



# The Ride Through Adversity

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Each year, I set a series of goals in my life. One goal always involves an extreme fitness challenge to hone my competitive spirit and maintain good mental and physical health. In June of last year, I completed my 2010 goal by cycling to the top of Mont Ventoux located in the Provence Region of Southern France. Mont Ventoux, which translated means “windy mountain”, is a legendary Tour de France mountain climb and is tagged the Mount Everest of cycling. The climb ascends over a vertical mile (approximately 10 Eiffel Towers) in just 13 miles of riding. Lance Armstrong describes it well, “6,200 feet up there, is completely different from 6,200 feet any place else. There’s no air, there’s no oxygen. There’s no vegetation, there’s no life, Just Rocks. Any other climb there’s vegetation, grass and trees. Not there on the Ventoux. It’s more like the moon than a mountain.”

In my self-inflicted “sufferfest” during the grueling climb to the summit, I found myself drawing on many parallels between this physical test and the adversity that we have faced in our own business and industry over the past two and a half years. Similar to the robust business years prior to the dramatic market decline, the road leading to Mont Ventoux is filled with the smell of flowers, gentle rolling hills, and beautiful views of cherry trees and grape vineyards within this French wine country. However, with a quick left turn, the road veers straight up, the speed goes straight down, and the physical exertion needed to maintain any momentum is multiplied many times over. Starting to sound familiar?

As the climb gets steeper, the road ahead seems to disappear into the fog through an endless series of switchbacks and traverses. All you can do is focus on the next turn of the pedals and the few feet in front of you while struggling to keep from getting blown off the mountain. You keep telling yourself that if you keep moving forward, you will eventually make it to the top.

Each of you has faced a similar challenge in your business during this unprecedented market downturn. However, there are direct benefits derived in prevailing over severe adversity. In basic terms: it makes you stronger, wiser, and better. This principle can be found all the way from Kanye West’s #1 single, Stronger: “N-n-now that that don’t kill me, Can only make me



stronger” to the Bible’s Romans 5, Verses 3-4: “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.” How you choose to handle the adversity in your own life is what will define you.

Managing adversity provides greater focus to immediate problem solving. The sense of urgency formed in a crisis situation helps crystallize the vision of what is needed to find a solution. It also dissipates clutter that can cloud our judgment in making the best decision.

The commitment required to overcome adversity builds character which aids in upholding solid moral and ethical values in conducting our business. Challenges don’t create great leaders or advisors, but simply reveals them during these times of crisis. Unfortunately, the opposite is true and well documented through the numerous Wall Street scandals during this downturn. Your character is on full display through your dealings with all parties involved in a difficult or complex transaction.

Adversity also allows us to put our own problems and challenges in proper perspective and makes us more empathic for those who need our help. When we focus on the servicing the needs of our client, we shift the focus away from our own fears.

## Chicago Chapter Holds Young Professionals and Prospective Members Reception

*Submitted by Christopher Curtis, SIOR, Nugent Curtis Real Estate*

In November, the SIOR Chicago Chapter continued its involvement with the Young Professionals recruitment efforts across the Chicago area by hosting an informational networking reception.



*Chicago Young Professionals and prospective members at "The Roof"*

The Young Professionals event was held at the Wit Hotel in downtown Chicago. The event was attended by more than a combined total of 25 Young Professionals, Prospective and Chapter members. The Chapter presented the benefits of the SIOR designation and provided materials regarding the qualifications needed to become a member.



*Chicago Chapter Members and Guests Networking*

## Virginia Chapter Hosts Young Professionals Networking Event

*Submitted by Byron Holmes, SIOR, CCIM, Porter Realty Company*

The SIOR Virginia Chapter hosted a Young Professionals event at "The Crossings Bar & Lounge" located in The Westin Richmond. The event offered attendees opportunities to network with local Young Professionals from several different companies in Richmond area. At the conclusion of the event, Charles Louthan, SIOR, Senior Vice President, Grubb & Ellis/Harrison & Bates, and Evan Magrill, SIOR, Senior Vice President, Cushman & Wakefield | Thalhimer, spoke briefly on the benefits of SIOR membership. The event was attended by over 15 Young Professionals, Chapter and Prospective members.

This makes us better leaders, colleagues and advisors. More than ever, our clients have needed our services and guidance to stabilize their own balance sheets and weather the economic storm.

Ironically, challenging circumstances can align a team to create a more positive mind-set to achieve their goals. There are many examples of championship sporting teams who had suffered a loss of a teammate and used this hardship as a bond to unite the team. Robyn Benincasa, two time World Champion Adventure Racer and featured speaker at the 2010 Spring SIOR Conference put it best, "Winners are ruled by the hope of success rather than by the fear of failure."

Just as the forces of nature eventually shift to make the bike ride more tolerable, so do the market dynamics in which we operate. As we begin to emerge from this tumultuous time, you should be proud of the courage and commitment exhibited to advance your expertise and skill sets in an effort to better serve your clients in their greatest time of need. Peter Weatherhead, author of *The Power of Adversity* states "A blade remains tempered long after the fire that scorched it has faded away....Mind, body, and spirit forged in the furnace of adversity builds every day, just like physical strength through exercise."

The road ahead will be filled with familiar obstacles and new types of challenges, but the strength gained through the triumph of great adversity leads to gaining a significant advantage and propels those to abundant success. 