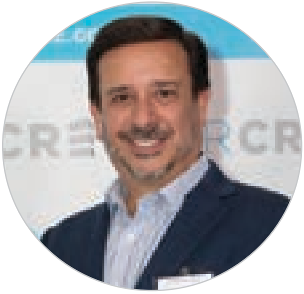
SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY

INSIGHT FROM THE EXPERTS

In this special section, leading experts from the Valley region share their insights on what small businesses need to succeed today — from smart financing and digital marketing to strategic growth and community engagement. Discover practical advice and proven strategies to help your emerging business thrive in a competitive marketplace.

Meet the Panelists



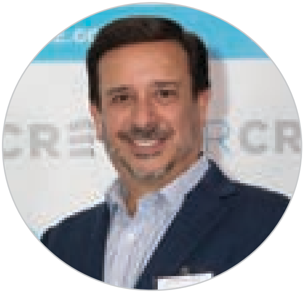
LEE KLEINMAN
Senior Vice President
Business Finance Capital CDC

MICHAEL HILLER
President
Hiller Enterprise Taxes & Investments

JOSEPH GUBIC
Partner
Citrin Cooperman

CHRIS McMORRAN
Principal
Keystone Advanced Solutions

Expert Perspectives on Small Business



LEE KLEINMAN
Senior Vice President
Business Finance Capital CDC

Lee Kleinman of BFC has shared his perspectives on what small businesses in the Valley and beyond need to know.

How should small businesses measure success beyond revenue growth?

KLEINMAN: One of the mandates of the SBA 504 program is job growth within the small business concern being financed so if a business is hiring and adding jobs, that is a measure of success from SBA's perspective. For example, within two years of debenture (SBA 504 2nd mortgage loan) funding, the SBA requires one job created for every $95,000 worth of SBA guaranteed debt. For manufacturers it is one job per $150,000 worth of SBA guaranteed debt. A job opportunity is defined as a full-time (or equivalent) permanent job and the jobs don't need to be at the project property being financed but 75% need to be in the community where the project is located. These are tracked by each respective CDC and reported back to SBA two years after debenture funding.

How can businesses position themselves to be attractive to banks, investors, or community lenders?

KLEINMAN: Up to date books and records! Far too often we're involved in transactions where a business now has an opportunity to acquire an asset or purchase a competitor business but are not up-to-date financially. There are typically delays in securing interim financial statements which could cause issues with timing requirements of an opportunity. In addition, filing tax returns ASAP vs. filing for extensions could also cause delays as many times that most recent tax return is required for the following two reasons: 1) Lenders feel more comfortable when they are lending against the most recent year-end filed numbers; and 2) It's the numbers within the most recent year-end that allow the transaction to qualify and those need to be memorialized on a filed tax return. Even if a business has had little to no historical financing needs, being deal-ready could go a long way towards future growth and success.

What practical tax strategies or planning tips can help small businesses save money or operate more efficiently?

KLEINMAN: Cost segregation is a powerful IRS-approved tax strategy that allows business owners and real estate investors to accelerate depreciation on the buildings they own. This acceleration reduces taxable income — which, in turn, significantly lowers income tax liability.
A Cost Segregation Study is a detailed engineering-based analysis of a commercial or income-producing property. The goal is to reclassify components of the building into shorter depreciation categories — such as 5-, 7-, or 15-year property — rather than the standard 27.5 or 39-year straight-line depreciation typically applied to real estate.
By identifying and segregating interior and exterior elements that qualify per the tax code, owners can accelerate depreciation and generate substantial tax savings, particularly in the early years of ownership. Even more compelling: under current tax law, qualifying assets identified in a cost segregation study may be eligible for 100% bonus depreciation, meaning you can write off the entire value of those assets in the first year they're placed in service.
To implement a cost segregation study properly and ensure your tax return meets the standards the IRS wants to see, it's important to work with a qualified specialist. Specifically, you should engage a Certified Cost Segregation Professional (CCSP) to ensure the study is done correctly, documented thoroughly, and audit-defensible. The study is then coordinated with your CPA for correct treatment on your return, maximizing both accuracy and benefit.

How can accounting and bookkeeping practices help small businesses make smarter financial decisions and reduce risk?

