

FORIUS COMMUNITIES: JUST-IN-TIME PROBLEM SOLVING

Are you a fan of "24"?

When it premiered in 2001, this Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning television series broke new ground in television history with its simple yet compelling concept: Each episode of the show plays out in real time — no flashbacks or jumping ahead — and covers exactly one hour in the life of Jack Bauer (played by Kiefer Sutherland), a federal agent trying to prevent terrorist attacks.

Three essential truths come to life in each episode:

1. In Jack's world, nothing ever remains the same longer than 60 minutes.
2. Jack understands he can't do his job alone; he's constantly connecting with other people.
3. No single person — Jack included — has all the answers. Everyone he encounters adds a nugget of essential information.

Credit: Not For The Faint Of Heart Sounds a lot like 24 hours in the world of business credit, doesn't it? Granted, most of us aren't running around foiling terrorists, although we do play an important part in the process. (If you're a member of your company's compliance team for the Patriot Act and OFAC [Office of Foreign Assets

Control], you know exactly what we mean.)

But isn't it amazing how Jack's experience parallels your own universe?

1. Your job is constantly changing.
2. You rely on others to help get your work done.
3. You assemble the knowledge you need from a variety of sources, often on the fly and under tremendous pressure, in order to make critical decisions.

This helps explain why the Forius Board of Directors recently voted to include access to the online Forius Communities to all member companies of the association.

As the Board said in its letter mailed last month, "...for the first time in our association's history, you can access just-in-time problem solving through our dynamic, robust business credit community. Retrieve real-time answers to real-world challenges. Tap into a broad and deep business intellect — and do it not just from your office, but from anywhere in the world."

Thanks, BCR!

The Forius Communities wouldn't have been possible without the help of a special group of people — the members of the Business Credit Resource (BCR) Group. These folks, who began meeting way back in 1992, were the first Forius members to move their discussions online.

Here's what some of them told us recently about the value of real-time, 24/7 collaboration.

"I had a problem I had never experienced before. I posted a question online ... and had a couple of answers within an hour. In fact, I had two phone calls within two hours helping me with my problem." **Duane Schwarz**, CCE, The Tile Shop, LLC.

"I do not participate very much, but I do like getting the information others send in by questions and answers. I like knowing the group is there for me if I have a question — sort of like a blanket at the end of the bed. You know it's there if it gets cold." **Brenda Williams**, Cummins NPower, LLC

"I am working to make this the first resource I turn on and the last one I shut off on my computer at the end of the day." **Reese Dyer**, CCE, Ecolab.

"I like to check into the site and see what is going on and stay connected. I learn of measurements like CEI (Collections Effectiveness Index) that help analyze my accounts receivable performance in a very seasonal business. I have added posts on the site to see if anyone has experience with new things ..." **Roger Hagerman**, CBA, Anchor Block Company.

"My boss is forever saying to me, 'Go check with your contacts and see what they think/do.' It's been great!" **Robin Kirnyczuk**, CBA, Berger Transfer.

Of course, not everyone has had the same experience. One member wrote: "I haven't used the online community very much yet. I like receiving the emails of questions and answers sent in by members. But I feel too intimidated to ask questions myself."

Don't be intimidated, says Robin Kirnyczuk, who currently serves as moderator for the online BCR forum. She posted this advice in the Member Center Forum. "There are no dumb questions, (just look at some of mine), and no right or wrong way to pose a question. We will ask for clarification if we don't understand your question ... we are here to help each other."

What about you? Have you used the Forius Communities or other online collaboration tools to help you do your job? Send an email to focus@forius.com, and tell us about your experience.

TAKE THE FOCUS POLL

Now that we're 2 months into the new year, what kind of performance do you expect your company to deliver in 2007?

Go to www.forius.com/focus to submit your answer. Results in the next issue...



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FORIUS FOCUS POLL

Results from Poll #3

A GOOD YEAR!

Focus readers report that 2006 was a good year for deductions. Half of those who responded to this poll said their company's deductions stayed the same from 2005 ... and half said their deductions decreased.

THE BUZZ

What are credit professionals talking about? "The Buzz" is a regular feature highlighting noteworthy and stimulating discussions posted in the Forius online communities. The following excerpts are from a recent conversation within the Member Center online community forum.

"What type of information is required when refunding a customer for a duplicate payment or credit memo? Is providing no information acceptable? What do your companies do?"

-Reese Dyer, CCE
Ecolab Inc.

