

# Control Your Fate in 2008!



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met us.**

**W**here does the time go? It seems like just yesterday I was beginning to focus in on 2007. Now, the year has an eight in it and is just around the corner. It is once again time to decipher fact from fiction as it pertains to eating regularly for the next 12 months.

I admit I enjoy reading "industry specialist" theories, crystal ball forecasts and prognostications. They remind me of Sunday afternoons when highly paid sportscasters wax eloquent with statistically supported opinions on who is going to win the tilt of the day. I often find myself laughing because sportscasters speak declaratively – as if they knew exactly what they are talking about – they don't. The victory will go to the team who wants it more, is skilled, and I might add, gets a few lucky bounces.

So it is with new-year industry projections. We all become privy to what's hot, what's not, who is going to make money and who is going to take gas. I guess we have learned to take the cue from People Magazine. If that is what the people want, that is what we'll give them.

If given enough ink (or airtime), I bet these people start believing that their expressed thoughts have a chance to enlighten our journeys. The interesting (spelled sad) news is that many, if not most readers and listeners actually gauge their futures on these advisories. If you say things are looking up, I feel better about my life. If you paint a bleak picture on any given day, I find justification for my motivation and aspirations turning south.

## Grabbing the Wheel

The year 2007 has come and gone. Either you took advantage of the many opportunities it presented or you fell asleep at the wheel and are currently bad-mouthing society for your current position in life. Either way, as the British song meisters Peter and Gordon once sang "But that was yesterday — and yesterday's gone."

The truth is that we all have all 12 months of 2008 in front of us and, from my point of view, it has taken on the look of a deer in headlights. It (2008) knows we are heading right toward the New

Year and that we are the ones in control of the eventual outcome. Hit or miss, we are in the driver's seat, behind the wheel of our personal 2008.

When it comes to industry trends, "quite frankly," as Rhett Butler pointed out, "I don't give a damn." On the other hand, what I do care about is my family, my health and my commitment to meld the three so I make the year 2008 the absolute best year of my life. How is that for taking an opposite tack from that of the trend jockeys?

Whether the Dow is going up or down, an airline is entering or exiting a particular market, or the real-estate business is booming or busting, we all have our work cut out for us.

My work and yours is going to look, sound and taste exactly the same in the coming year. Our job will be to find, sell and keep our clients glad for the day they met us. That is a mouthful and will provide us both with a full-time job. And if you are like me, you won't have the luxury to spend even a second whining, sniveling, complaining or lamenting about anything.

Now don't get me wrong, I am delighted to read that cruising is still on the rise. I like hearing that the pendulum is swinging back toward travel professionals and away from self-serving oneself on the internet. But your future did, does and will lie entirely in your hands. Your reality will be exactly what you make it to be in the next 12 months.

I will remind you of a quote I used in last year's column. The notorious General Patton once said, "If someone has to die for their country, let it be the other son of a bee." My interpretation: "If someone has to take gas in 2008, let it be your competitor."

Whether the coming year is forecast to be up, down, over or out, I want you to believe that you are in control of your destiny. Just to take everything you read "with a grain of salt," knowing that, in the end, your future is up to you.

With this in mind, I'll play it again (Sam). Get up, get out and make 2008 a year you can be proud of. And while you are at it, make it your business to make more people glad they know you.

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