KLEINMAN: A big risk to a small business is internal embezzlement and external fraud. Banks, with the increase in technology backed treasury management tools and software, offer some of the best protection from this type of loss. Business owners should consult with their business banking relationship manager, or local bank branch if one not assigned, at least 1-2 times per year to ensure all

> **“ COST SEGREGATION IS AN EXCELLENT WAY FOR BUSINESS OWNERS TO ACCELERATE DEPRECIATION EXPENSE ON THE BUILDINGS THEY PURCHASE.**
>
> –LEE KLEINMAN

available services and products are being utilized. Common loss/fraud prevention services offered by banks include check positive pay, ACH debit filters, dual control systems and transaction monitoring. Businesses should also leverage online banking platforms for real-time monitoring, establish clear segregation of duties and access controls, use risk-based authentication, implement regular audits and reconciliations and conduct thorough background checks on employees.

If a small business could take one action today to strengthen its foundation, what should it be?

KLEINMAN: Ensure a solid and value-added team of professionals is assembled which includes a business banker, accountant, lawyer and insurance agent among any others that may be required based on the business model. This ensures smooth and successful business continuity and leverages a diverse set of skills for increased productivity and innovation, improve decision-making through collective perspectives, foster better employee engagement and retention, and ultimately achieve superior business outcomes like customer satisfaction and long-term growth. No single person possesses every necessary skill, making teamwork essential for completing complex tasks and adapting to challenges.

What is your advice on how best to assemble a team?

KLEINMAN: The best way to assemble a team is to:

• Ask your friends and colleagues who they use: as in any service-based business, referrals are still the best way to find a good fit.

• Do your homework. Check credentials online and explore networking sites like LinkedIn for potential leads.

• Ask other professionals for recommendations, since most are happy to pass along a few names.

• Check out lists published online. While you should take some accolades with a grain of salt, peer-recommended or vetted lists are a good place to start.

As a business development officer for BFC, Lee Kleinman is focused on generating new owner occupied commercial real estate transactions for small business owners. Prior to joining BFC, Kleinman worked 30+ years as a Wells Fargo team member, serving various roles including most recently as senior vice president, senior commercial lender. He has been involved in hundreds of transactions totaling over $1 billion in loan volume.

MICHAEL HILLER
President
Hiller Enterprise Taxes & Investments

Michael Hiller of Hiller Enterprises Taxes & Investments has shared his perspectives on what small businesses in the Valley and beyond need to know.

How can owners leverage partnerships with other local businesses to expand their reach?

HILLER: At Hiller Enterprise one of our resources is connecting you with our partnerships. We connect you with a team from Formations Bookkeeping, payroll, and outside virtual assistance from administrative to social media/website, and even investment opportunities in real estate. We also connect our clients to commercial space with our landlord network. When clients are in trouble, we leverage our outsourced network from banking and to outside lending sources. On top of that, we make connections with local chambers and with nonprofit opportunities such as with the Boys and Girls Club of West Valley. We dedicate our time to relationship building. It's important for us to show that we are a value over price firm. Which is why our clients see our firm as an investment. It's important for our clients to know they are not alone, and our growing network allows the client, quality expenses to write off, a potential referral network, troubleshooting connections, and growth.

What practical tax strategies or planning tips can help small businesses save money or operate more efficiently?

HILLER: Important is record keeping and keeping up with current reports and comparison reports. Being in the know on economic trends can help manage funds and keep stable accounts. These past five years have seen a lot of tax rule changes for each tax filing year. Invest your time and money with a seasoned accountant. We spend hours in seminars run by top legal professionals and researchers. There is a lot of misinformation out there. Like a California parking sign, it is important to perform due diligence and check off and ask the pertinent questions.

How can accounting and bookkeeping practices help small businesses make smarter financial decisions and reduce risk?

HILLER: With tax rules changing year after year, it's important to put in place foundations. Whether it's for personal or for business, the individual needs to know where they stand. For the personal, I always recommend Quicken as a great way to view the personal bank account and credit cards and investment accounts — and even for credit card scores for business. It's important to have bookkeeping, whether it's utilizing QuickBooks or other companies such as Xero. On the monthly, it's important to get accurate data that shows where the money can be leaking or overspending and how much the businesses or personal net worth is. By putting this foundation in place, a person will have the knowledge on the next moves in an unknown economy. Whether it's investing in CDs, higher savings accounts or planning for special occasions like weddings you can't plan if you're not foundation. The saving and efficiency become effective because we can see where the overspending is going, and we can correct that (such as overconsumption of subscriptions or delivery sources). We also want to leverage tax write offs and time, but without a proper foundation, we could not have effective tax planning. When individuals prefer to use Excel, that's a great tracking method, as long as they are consistently updating. That is the only way any strategy can be effective. We need to know on a regular basis if individuals or businesses don't have some sort of recordkeeping. Even if relationships are arguing over money sources, the awareness is the strategy.

