitated voluntary donations or actively solicited, with no statement as to how funds were to be processed, what criteria for awards would be, and who was to decide. No system existed for reporting to donors. Except for dollars given through established charities, donors have no idea how their money was spent. Curiously, in many of the most honest instant charities, funds never are allocated to the intended beneficiaries because a logical distribution system does not exist. In these cases, funds remain on deposit for years, until some board or institution decides to spend them on a theoretically related purpose.

Between the honest instant charity and the fraudulent lies the grey zone of limited purpose, the charities formed around a personal tragedy, such as for an individual damaged for life in an accident or for the victim of a crime, or a charity based on the personal whim of a famous person, such as a former military officer. Unfortunately, the limited efficacy of such efforts is not apparent until a simple required report shows that the founder is taking a large personal income from donated funds.

Fraudulent charity is well known, occasionally prosecuted, and easily avoided by donors, especially by donors who give only to established organizations. Donors giving to the honest instant charities may take heart that the intention is good and that their funds are likely to provide a positive service to someone. Giving to a fraudulent charity arises from ignorance and unwillingness to check backgrounds by calling state attorneys general and other supervisory agencies.

Good Economics? *continued from page 1*

during the time between the charge and the monthly credit card due date, in some cases more than six weeks, depending on relative transaction dates. Many no-fee credit cards pay benefits, such as cash back or frequent flyer miles. On a \$100 transaction, the benefit might be ten cents. If the credit card total monthly debit is paid automatically by an electronic charge to a bank account, a check fee is avoided. Depending on assumptions, the total savings of using a credit card instead of a check could be 45 cents or more. At ten transactions per month, savings might rise to almost \$55 for the year, enough for one excellent steak at Outback.

Is this good economics, or just my impatience?

Good night, Dorothy. You done good.

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