

## Risk-takers in new fields target Miami's next big business

THE BEST OF  
**MIAMI** 2010  
BEST ENTREPRENEURS

By ZACHARY S. FAGENSON

Talk to most business leaders and they'll tell you that if Miami-Dade County's to continue on the path toward becoming the indisputable economic and cultural hub for the Americas, it needs to add more spokes onto a wheel that has long been supported by real estate development, tourism and agriculture.

But turning a large metropolitan area's economy toward future opportunities is no small undertaking.

In the mid-'90s the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce led the One Community One Goal effort that identified seven sectors — biomedical, film and entertainment, financial services, information technology, telecommunications, international commerce and the visitor industry — as industries that could create enough jobs to keep up with the county's population growth.

And there's been progress in those areas. Miami is now a leader in international trade and commerce, especially in the Western hemisphere.

Local universities and medical schools started a full-court press to make South Florida a hub for biotechnology.

The recession, however, made the need for new industries even more urgent.

But those industries rely on risk-takers with the knowledge and perseverance to go out on a limb in hopes of finding Miami's next big business.

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce President Barry Johnson pointed to **Brian Rechtman**, president of BlueTree Marketing, as one of those individuals.

BlueTree "is a firm, that specializes in online fundraising and marketing and [Brian] really is a go-getter," Mr. Johnson said. "They work with organizations of all sizes to help grow targeted traffic to websites nationwide."

And the company's looking to storm the world of "text to give" and other forms of online fundraising "because the cost of acquiring donors or the percentage of donation that actually goes into the charity's pocket is higher through online measures," Mr. Rechtman said.

So rather than throw black-tie galas that can require expensive venues, entertainment, food and other the bells and whistles, nonprofits can set up a website, promote it, and spend more time focused on accomplishing their mission than seating arrangements.

And while the continued growth of new industries will rely on an innovative generation of business leaders, the same can be said for the revival and growth of many communities throughout the county.

Former Miami Beach Mayor and sitting Vice Chair of the Downtown Development Neisen Kasdin said **Jose Goyanes**, owner and part-owner of several downtown restaurants, beauty supply stores and barbershops, has been one entrepreneur willing to stick out his neck and lead downtown's transformation.

"I think he's a pioneer in the revitalization of the East Flagler area," Mr. Kasdin said.



Photo by Maxine Usdan

Jose Goyanes is an owner of several downtown restaurants, beauty supply stores and barbershops.

One of Mr. Goyanes' newest ventures, the restaurant Tre Italian Bistro just off Biscayne Boulevard on Flagler Street, has become a hot spot for business lunches and is looking to stay open late to help turn downtown into a place people want to be after business hours.

But Mr. Goyanes, who insisted repeatedly that there were others more deserving of the nomination, said his biggest challenge over the past year has been the greater economy.

"Surviving through the rough economy of the last two and a half years, I think, is an accomplishment for any small business owner," he said, adding that he's "just making the things that we have better, and I think you can see it across the board in the restaurants and my own businesses."

Yet he was quick to point to fellow downtown restaurateur **Brian Basti**, a partner of Ecco Pizzateca & Ecco Lounge, for one of his recent business ventures.

"The guys that have done Ecco, Brian Basti and Aramis

Lorie, I would nominate them as a team. Not only have they done Ecco but they've opened up a business across from the old arena called Grand Central," Mr. Goyanes said. "These young guys have come in and the fact they went out and opened a venue in the location they did it takes planning."

Grand Central, a midsize event space at 697 N Miami Ave., opened its doors on a limited basis during Winter Music Conference and recently hosted a slate of world-famous disco jockeys and producers.

"We had been looking for this space for a live music venue for a long time," said Mr. Basti, who's a partner and a bartender in the mid-sized ivory venue.

We wanted "a space that we could change as many times as want," he added. "There [are] bars on wheels, the stage is on wheels and we have panels that can be hung from the I-beams" that can make the space as small as 1,000 square feet or as large as 10,000.

And while the venue isn't in Miami's safest neighborhood, Mr. Basti said Grand Central's team has been able to set up a patrolled parking lot on the old Miami Arena site and haven't had problems ensuring event-goers' safety.

"We were familiar with the area [and] city police have been doing a great job keeping the neighborhood safe," he added.

These kinds of entrepreneurs will remain critical to Miami's future economic success.

The Beacon Council, Miami-Dade County's official economic development arm, is in the process of reanimating One Community One Goal for the 21st century. And whatever industries are pinned as critical to Miami's future economy, they'll rely on bold professionals with "solid business plans and a lot of... fortitude," Mr. Goyanes said, to flourish.