How should small businesses approach succession planning or preparing for unexpected leadership changes?

HILLER: Succession planning is very difficult sometimes and very much depends on age and relationships. We get to know the client and by building a relationship with an accountant, we can discuss the goals and vision. I have seen businesses and family members find reasons to avoid this process. In the career field, we have had family friends' CPAs pass away over the years, with the spouses utilizing my family firm as the referral. What created the hardship especially on relatives was a failure of planning and record keeping. — especially not going digital. One of my daily mottos is to have a backup for a backup. That means be prepared for anything. It doesn't mean we can predict the future. We can do some minor tweaks to avoid the worst-case scenario. That is having a team. We cover your bases at Hiller Enterprise. For online bookkeeping we create two account holders: the bookkeeper and Michael. If anything happens, we have records and

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WITH TAX RULES CHANGING YEAR AFTER YEAR, IT'S IMPORTANT TO PUT IN PLACE FOUNDATIONS. WHETHER IT'S FOR PERSONAL OR FOR BUSINESS, THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS TO KNOW WHERE THEY STAND.

-MICHAEL HILLER

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access. No need to worry about not getting access. We also can direct clients to top lawyers and, with our partnerships, a notary service.

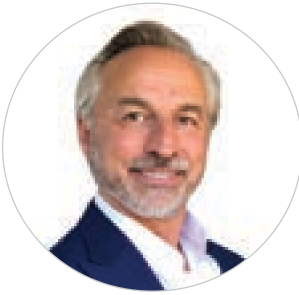
What role can networking and local business groups play in helping small businesses thrive?

HILLER: It's important to separate networking from building relationships. Going to events and handing out cards is just not enough. As a real estate broker, I look back at my commercial real estate agent days. In 2015, I was going to ten networking events a month to build my startup career and reputation. It was not the business card collecting that grew a network, it was the follow up and planting the seed. That can be done in various ways. The simplest way is to add people on social media like LinkedIn, following up by email to schedule a meet up or call, and entering a referral partnership contract. This way, an entrepreneur will not only grow a network and will source a referral network for client picking.

If a small business could take one action today to strengthen its foundation, what should it be?

HILLER: It's managing cash flow and the risk vs reward variables. It's important to understand that it's also about stage of the business and today's economy. If I am speaking to our daily startup entrepreneurs, they need to find a system and keep it consistent and organized. Many times, an overlooked or minor event can be the most time consuming. Spend the time setting up the administrative part of the business the right way for success and speak to legal and insurance professionals regarding covering unprotected areas such as cyber or E&O insurance and becoming a corporation. For the seasoned entrepreneur and business, it's about adaptability with change of market and data breaches. Times have changed. While adapting to new technologies like AI, remember to maintain safeguards. The accountant world adapted to scanned record keeping and emailed pdf encryptions. For years, accountants got stacks of paper from clients scattered in the office room. Today technology has allowed global access.

Michael Hiller, a Millennial entrepreneur from Woodland Hills, grew up in a family of CPAs and entrepreneurs. While working at his family's firm, Hiller & Hiller, CPA, he saw millennials lacked accounting guidance. Driven to help, he began empowering small business owners with clarity and dedicated financial support.



JOSEPH GUBIC
Partner
Citrin Cooperman

CITRINCOOPERMAN

Joseph Gubic of Citrin Cooperman shared his perspectives on what small businesses in the Valley and beyond need to know.

How can small businesses in the Valley adapt and stay competitive in an evolving local and regional marketplace?

GUBIC: To remain competitive, small businesses should prioritize agility, continuous learning, and customer engagement. Investing in digital marketing, streamlining operations, and adopting affordable tech solutions can boost efficiency. Building strong relationships with customers and suppliers, staying informed about regulatory changes, and participating in local business groups are essential. Regularly reviewing market trends and soliciting feedback ensures businesses can pivot quickly and maintain relevance.

What are some cost-effective strategies to scale without overextending cash flow?

