

What's New at SobelCo

We started off this month with a great announcement: **Weber, Shapiro & Company, LLP** is merging with **SobelCo**, effective January 1, 2019.



The history of this exciting merger between WS & Co and SobelCo actually has its genesis in a series of mergers that began more than 35 years ago when, in 1983, **Scott Shapiro** joined Harvey Kaufman to establish Kaufman & Shapiro CPAs. Close to a decade later, in 1994, **Mark Weber** merged his practice with theirs to co-found Kaufman, Shapiro & Weber, CPAs. When Kaufman retired one year later, the firm was rebranded as Weber, Shapiro & Company LLP and in late 2015 the firm moved to its current location in Woodcliff Lake. In 2019 the firm will proudly become SobelCo. as a result of this current merger. Throughout the mergers and name changes, Weber, Shapiro & Company LLP has always upheld its original commitment to serving the middle market business community with a distinguished client-centric philosophy.

Both Mark Weber and Scott Shapiro are PwC alumni and, as such, they have been able to combine their 'Big Four' experience and technical skills with a distinctively personal, hands-on approach to delivering outstanding service customized for small-to-mid-sized businesses and individuals. Mark Weber, who will continue in his role as the Managing Partner of the Woodcliff Lake office, summed it up well, saying, "Whether running a business or making individual financial choices, our clients have confidence that their taxes, their business, and their financial future are in experienced hands."

The merger, set to take place on January 1, 2019, expands the geographic footprint of the firm and complements their influence across the tri-state area as Weber Shapiro will remain in their Woodcliff Lake location while SobelCo enjoys its newly redesigned and remodeled office in Livingston. Along with their strong and nurturing internal cultures, over the years both firms have also developed a strong external presence in some of the area's key niche markets. These include well-regarded reputations for serving clients in Professional Service Firms, Manufacturing/Distribution, Retail/Wholesale, Real Estate, Nonprofit and Social Services, and Employee Benefit Plans. In addition, both have deep familiarity with Franchises, Media and Marketing Companies, and serving as Outsource CFOs, providing back office support and concierge services along with other similar core services. Further, WS brings a focus on Technology and Telecommunications as well as experience helping individuals with multi-country income tax compliance through their expatriate expertise.

In addition, WS has a distinguished international tax practice including an expatriate niche practice with extensive experience in preparing tax returns for U.S. citizens living abroad and foreign citizens living in the U.S. They have worked with clients residing in a variety of countries, including France, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom and are able to assist them with all their required U.S. filings and disclosures.

And lastly, SobelCo's recognition for its forensic accounting, fraud, valuations and litigation support will provide added benefits for WS.

As a further result of the merger, Sobel & Co will serve as a member firm in both Allinial Global, where SobelCo has long been deeply involved in various leadership roles and the Alliott Group, where WS has been an active participant for many years. The firm's clients will enjoy the best of both worlds as the firm maintains its membership in two international organizations, each providing diverse advantages.

The merger of these two firms under the SobelCo name will reinforce the mission and vision of both – with important benefits for the firm and the business community.



But there is more to report!

This month we are proud to announce that **Colleen Logan** received the Commercial Real Estate Women's (CREW) President Award which was presented to her by Jennifer Mazawey, Genova Burns. This is the second year in a row that Colleen has been recognized with this prestigious award. This honor is well deserved as she has consistently gone above and beyond the role of a board member, driving the chapter's marketing and branding initiatives. In addition, Colleen was also recognized by the SobelCo partners for her commitment to our firm's branding and marketing communications with the Encourage Award. Colleen, along with three honorees, were nominated and selected by the partners specifically for their exceptional contributions during the year. **Val Catanzano** received the True Professional - Administrative Award; **Megan Kelly** received the True Professional – Professional Staff; and **Justin Lompadio** was acknowledged as the True Professional – Sobel Tinari Economic Group.

There have been a wide variety of year-end educational programs offered by SobelCo. To start with, **Alan Sobel** and Gianfranco Pietrafesa, attorney at Archer Law, were the speakers for the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ) Family Business Program, leading a discussion on the "Impact of the New Tax Act on Your Family Business."

Then Grace Byrd, Sills Cummis, spoke to the attendees at the quarterly SobelCo Financial Executives Roundtable, tackling the challenges of new PTO laws and more.

And rounding out the calendar for December, Bridget Hartnett and Sally Glick led a 'roadshow' for Nonprofit CEOs in conjunction with the Somerset County Business Partnership (SCBP). The traditional Nonprofit CEO program will also be held in north central Livingston later in the month.

Along with all the news and flurry of events we have had time for fun and celebration as well.

On December 6 everyone in the firm enjoyed lunch together and then participated in a Town Hall meeting. Managing partner, Alan Sobel, addressed the state of firm while acknowledging many long time work anniversaries and celebrating our True Professional honorees. This important discussion was followed by the SobelCo annual holiday party where more than 200 people – the largest crowd in firm history, came together for a terrific night of great food, great conversations and some really great prizes!. But the fun did not stop there! **Frank Merenda** and the Sobel Valuations Practice hosted a holiday lunch in the Philadelphia area where they are headquartered, bringing together guests from the Livingston office to join in the festivities.

Along with enjoying all the holiday festivities together, Sobel Tinari Economics Group (STEG) had some initiatives unique to their practice including recently exhibiting at the New Jersey Association of Justice Meadowlands 2018 Seminar.

There is much more to come as we look to the new year!