

# Relentless Pursuit of Sustainable Growth



By T. Patrick Hurley

Leaving our individual comfort zone is never easy. We all work incredibly hard to reach each new level for our chapters and ourselves. It's only human nature to want to rest a little and enjoy our achievements. Unfortunately, that would not be wise. Only by redoubling our efforts and striving higher can ACG truly succeed as the leading authority on corporate growth.

The good news is that we already know the way. The payoff in incremental value of information and contacts, deal flow, and opportunity for those with imagination and discipline is obvious. Tapping industry depth in nontraditional ways and videoconference training are examples to broaden the ACG product offering.

The difference we experience anywhere with a quantum step in resources, content, and quality is clear. Very few of us ever want to go back. What we think is good enough really isn't for very long. We must leverage technology and extend the reach of ACG around the globe to strengthen the organization and attract more corporate participation.

Ram Charan implored us in strategic planning to look beyond the corners of our eyes. Please support the premise that the collective position of one ACG makes each chapter more powerful and maximizes value for all members. That does not compromise individual chapters or leaders in any way. It's all upside and no downside.

We are securing our foundation. That is priority one. The progress driven by immediate past president Peter Coffey during this last year and by CEO Dan Varroney since his taking charge has

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had painful moments. Everyone on the main board is well aware of the turbulent period before those changes and that the repair work is continuing.

Dan is laser-focused on upgrading system-wide technology, further raising ACG media visibility, and delivering more resources to chapters. Those items will be addressed at the Leadership Summit at the ACG InterGrowth Conference in April, and we anticipate representation from every chapter.

While there will be considerable work through the balance of 2006 on those fronts, we must also realize that the interests of ACG in Europe and Asia require attention. European M&A activity matched that of North American dealmaking in 2005, and ACG has the opportunity to stake out an important position in the burgeoning Asia market.

We have only three European chapters and three under development. That is simply not enough for a market so important to many corporate and private equity members. We will surely

benefit from the activities of ACG main board member Harry Klien of ACG Austria spearheading the first European Capital Connection in June. And we look to tap the European buyout experience of Robin Marshall of 3i, the newest main board member.

ACG also has the opportunity to establish its presence in Asia. Just by coincidence while in Beijing last month, Piper Jaffray was holding its third annual Internet and Technology Conference in my hotel. It ran three days and drew 250 people. Deutsche Bank hosted a broader conference just down the street that was overrun by 2,500 companies and investors. There is plenty of action in China and elsewhere in the region.

Of course, we must balance ACG priorities and not dilute our efforts by spreading our resources too thin. Just as risky, however, is to remain within our comfort zone and not pursue international expansion. Be creative and relentless in pursuing ways to maximize the value of ACG. The result will be sustainable growth, and the rewards will flow your way.

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