

**SPEAKER & ENTERTAINER PROFILES**  
**2009 Biennial Meeting of the Governing Chapter**  
*(In order of presentation)*



**M. Paul Kravitz:** Manager, New Products & Business Development,  
 Nestle Purina, PetCare Company

Topic: *30 Years of New Pet Foods, or How Purina Came to Understand  
 the Importance Covering the Essence of Leadership.*

Paul Kravitz knows a thing or two about the world of pets. He should, after spending the past 32 years in various Marketing functions with Nestlé Purina PetCare in St. Louis, MO. For the most recent five years, Kravitz has helped Purina market new products for dogs and cats—new pet foods, new pet food packaging, and new pet care products. Beyond bringing several innovative new and improved pet products to market, Kravitz has developed and launched two new resources – a Trends Tracking System and a Corporate Intelligence Group – to provide a continuous flow of innovative product ideas to the company

Prior to his role in New Products, Kravitz conducted marketing research with then Ralston Purina Co. He consumer-tested many new and established pet foods, developed retail tracking services, segmented the pet food market, monitored on-going brand awareness and attitudes of key brands, provided satisfaction feedback from key retail customers, and measured the purchase behavior – on-line and retail – of major brands.

Before advancing the well-being of companion animals for Purina, Kravitz began his professional career in the worlds of soap and soup. By that, he served in the marketing research departments of two other well-know CPG firms: Campbell Soup Co and Procter & Gamble Co.

In addition to his day job, Kravitz currently teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in Consumer Behavior at Maryville U in St. Louis and is Board Chair of MERS/Missouri Goodwill Industries.

A true Big 10 grad, Kravitz has a MA degree in Consumer Behavior from Ohio State U and a BA in Marketing from Michigan State U. He is happily married to an accomplished (and wonderful) social worker, is the proud father of two terrific (and employed) children and is the owner of one crazy (but adorable) Toy Poodle. He resides in Chesterfield, MO.



**Chris Torbit,** Vice President, Mobile Solutions, SmartReply

Topic: *Marketing on the Move – The New Era of Direct Marketing*

Chris Torbit is responsible for strategic direction and leadership of Mobile Services within this emerging communications field. Prior to working at SmartReply, Chris began his career in 1993 at Consolidated Communications. During his 11 years with the company, he held a series of leadership roles and won numerous sales and marketing accolades with McLeodUSA. He later founded and sold Blast Companies, a multi-channel marketing company to SmartReply.

Chris holds a BA degree in financial management from the University of Missouri – Columbia, an MBA from Southern Illinois University and double masters in telecommunications from Webster University.



**Ms. Audrey Katcher:** Partner, Rubin Brown LLP,  
An Independent Member of Baker Tilly International  
Topic: *What They Never Told Me in College*

Audrey is a Partner in the Internal Audit Department of RubinBrown and leads the Information Technology Audit Services practice. She has over 18 years of public accounting experience in several industries, including higher education, manufacturing and financial services.

Audrey obtained her accounting degree and holds both Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) and Certified Public Accountant (CPA) qualifications. She started in public accounting as an external auditor on large public companies and then expanded her skills by obtaining in-depth information technology training. To help businesses protect their interests, Audrey has managed and led reviews of technology risk, system security, and regulatory compliance.

Over the years she has led efforts related to major business environment changes. These ranged from e-business to Sarbanes Oxley to Interactive Data for SEC filings (XBRL). Her work has taken her from Chile to Switzerland, from Mexico City to Paris. She has been interviewed on CNN and has presented tough topics to audit committees and executives. She is excited about sharing these experiences with you as pursue your career in business.

Audrey Katcher has invested a substantial portion of her career sharing her knowledge with others as Guest Lecturer, University of Missouri, St. Louis and as President, University of Missouri – St. Louis Accounting Advisory Board. She holds memberships in: Missouri Society of CPA's; American Institute of Certified Public Accountants; Institute of Internal Auditors; Information Systems Audit and Control Association; and the St. Louis Forum.



