

## eUpdate



Changing how strategy happens



## Winter 2009

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### Secrets of Their Success

The most impressive accomplishment of The Schapiro Group's first 25 years is our client base – distinguished organizations that profoundly influence how communities work. We are honored to be trusted as their strategic adviser and opportunity analyst. In some cases the relationship has been growing since our early days in business.

This milestone anniversary of our firm is an opportune time to put the focus on our clients – their strategic successes and impact. So we asked them to share their stories, in some of which we have been privileged to play a supporting part. As you read, it shouldn't be hard to see why we enjoy our work.

This is the second installment of client success stories. To read the first go to the [Summer/Fall 2009 edition](#).

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### Establishing Thought Leadership in an Industry

The driving public wants to know more, and know it faster – and traffic management agencies should invest accordingly. This is the strategic advice that Cambridge Systematics offers its state and local transportation clients, armed with research from The Schapiro Group. Since 2002 Cambridge has been measuring driver awareness and usage of traffic assistance resources, ranging from highway message boards to websites to service patrols. Research findings have pinpointed opportunities to use the popularity of radio and message boards to fill in knowledge gaps about other services, such as how to call for a service patrol vehicle and what 511 offers. Recent research is preparing Cambridge to help clients design traffic information systems of the future around GPS and instant messaging. By scientifically measuring customer satisfaction, Cambridge is helping transportation agencies meet the needs of the driving public and establishing itself as an industry leader.

Kenneth Voorhies, P.E. PTOE  
ITS/OPS Southeast Manager  
Cambridge Systematics, Inc.  
[www.camsys.com](http://www.camsys.com)



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### Building an Arena through Strategic Leadership

Over a decade, as a member of the Gwinnett County Commission and the Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau Board, Judy Waters influenced how hundreds of millions of capital dollars were invested. Her leadership in getting the Gwinnett Arena developed was typical of her careful, methodical approach. Judy first envisioned how such a facility would serve the needs of generations of Gwinnett families and businesses, present and future. Then she led the effort to document the economic potential in serving those uses. Her low-key, fact-based manner effectively convinced a majority of other decision-makers that a regional arena would pay off in a big way. Research generated insight into what citizens desired: very large ballroom, family-friendly design and programming, capacity for business functions, and central location. Residents and leaders envisioned an asset for Gwinnett and environs rather than a metro-wide competitor to downtown Atlanta's Phillips Arena. The research helped Judy and other arena allies to frame the project for public discussion, positioning it as a completion of the existing Gwinnett Civic Center rather than a new stand-alone venue. The project took time to overcome resistance within the Commission, but when the Gwinnett Arena at last opened its doors, it fulfilled the desires of Gwinnett citizens and has been a hit ever since.

Judy Waters  
Executive Director  
The Community Foundation for Northeast Georgia  
[www.cfneg.org](http://www.cfneg.org)



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## Forging a Shared Vision

For Market Street Services, strategic success is measured by the sustained economic progress of its community clients. Founded by J. Mac Holladay in 1997, MSS has built its reputation by convening local leaders to forge a shared vision of how the community should grow. With MSS providing specific research as well as broad development expertise, community stakeholders from the business, civic, political and non-profit arenas collectively reach a consensus on development strategies, types of industry that are most desired, the workforce skills that are needed, and the infrastructure that must be put in place. Even booming communities profit from partnering with MSS, evidenced by a project with the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce. In spite of tremendous growth, Gwinnett County had never formalized an economic development strategy. MSS led the Partnership Gwinnett process in which key leaders from across the county wrestled with local opportunities and challenges, ultimately agreeing on ten focal areas. Aggressive implementation of the plan has led to economic wins (relocation of NCR), the promising cultivation of long-term opportunities (trade relations with China), and quality of life advances (a strategic plan for the arts).

J. Mac Holladay, CCE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Market Street Services  
[www.marketstreetservices.com](http://www.marketstreetservices.com)



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## Being Mentored and Paying It Forward

Mentors aren't just for young people and rising stars. To Alice Wiggins-Tolbert, being mentored is a lifelong career growth strategy. This outlook has helped her rise to high-level jobs in public transportation, academia and the private sector. Currently she is Director of Project Development with the international planning and engineering firm Parsons Brinckerhoff. When offered the consulting position, her initial hesitation gave way to the encouragement of trusted, seasoned colleagues who knew both the industry and her own capabilities. From her second week on the job, she was bringing in clients and managing projects. "What a heady feeling to know that people believe in you and are there to push you to another level," she says. Striving to meet the expectations of mentors means that tough challenges gradually become effortless, paving the way to higher levels of competency. Appreciating her own mentors, she has consciously mentored others. "Many of them have surpassed me in their professional achievements," she says. Being open to guidance has prepared Wiggins-Tolbert to help the next generation become entrepreneurial, creative, focused, task-oriented and competent in leadership roles.

