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Think outside the Springs

Nancy Kelly recently returned from Japan, where she sold the Professional Dynametrics Program to ASK Global Communications in Tokyo.

ASK Global provides training and personal growth programs and has a \$2.8 million sales budget this year.

Kelly was referred to ASK Global by a friend, and spent 12 months working through an interpreter and negotiating before traveling to Tokyo to close the deal.

So why am I telling you this and not off on some rant and rave opinion piece? I think our exporting businesses here in the Springs are flying under our general business radar.

According to George Boutin, the executive director of the Colorado Spring Office of International Affairs, there are several hundred exporters, ranging in size from the Atmels and Aeroflexes to one-person shops such as Kelley's.

Donna Vessey of Vessey Entertainment just managed an event for Tyco in Juarez, Mexico, for 300 people and said "geography does not affect the event planning business." Vessey said her company has been receiving Web site hits from the United Kingdom and Dubai, and is planning to expand outside the Springs.

I don't need to discuss the global marketplace, because you all know that is where the world is going. I was sitting on the floor in the Baltimore airport last week blogging on the Golf Blog at CSBJ.com, so you really can work from anywhere these days.

So, how do we as a region capitalize on the changing business climate?

Some manufacturers are concerned about the movement of manufacturing jobs overseas. Well, let's think about how we adjust. Are we training our work force to be the very best in the world? I would say no. We are running out of engineers and scientists causing U.S. businesses to seek talent from other countries.

"You have to go outside the Springs if the market is soft," Kelly said. Well I would say



**LON
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From left to right, Brent Hubby, CEO of Professional Dynametrics Program; Yoke Kaga, COO of ASK Global Communications; Yuichi Matsuda, CEO of ASK Global Communications; and Nancy Kelly, Professional Dynametrics Program license expansion manager

Japan is definitely outside the Springs market.

U.S. businesses have to rethink how they are doing businesses in this day and age. I am pleased to say business journals are achieving steady growth pretty much across the country, however, we have to look at our business model and think "what can I break today that isn't broken to be innovative."

Who would have thought 15 years ago that a company named Google would be public and trading at \$466.59 a share?

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. That is some innovation.

Banging the economic development drum

We as a community need to take some risks and get more innovative. We need to get a tax passed (yes, I said the "T" word again) for economic development.

This isn't actually innovative, generally speaking across the country, but it is for our neck of the woods. If we want to play on the economic development field with the big boys, we better find some money for incentives.

A half-cent sales tax would bring our Economic Development Corp. somewhere around \$30 million to \$35 million annually. The money would allow them to really pick up the pace.

The EDC invested \$50,000 in a business-to-business marketing campaign using business journals in Southern California and now has prospects from the Golden State calling.

Just think what kind of activity could happen if it invested \$200,000. The return on investment is huge.

Say one company, with 150 jobs, many paying more than \$100,000, decides to move to the Springs. With multipliers, the impact on our area would be immense. Car dealers, commercial and residential real estate brokers all would benefit from the influx of jobs.

I wonder how much they support our local EDC?

And you thought I wasn't going to start ranting and raving. I guess I couldn't hold back.

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