**Dean Benjamin Ola. Akande:** School of Business & Technology, Webster University  
Topic: *Lessons from Humpty Dumpty*

Benjamin Okande, professor of Economics, is the chief academic officer of the 13,000-student business school. Dean Akande leads a faculty of 1500 spanning multi-campuses in the U.S., Europe and Asia. Since joining Webster as dean in 2000, Akande has provided leadership that has elevated the business school to new heights. The dean is a successful fund raiser and has enhanced the public presence and reputation of the institution. The Nigerian born US citizen has lived in the US for 30 years and is a well traveled globe trotter.

Dean Akande holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Oklahoma and completed post-doctoral studies at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Dean Akande has been recognized as one of St. Louis' Most Influential Leaders from 2007 – 2009. His articles have been published in some of the nation's leading publications.

Dr. Akande serves on the boards of the Newberry Group, Xiolink, The Private Bank of St. Louis, and The Vandiver Group. In addition, Dr. Akande is a Trustee at Mary Institute Country Day School, where he chairs the Investment committee, and is a Board member of Beyond Housing, a leading provider of housing and support services for low income families and homeowners in Saint Louis.

Dean Akande is completing work on the transcript of an upcoming book entitled "The IPOD generation, it's their world we're just living in it." The book is an inside look at what he characterizes as the Internet savvy, Phone addicted, Opportunistic, Digital Conscience generation.



**Mr. Joe Helmsing**, CEO, Craftsmen Industries, Inc.

Topic: *One the Move: New Directions for Tomorrow's Challenges*

Joe Helmsing, the 62 year old President of Craftsmen Industries, has survived his share of business challenges and seen his small business grow into a nationally recognized company. Over the past 27 years, Joe and his company have left an indelible mark on each other. Their life stories are one and the same.

Joe began working with trailers at Southwest Truck Body in 1968 during his third year at St. Louis University. He earned his Masters from St. Louis University evening MBA program in 1972. He had many roles at Southwest Truck Body during the 10+ years that he worked with the St. Louis company, the SBA Contractor Of The Year, during that period.

In 1977 Joe and his brother Bob purchased Lawrence Canvas, a company with five employees that has steadily grown over the years. Three years later the brothers purchased Foremost Manufacturing. Sales and the number of employees both doubled within one year. A SBA 503 backed loan was crucial to accomplish the next purchase, the repair division of Southwest Truck Body Company. When deregulation in the trucking industry took place, the repair division like the rest of the industry fell on hard times. One of the first decisions was to change the name to Craftsmen Industries. Joe did not want the words repair or trailers to be in the name. He believed it could limit his future direction. Because Craftsmen grew so rapidly in the early months, the brothers sold Foremost to concentrate on the new business. In the late 80's the brothers separated the businesses, Joe took control of Craftsmen Industries.

From the very beginning, in 1982, Craftsmen customized vehicles. In the early 1990's companies were calling on Craftsmen Industries to build and customize their vehicles. Without fully realizing it, the company had become one of the early experts in the then unknown world of mobile marketing. Today mobile marketing is a nationally recognized growth segment of the advertising industry.



Jeff Cook is a founding member of the country music supergroup ALABAMA. He is a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame. In addition to his rich vocals, Jeff Cook, "Mr. Musician", served as vocals, Lead Guitar, and Fiddle for the group ALABAMA for many years. His career with ALABAMA resulted in 21 gold, platinum and multiplatinum albums, 42 number one singles, 2 Grammys, 23 American Music Awards, 3 CMA Entertainer of the Year Awards, ACM's Artist of the Decade, RIAA's Group of the Century, and more than 78 million records sold!!

After retiring from the road in 2004, ALABAMA left millions of their fans wanting more of the down-home country music they had been enjoying for almost 3 decades. Now, five years later, Jeff has cranked up his Allstar Goodtime Band, to bring their audiences a Smokin, House-Rockin' Goodime Show. The band consists of 8 members, all hand-picked by Jeff, to bring an amazing on-stage chemistry which creates what the band calls "Funtry" music. It is a mixture to target the casinos, fairs, and festival demographics. They love the diversified crowds!

Jeff and the band have released several CD's and they have something for most genres and includes the familiar "lick" of Jeff's well-known guitar and fiddle. Now with a rejuvenated enthusiasm for performing, Jeff is back on stage with the Allstar Goodtime Band, singing new music, some timeless favorites, and almost 3 decades of ALABAMA hits.

(End)