Alice Wiggins-Tolbert  
Director of Project Development  
Parsons Brinckerhoff  
[www.pbworld.com](http://www.pbworld.com)



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## Developing a Transition Plan

Reading *Good to Great* focused Marsha Anderson Bomar on the fact that many firms falter in the shift from first to second generation leadership. The book inspired her to start planning for the day when Street Smarts, her land use and transportation engineering/design firm, would be guided by others. Founded by Marsha in 1990, Street Smarts grew steadily with a diverse base of private and public clients. Determined to prepare for succession, seven years ago Marsha set a ten-year timetable and started moving methodically through planning steps. This involved analyzing current leadership to assure "the right people were on the bus, occupying the right seats," as she puts it. She engaged key employees in early discussions, drawing on outside resources including The Schapiro Group for consulting, research and facilitation. Gradually the internal conversations evolved from being led by outside experts to in-house people, which Marsha recognized as a critical element to gain buy-in across the team. With her team leaders, all data were completely transparent, building on the openness and trust which had always been hallmarks of Street Smarts. Today Marsha periodically tweaks the transition plan but continues to follow it in its original form. After winning multiple awards for entrepreneurial leadership in her career, the ultimate accolade will be if after she's gone, Street Smarts doesn't miss a beat.

Marsha Anderson Bomar  
President and Founder  
Street Smarts  
[www.streetsmarts.us](http://www.streetsmarts.us)



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## Performance Based Grantmaking

The Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund is focused on strengthening and stabilizing small and mid sized arts organizations. For many years, the Fund employed a unique strategy using a data-driven approach toward

its multi-year grant-making to support non-artistic staff (i.e., administrative, marketing, development), establishing capital reserves, and supporting debt reduction. This deliberate approach has paid off handsomely, as MAAF has established 55 new permanent staff positions in small and mid sized arts organizations in the metro Atlanta region over the past 15 years.

Now, in recognition of perhaps the most challenging economy that arts organizations have known, the Arts Fund has employed a grantmaking strategy that awards general operating grants to highly performing arts organizations. These general operating grants support organizations' strategic plans, enabling them to use funds where they are most needed. All organizations are discovering new ways of adapting to this new environment, and general operating funds provide the best opportunity for arts organizations to survive and thrive.

Lisa Cremin  
Director  
Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund  
[www.metroatlantaartsfund.org](http://www.metroatlantaartsfund.org)



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## We're Proud of Our Clients

**Mary Grealy, President of the Healthcare Leadership Council** ([www.hlc.org](http://www.hlc.org)) was selected by Modern Healthcare as one of the nation's Top 25 Women in Healthcare.

The **Juvenile Justice Fund** ([www.juvenilejusticefund.org](http://www.juvenilejusticefund.org)) received the Atlanta Women's Foundation Sue Wieland Embracing Possibility Award given to one of AWF's outstanding grantee organizations ([www.atlantawomen.org](http://www.atlantawomen.org)).

**Alex Wan** ([www.alexwanforatlanta.com](http://www.alexwanforatlanta.com)) was elected to the Atlanta City Council with an impressive 60% of the vote.

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## TSG Serves the Community

Making sense of politics... TSG President Beth Schapiro recently shared her insights on policy and politics with the Peachtree Rotary Club. She will also be participating in a roundtable discussion at the Southern Political Science Association winter meeting.

Cool indeed... Beth was invited to serve on the Advisory Council of Cool Girls ([www.thecoolgirls.org](http://www.thecoolgirls.org)), an organization whose board she previously chaired.

Is there a doctor in the house?... Strategist Rusty Parker will soon be the proud owner of a doctoral degree in Applied Sociology from Baylor University. Congratulations, Dr. Rusty!

History in the making... Rusty also finished his first 5K in Atlanta's Kirkwood neighborhood on the 145th anniversary of the Battle of Atlanta. Funds raised by B\*ATL ([www.batlevent.org](http://www.batlevent.org)) will go to erect and maintain national park-like display signs across the East Atlanta area to augment existing historic markers.

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In January 2004, The Schapiro Group began the eUpdate to keep clients and friends of TSG informed about the firm's activities. Feel free to forward this email.

To add yourself to or remove yourself from this eUpdate list, please send an email to [info@schapirogroup.com](mailto:info@schapirogroup.com).

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