GUBIC: Scaling smartly means focusing on incremental growth, outsourcing non-core functions, and leveraging technology to automate processes. Negotiate favorable terms with suppliers, utilize shared resources, and explore strategic partnerships. Monitor cash flow closely and avoid unnecessary expenses. Consider flexible staffing models and prioritize investments that yield quick returns. Seek out grants, low-interest loans, and community programs to support expansion without straining finances.

How should small businesses measure success beyond revenue growth?

GUBIC: Success should be measured using a balanced scorecard approach, including customer satisfaction, employee engagement, community impact, and operational efficiency. Track retention rates, brand reputation, and innovation milestones. Evaluate progress toward long-term goals and adaptability to market changes. Non-financial metrics, such as sustainability initiatives and social responsibility, provide a holistic view of business health.

How can owners leverage partnerships with other local businesses to expand their reach?

GUBIC: Collaborating with local businesses can expand reach, share resources, and create joint marketing opportunities. Co-host events, cross-promote products, and develop bundled offerings. Partnerships foster innovation, reduce costs, and strengthen community ties. Engage in local business associations and networking groups to identify potential collaborators. Transparent communication and aligned goals are crucial for successful partnerships.

How can businesses position themselves to be attractive to banks, investors, or community lenders?

GUBIC: Maintain accurate financial records, demonstrate consistent cash flow, and articulate a clear business plan. Highlight unique value propositions and market potential. Build credibility through positive customer reviews and community involvement. Networking with financial professionals and attending pitch events can increase visibility. Transparency and preparedness during due diligence processes are essential.

How can accounting and bookkeeping practices help small businesses make smarter financial decisions and reduce risk?

GUBIC: Accurate, timely bookkeeping enables informed decision-making and risk mitigation. Use cloud-based accounting tools for real-time insights and automated reconciliation. Regularly review financial statements to spot trends and anomalies. Segregate duties to prevent fraud and conduct periodic audits. Track key metrics like cash flow, receivables, and payables. Consult with a professional for strategic guidance and compliance. Good practices support loan applications, tax filings, and strategic planning.

How should small businesses approach succession planning or preparing for unexpected leadership changes?

GUBIC: Succession planning should be an ongoing process, not a one-time event. Identify key roles and potential successors and provide ongoing training and mentorship. Document critical processes and maintain updated organizational charts. Consider buy-sell agreements and life insurance to fund transitions. Communicate plans with stakeholders to ensure continuity. Regularly review and update succession strategies as the business evolves.

How can business owners use data or simple metrics to make smarter financial and operational decisions?

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COLLABORATING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES CAN EXPAND REACH, SHARE RESOURCES, AND CREATE JOINT MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES. PARTNERSHIPS FOSTER INNOVATION, REDUCE COSTS, AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY TIES.

–JOSEPH GUBIC

GUBIC: Track key performance indicators (KPIs) such as revenue per employee, customer acquisition cost, and inventory turnover. Use dashboards and accounting software for real-time visibility. Analyze trends to inform pricing, staffing, and marketing decisions. Set benchmarks and compare against industry standards. Regularly review financial reports and operational metrics to identify areas for improvement and guide strategic choices.

Joe Gubic is a partner in Citrin Cooperman's Audit and Attest Practice and is based out of the Woodland Hills office. Gubic is a skilled professional with over 25 years of experience in strategic financial management and business operations, specializing in assurance services. Gubic provides support to middle-market, privately-held, and private equity-backed companies in the real estate, entertainment, hospitality, manufacturing & distribution, construction, professional services, healthcare, retail, technology, and employee benefit plan sectors with local and international operations.

Prior to Citrin Cooperman, Gubic was an audit partner at a Texas-based accounting firm where he advanced the commercial audit sector and fostered relationships in the client accounting services group, onboarding new clients.

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TRACK KPIs SUCH AS REVENUE PER EMPLOYEE, CUSTOMER ACQUISITION COST, AND INVENTORY TURNOVER. ANALYZE TRENDS TO INFORM PRICING, STAFFING, AND MARKETING DECISIONS. SET BENCHMARKS AND COMPARE AGAINST INDUSTRY STANDARDS.

–JOSEPH GUBIC

Survey Reveals Key Opportunities and Challenges

LAST YEAR, the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) and ADP released the results of a survey of women business owners. Nearly 92% of women-owned businesses are microbusinesses, businesses with fewer than 25 employees. While the businesses may be small, they provide the lion›s share of the family income, with 63% of the business owners providing 50-100% of the household income. By giving these businesses the resources to grow, we will see an opportunity to increase wealth in our most underserved populations.