"I regularly review my A/R for credit balances and send a letter with either a copy of the credit memo or statement.

"The customer then knows what the credit on account is for and is either expecting a refund check so no issues arise, or they buy more from us to use up the credit!"

-Roger Hagerman, CBA
Anchor Block

"If it were a duplicate payment, I would tell them which checks created the duplicate payment. You probably don't have to let them know anything, but it always saved me extra phone calls."

-Scott Woitas
Anchor Block

"If 90 days go by and they still have not used the duplicate payment, we send out a letter stating that, if we do not hear from them within 30 days, the credit will be turned over to the State of Minnesota per Minnesota escheatment laws."

-Barbara Condit, CCE
SPS Companies

If you'd like to join an online community, send an email to foriuscommunities@forius.com, or contact Cindy Vekas, CCE, Director of Knowledge Networks, at (612) 341-9623.

NACM FEBRUARY 2007 CREDIT MANGER'S INDEX

Columbia, Maryland - The seasonally adjusted Credit Manager's Index (CMI) crept 0.6% lower in February. It was the sixth decline in seven months, and five of the Index's 10 components fell. Much of the fall was driven by sharp decreases in the new credit applications component of all three indexes. "Indeed, without the slide in new credit applications, the combined index would have risen 0.3%," said Dan North, Chief Economist with credit insurer Euler Hermes ACI. He noted that the combined sectors' results reflect conditions found throughout the economy: continued economic momentum accompanied by stubborn signs of deterioration.

On a year-over-year basis, the overall CMI fell 0.7%. North said that while all of the component indices remain above the 50 level, indicating expansion, "the survey continues to suggest that ingrained weakness caused by the decimated housing market and tightening monetary policy continues to chip away at the economy's considerable momentum."

Link to a complete view of the Credit Manager's Index at www.forius.com.

FORIUS NAMES AND FACES



Karau

Bob Karau, Lindquist & Vennum PLLP, spoke at six ethics classes at St. Paul North High School about personal/business ethics and his experiences with Sarbanes-Oxley consulting. He has now been invited back to speak to the May graduating classes on "Re-imagining Ethics in our World." (Side note: Bob was also the first-place winner in the Minneapolis IDS Building poetry contest)

Gale Heikes was promoted in October 2006 from Credit Specialist to Export Credit Analyst at the Mosaic Company.



Heikes

In January 2007, **Roger Peterson**, CCE became the new Credit Manager for Faribault Foods.



Peterson

Submit your business or individual news for the Focus Names and Faces section via e-mail to focus@forius.com. We welcome accompanying photos.

EXPERIAN® IN SCOPE

2006 was a busy year for Experian's Business Services division of credit reporting and information, culminating into two major newsworthy applications for the company: BizGoSM, a mobile business credit application; and BizSourceSM, a new commercial credit database.

In a recent press release, Experian announced the launch of BizGo, the only application available in the United States that allows users to verify a company's current information and check its overall credit standing from a web-enabled cell phone, PDA or other hand-held device.

Experian's BizGo is available now. Reports are \$2.95 each, and clients can view the last 15 reports pulled for up to seven days from the purchase date.

And since BizGo is powered by Experian's commercial credit database, Experian's other announcement of a new commercial credit database, BizSource, and its accompanying new search technology, TrueSearchSM, expected April 2007, is good news for business credit managers and analysts.

Bizsource is a unique single database for in-depth intelligence on 19 million U.S. businesses, spanning every industry and every state. Combined with TrueSearch, Experian's search and match technology, BizSource users will see:

- A more comprehensive credit history in one combined record
- A constant Business Identification Number to track a business over time
- Increased matches on inquiries
- Improved file depth and accuracy
- Match quality that continually improves over time
- The ability to blend commercial and consumer data for small businesses

WELCOME!

Forius welcomes its newest clients

Brenda Roth
Capitol Beverage Sales, L.P.

Mike Hopkins
Paramount Apparel International

April Bauer
Spectrum Brands/Rayovac

BUSINESS CREDIT NEWS

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

OECD Upgrades Russia

Russia's credit quality has been raised one level by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, indicating Russia is perceived as a less risky country in which to invest.

New Zealand's Tighter Times

More than 40 percent of small New Zealand companies have a moderate or high risk credit rating, raising concerns for the local economy, says Dun & Bradstreet (D&B).

