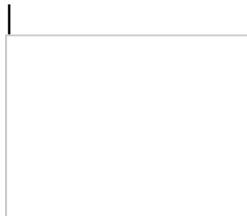


## Accounting Firm Aims to Help Execs Cope with Recession

Princeton, N.J. (Dec. 3, 2008)

By Michael Cohn



Accounting firm WithumSmith+Brown has introduced a new consulting service to help businesses deal with the troubled economy.

The firm's Project Forward team includes WS+B's top industry experts who will provide independent counsel to enable leaders of middle-market companies to navigate through difficult times. Tom Basilo, a CPA and CEO of WS+B's global assurance division, leads the team.

The Project Forward initiative will use a proprietary methodology called the Business Strength Analyzer that assesses a company's strengths as well as new opportunities for improving profitability, productivity and cash flow.

"A lot of the CFOs are baffled because a lot of the old techniques that have been successful for years and years just are not working," said Basilo. "My feeling was that they needed someone to be a sounding board to help them come to some solutions, maybe through some brainstorming discussions."

The firm will also help business leaders prepare themselves to seek out sources of credit and financing. "Only the best companies will be given credit," said Basilo. "They need to be a lot more prepared than before and have an understanding of banks."

WS+B has put together people from different disciplines within the firm, including business process improvement experts, for the new team. Basilo has been dealing with entrepreneurs since the 1970s, working at firms such as Coopers & Lybrand and Ernst & Young. He plans to target companies that had been successful until the recession hit and are now struggling to find a way out of the economic downturn.

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