"Women business owners are the drivers of our nation's economy and the leaders in our communities," said Karen Bennetts, NAWBO National Board chair. "By supporting women business owners and providing them with the necessary resources, we are building the bridge to wealth creation, allowing them to grow and scale their businesses. We appreciate the support of great companies like ADP who recognize this vital section of the American economy."

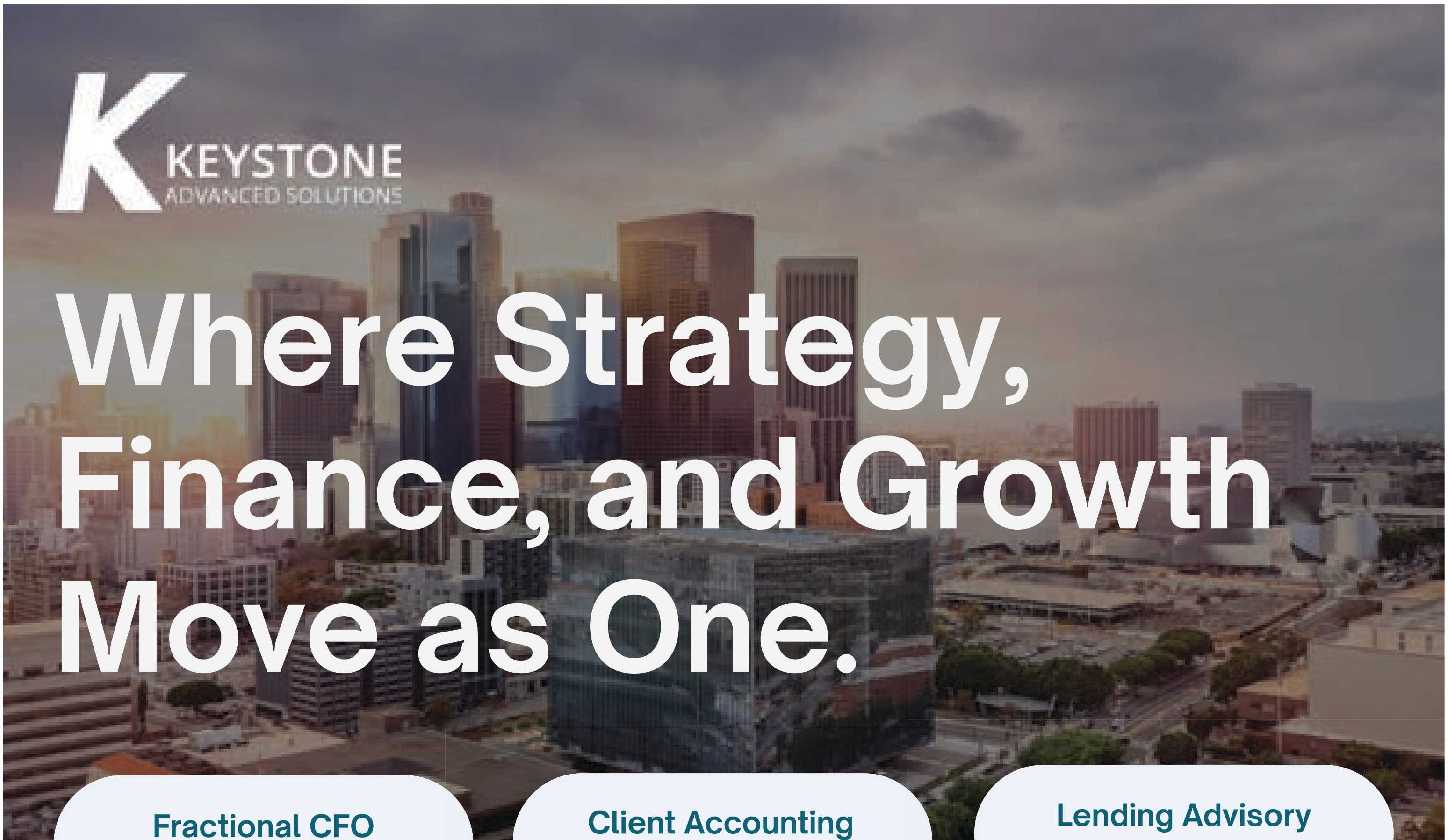
According to the Annual Business Survey, women-owned 1.24 million or 21.4% of employer firms in the US. Women-owned businesses account for $1.9 trillion in receipts, 10.9 million employees, and $432.1 billion in annual payroll.