China's Continuing Expansion

According to the *Kiplinger Report*, the new U.S. trade case against China will take years to resolve, given the gamut of offenses alleged ... Meanwhile, China's economy will keep up a torrid pace. For 2007, Kiplinger predicts a 10% gain in gross domestic product, just below 2006's 10.7%. China will soon have the third-largest economy, after the U.S. and Japan.

Links to the complete articles can be viewed online at www.forius.com/focus



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Plan Ahead

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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For more information, go to www.forius.com or send an email to info@forius.com

Industry Groups

	Mar	Apr
Building Materials Suppliers	14	11
Construction & Equipment Suppliers	28	25
Floorcovering	27	-
Plumbing, Heating, A/C & Refrigeration	20	17
Twin City Media	15	19
Truck Service & Equipment	8	12
Wholesale Lumber	21	18
International Aviation	13-16	-
National Hearing Manufacturers	21-23	-
International Fitness		11-13

Interested in a Forius industry group? Contact us at (612) 341-9600 or send an email to info@forius.com.

Business Credit Resource Group

Meeting Friday, April 13th

For more information on the Business Credit Resource Group, send an email to foriuscommunities@forius.com, or contact Cindy Vekas, CCE, Director of Knowledge Networks, at (612) 341-9623.

Development Opportunities

	Mar	Apr
CBA, CBF, CCE Exam	5	-
CFDD Meeting - Regional Economic Conditions and Outlook Call Bonnie Fierstine (952) 887-1832 for reservations	13	-
Forius* CAP: Financial Statement Analysis I 10 weeks; Meets every Monday	19	-
Forius* ACAP: Financial Statements II 10 weeks; Meets every Tuesday	20	-
Forius* Big Thinkers Breakfast Impact & Influence: Use it or Lose it	22	-
Laws & Regulations Online Class 5 weeks; register at www.foriuscommunities.com	26	-
CFDD Panel Discussion - Public Speaking Call Bonnie Fierstine (952) 887-1832 for reservations	-	10
Forius* Barry Elms: The Art of Getting Paid	-	24

*Register for all Forius development events at www.forius.com.

Forius Offices will be closed April 6, 2007



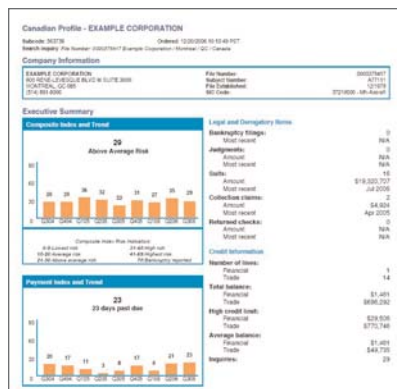
CANADIAN PROFILE REPORT

Experian's Canadian Profile report has an enhanced look!
The report has refined the way the report displays information on Canadian businesses.

The improvements will speed up your credit review process, enabling you to quickly find the information you need via a much more reader-friendly format - ultimately helping you make more informed financial decisions on Canadian companies.

To view a sample of the newly enhanced Experian® Canadian Profile report, visit www.forius.com/canada.

To learn more about the enhanced Canadian Profile report, contact your Forius District Manager.



Phone: (612) 341-9600

Email: info@forius.com



EVENT CALENDAR

FORIUS BIG THINKERS BREAKFAST

“Impact & Influence: Use it or Lose it.” Learn how to recognize your own personal power and be able to use it effectively in the workplace.

March 22, 2007
8 - 10 a.m. - Sheraton West, Minnetonka, MN
www.forius.com/BigThinkers

BARRY ELMS THE ART OF GETTING PAID

Learn the collection methods and negotiation skills to get paid from America’s business coach, Barry Elms.

April 24, 2007
9 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Ramada Inn, Bloomington, MN
www.forius.com/BarryElms

FORIUS BASEBALL OUTING

Minnesota Twins versus the Boston Red Sox! Get lower level seats to this premier game and have some fun with Forius association colleagues.

May 4, 2007
Call or send and email to Cindy Vekas, CCE at
(612) 341-9623 or cvekas@forius.com for ticket reservations

NACM CREDIT CONGRESS

Don’t miss the premier event for business credit professionals.

June 10-13, 2007
Bally’s Las Vegas
www.forius.com

FORIUS GOLF TOURNAMENT

Gather your clubs and head out for a day of contests, food, and prizes.

August 20, 2007
Stoneridge Golf Club, Stillwater, MN
www.stoneridgegc.com
