

# CHRISTOPHER J. WEHKING

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## EXECUTIVE: BUSINESS & OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

*Direct management and development of programs, facilities, sales, global marketing and tradeshow.*

*Strategically managed the company and its products into the global market.*

*Accomplished global branding and delivered product-program growth by 20% annually.*

*Generated \$3+ million in revenue gains from new product and program development.*

*Managed \$2 million operating cost reductions while maintaining top-quality customer service.*

Highly accomplished, visionary executive providing innovation through strategic processes and tactical execution of domestic and international business operations. Market- and customer-focused leader delivering rock-solid achievements in organizational growth, profitability, and bottom-line improvement. Skills in managing the successful introduction and acceptance in European, North and South American, Middle Eastern, and Asian markets. Experienced general manager and adept negotiator with strong qualifications in all core business functions. Motivating team builder who maximizes productivity, performance, and peak results through consistent communications, clear objectives/expectations, and individual/team recognition. Professional in cultivating, bridging, and managing client relationships and business partnerships. Able to develop future value propositions, design profitable sales and marketing strategies, identify new revenue streams and expense reductions, and drive consistent growth in programs and revenues.

### CORE QUALIFICATIONS

- Strategic Management
  - Branding, Marketing, and PR
  - Training and Staff Development
  - P&L, Budgetary, and Fiscal Oversight
  - Customer Satisfaction / Loyalty
  - Sales Management and Growth
  - Business Turnaround / Expansion
  - Program Innovation and Launch
  - New Product and Services Development
  - Cost Reduction and Control
  - Business Operations / Facility Management
  - Client and Vendor Relationship Building
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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**AHMA (AMERICAN HARDWARE MFG. ASSN.)** – Schaumburg, IL

1986–2005

*Multimillion-dollar operation delivering products, services, and national and international programs to the hardware and home improvement industry. AHMA has 800+ corporate members and serves thousands of executives. Liaise with 22+-member Board and more than a dozen committees in moving organization forward through tactical execution of strategic plans.*

**Vice President, Operations, Sales & Marketing (2001-2005)**

**Director, Operations, Sales & Marketing (1997-2001)**

Functioned in CEO capacity, dealing with all operational and business development processes for the company. Delivered key contributions in all core areas: strategic business planning, traditional and electronic sales management, marketing and advertising, public and customer relations, new product/service development, and logistics. Oversaw domestic and international program operations, including contract negotiations and execution, database management, partnerships and alliances, and membership recruitment and retention. Developed and delivered strategic objectives through operational management, strong negotiations, organized planning and execution, management of policy, procedures and standards, and adherence of a strong client and customer communication-satisfaction initiative.

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Tapped to lead and develop the next generation of programs with responsibility for overseeing and managing sales, advertising, marketing, and sponsorships. Served as key member of technology implementation group that developed and executed new financial software program and new websites for the enterprise. Successful at managing sales and marketing teams, both internal and external, through traditional and electronic campaigns geared at domestic and international market growth. Spearheaded initiatives to improve brand awareness and company image, increase sales, and heighten customer communications and satisfaction. Responsible for budget accountability, market research, competitive analysis, database enhancement, and new market and customer expansion.

Directed all operations-related financial, P&L, budgetary, and fiscal accountability. Oversaw benefit, pension, and profit-sharing programs including multimillion-dollar investments and reserves. Built and maintained cohesive teams comprised of professional staff members and contracted sales and marketing teams (outsourced) and volunteer (board-committee) support groups. Directed policies and procedures impacting all of the organization's employees, and developed individuals for internal career advancement with more than 12 direct reports attaining leadership positions. Managed activities of external consultants, research companies, and vendors. Orchestrated research projects / focus groups / surveys to better define brand, image, and marketing opportunities. Spearheaded quantitative and qualitative customer research programs. Served on Executive Committee of Major American Trade Show Organizers.

### ***Performance Milestones:***

- Turned around \$250,000 in annual program losses to \$250,000+ in annual profits through improved programming, increased product value propositions, stronger sales and marketing efforts, and creative negotiations and cost-control initiatives.
- In an industry challenged by consolidation and declining revenues, restructured staff 30% and reduced expenditures by nearly \$2 million within 1/3 of projected timeline.
- Flawlessly executed organization's #1 revenue-generating product program, maintaining an annual revenue growth of nearly 15% for more than 10 years.
- Increased international sales by more than 500% and improved product value by strategically growing international buyer participation from 5% to 20% for an eight-year span.
- Diversified and increased customer offering and revenue resources achieving 20% sales increase and introduced/sold sponsorships to cover 15% of program costs.
- Strategically redesigned product and program value propositions to increase service, product, and program pricing by an average of 20%.
- Avoided significant investment losses and saved company potentially millions in investment dollars by shifting portfolio to guaranteed funds during volatile market.
- Terminated unproductive joint venture partnership six months ahead of schedule and negotiated positive financial settlement.
- Generated more than \$3 million in sales within six-month period, operationally delivering the organization's newest product, despite limited time, equipment, and resources.
- Directed the initiation and introduction of more than a dozen new cost-effective educational training programs provided through Internet webinars.
- Strengthened international business relations resulting in recognition and honors from highly respected Japanese Trade Association.
- Significantly increased staff productivity and outcomes by introducing team sales and service recognition and incentive programs.

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## **Assistant Director, Operations, Sales and Services (1992-1997)**

### **Manager, Operations and Services (1986-1992)**

Developed, sold, and operationally managed the organization's principal service and international programs, city-wide international tradeshows, international export programs, annual meetings, educational and training programs, and special staff and VIP programs and services. Served and presented for the MPI, CMP education committee.

#### ***Performance Milestones:***

- Developed and delivered new service program generating nearly \$1 million in revenues the first year and tripling revenues the following year.
- Directed all aspects of facility operations including contracts, space utilization, floor plan layout, and ancillary services.
- Successfully directed company events involving notable VIPs that included presidents, politicians, entertainers, and other high-profile international and national dignitaries.
- Expanded technology programs nearly 2,000%; attracted all industry segments and transitioned event from breakeven to highly profitable and valuable industry program.
- Profitably expanded global export-products offerings from one European program to nearly a dozen during a two-year term, achieving eight-fold revenue increase for flagship German program expanding service for 20 customers to 130 and executing programs in North and South America, Asia, Europe, and Middle East.
- Achieved favorable service upgrades and significant savings by negotiating contracts with contractors, service providers, and facilities.
- Reduced \$1 million in rental expenses for a five-year period through open bidding, aggressive negotiations, equipment purchase, and maximizing of foreign VAT refunds.

*Prior experience in numerous Sales Management and Customer Service Management positions with HILTON HOTEL CORPORATION in Chicago, IL (1983-1986) and with HAZELTINE NATIONAL COUNTRY CLUB in Chaska, MN (College and prior).*

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## **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

### **Bachelor of Science in Management (Business & Hospitality)**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – Menomonie, WI

### **Executive Education Programs**

THE GARVIN SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (THUNDERBIRD) – Phoenix, AZ

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS**

**American Society of Association Executives • Chicago Society of Association Executives • Young Executives Council • Southern/Eastern Hardware Association • Professional Convention Management Association • Meeting Professional International • International Association for Exhibition Management • Chicago Chapter of the International Association for Exhibition Management • Major American Trade Show Organizers • Member Harley-Davidson Owner Group**