One of the challenging pain points described in the survey results is hiring. While hiring has been challenging in many industries, survey results show that 41 percent of NAWBO members report hiring is more difficult than ever before. Many reported losing an applicant to a competitor. Forty-three percent had no staff, so losing out on an applicant could mean the difference between missing or making an order fulfillment deadline.

The good news is that there are strategies to help ease the stress of hiring. Smaller businesses may even have an advantage in making themselves more appealing to applicants, said Kiran Contractor, director of talent acquisition at ADP. "As a small organization, you can take a personalized approach." She encourages small business owners to do their best to determine what applicants value and incorporate that into the offer.

Founded in 1975, NAWBO is the unified voice of America's more than 12 million women-owned businesses representing the fastest-growing segment of the economy.

Learn more at NAWBO.org.



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CHRIS McMORRAN
Principal
Keystone Advanced Solutions

Christopher McMorran of Keystone Advanced Solutions shared his perspectives on what small businesses in the Valley and beyond need to know.

What are the biggest opportunities for small businesses in the San Fernando Valley to grow over the next 12–18 months?

McMORRAN: The next year presents both challenge and opportunity for small businesses. Economic uncertainty, shifting tariffs, and evolving technology are reshaping how companies operate and compete. The real opportunity lies in adaptability. Businesses that understand their financial position, manage cash flow intentionally, and invest in systems that improve visibility will be better prepared to capture growth when conditions stabilize. AI-driven tools and automation are also leveling the playing field, allowing smaller firms to compete with larger competitors through better insights and efficiency. Those who pair financial discipline with innovation will find this environment full of openings for expansion and long-term advantage.

What are some cost-effective strategies to scale without overextending cash flow?

McMORRAN: Sustainable growth begins with clarity. Not all revenue creates value, and not all expenses limit it. Once a business understands its true financial position, it can scale with purpose. Clear, reliable financial systems reveal how each decision affects liquidity, margins, and long-term value. With that insight, leaders can balance debt and equity more strategically, using capital to accelerate growth while maintaining the stability needed for consistent operations. When financial data becomes actionable, it transforms from a record of the past into a roadmap for smarter, more sustainable expansion.

How should small businesses measure success beyond revenue growth?

McMORRAN: Revenue growth is only one measure of success, and often not the most meaningful. A healthy business also measures the quality of its earnings, the strength of its relationships, and its ability to adapt to change. Success is reflected in consistent cash flow, operational efficiency, and a team that understands and executes the company's vision. In a volatile economy, sustainable growth depends as much on discipline as on opportunity. Many of our clients attribute their success to building a strong financial foundation and fostering a culture of resiliency and agile change management. Daily wins compound over time, creating lasting momentum. Defining success solely by revenue often leaves teams and leaders wanting more.

How can owners leverage partnerships with other local businesses to expand their reach?

McMORRAN: Partnerships work best when they are built on alignment, not convenience. Local collaboration allows businesses to share resources, expand visibility, and strengthen community ties, but the foundation must be strategic. The most successful partnerships start with clarity—understanding what each party brings to the table, where value is created, and how success will be measured. Strong communication is essential in any relationship, including those leveraged through partnerships. A challenging economy will inevitably present consolidation and partnership opportunities. When companies operate from a position of financial strength and transparency, they become more attractive partners. In regions like the San Fernando Valley, where industries overlap and networks run deep, collaboration is a competitive advantage that can drive growth and resilience.

What are the most underutilized sources of capital available to small businesses?

McMORRAN: Capital preparedness is one of the most underutilized catalysts for gaining access to funding. Preparedness changes the conversation. Lenders and investors engage differently when a company is ready to meet them on equal footing. Strong financial readiness allows businesses to leverage capital from traditional banks, CDFIs, investors, and non-bank lenders that might otherwise be out of reach. Many businesses focus on finding lenders instead of preparing their financials to attract them. When a company maintains accurate, transparent, and lender-ready financials, it shifts from seeking approval to presenting opportunity. Preparedness builds confidence with underwriters, accelerates approvals, and strengthens negotiating power. The result is access to better terms, stronger banking relationships, and the capital flexibility needed to scale with confidence. In today's market, readiness itself is a form of capital, and businesses that understand this principle consistently secure more of it.

How can businesses position themselves to be attractive to banks, investors, or community lenders?

McMORRAN: Many business owners unintentionally weaken their borrowing position by optimizing financials for tax efficiency rather than financial strength. When profitability is minimized on paper, lenders see limited debt-service capacity. Understanding key ratios such as debt-service coverage, leverage, and working capital is essential, particularly when pursuing traditional financing or SBA-backed programs like 7(a) or 504 loans. The ability to demonstrate these metrics through clear, consistent financial reporting is what builds confidence with underwriters. Proactive collaboration among operators, accounting teams, and tax professionals ensures that financials tell a cohesive story lenders can trust.

How can business owners use data or simple metrics to make smarter financial and operational decisions?

McMORRAN: Data-driven decisions begin with visibility. Many small businesses collect data but fail to translate it into insight. The most effective leaders focus on a few key metrics such as cash flow trends, gross margin, accounts receivable turnover, and debt-service coverage that reveal the health of the business in real time. Translating this data into insights that are actionable across the company's operational channels is invaluable. With the right systems in place, this data becomes a daily feedback loop for smarter choices. Technology and AI now allow even smaller companies to access forecasting and analysis tools that were once reserved for large enterprises. The advantage goes to those who use these insights not just to track performance but to anticipate opportunity and mitigate risk before it appears on the balance sheet.

If a small business could take one action today to strengthen its foundation, what should it be?

McMORRAN: The single most important step is achieving clarity. Every decision, from hiring to expansion to financing, depends on understanding the true financial position of the business. Clear, timely, and accurate data transforms uncertainty into direction. When business owners see where their cash is going, what drives profitability, and how each decision impacts liquidity, they gain control. In a high-interest-rate and high-volatility economy, decisions driven by intuition rather than data carry significantly greater risk. Clarity creates the space for better choices, and better choices lead to financial strength and operational flexibility.

Christopher McMorran is a principal at Keystone Advanced Solutions, a modern financial advisory firm serving small and middle-market businesses through outsourced accounting, fractional CFO, and M&A advisory services. He helps business leaders navigate their financials and align access to capital through traditional, alternative, and investor sources. McMorran also serves on the board of the Global AI Council and several nonprofits, reflecting his commitment to community engagement and financial empowerment.

Keystone Advanced Solutions is a modern financial advisory firm providing outsourced client accounting, fractional CFO, and advisory services to small and middle-market businesses.

Hiring for Promise Closes Skills Gaps

ORGANIZATIONS LOSE OUT on performance gains when they require employees to demonstrate proficiency in all skill requirements before moving them into critical roles, according to a survey by Gartner, Inc. In fact, employees hired based on promise are 1.9 times more likely to perform effectively than those hired for proficiency.

A Gartner survey revealed that 48% of the 190 surveyed HR leaders agreed the demand for new skills is evolving faster than existing talent structures and processes can support.

"Many organizations are transforming their capabilities so rapidly that they can't acquire all the skills they need — the talent either doesn't exist or is too expensive," said Meaghan Kelly, director in the Gartner HR Practice. "This puts more pressure on organizations to build skills internally, but unfortunately, most organizations are not building skills fast enough to fill critical roles."

One of the biggest challenges facing organizations today when building skills is the pressure put on building proficiency. The current approach of requiring employees to be proficient in all skills before transitioning into new roles is delaying performance and hindering growth.

To speed up time spent on skills development and facilitate internal mobility, HR leaders must shift from building proficiency to building on promise, which Gartner defines as "a willingness and ability to learn new skills from a minimum foundation." Yet, in a Gartner survey of more than 3,200 employees, only 28% reported that their organization places importance on building on promise.

MOBILIZING PROMISE

One of the biggest challenges in mobilizing organizations to hire on promise is actually identifying employees with promise. According to the October Gartner survey, 51% of managers agreed that they request recruiters to only focus on recruiting employees with all desired skills when recruiting internally.

"Waiting to find an employee with all of the exact skills listed for a role significantly shrinks the pool of potential candidates," said Annika Jessen, director in the Gartner HR practice. "Instead, managers should focus on defining simple, foundational role requirements to reach a wider group of candidates."

To encourage managers to adopt this approach, recruiters should illustrate what promise looks like for in-demand skills via quantitative and qualitative data, and how to transform promise into performance.

Per Gartner research, implementing a network support approach has nearly doubled the impact on skills preparedness versus the 1:1 support approach.

Learn more at gartner.com.