

# Ambitious, expanding Grassi snags four rival partners

Lake Success firm to grow its consulting, real estate practices

BY LAURA THEIS

If perfection is a road and not a destination, Grassi & Co. is enjoying the ride.

Managing Partner Lou Grassi has committed to doubling his Lake Success-based company's revenue and employee base over the next five years, focusing his resources on expanding Grassi & Co.'s consulting, real estate, marketing and training efforts.

To jumpstart the mission, Grassi has hired four new partners – Brian Aryai, Barry Schosid, Jim Logan and Vince Paolucci – over the last month, all from competing firms.

"It's not too often that, in one month, four partners leave competitors and come to a firm," Grassi noted. "It's very exciting."

Aryai, the former director of corporate governance and anti-fraud practice at BDO Seidman, will head Grassi's consulting practice.

"He's a James Bond kind of guy," said Adam Wolf, Grassi & Co.'s director of marketing and business development, referring to Aryai's work as a senior special agent for the U.S. Treasury

Department before entering the corporate world.

His anti-fraud experience puts Aryai right at home with Grassi & Co.'s consulting efforts, which are growing out of the firm's forensic accounting divisions, Grassi said.

Paolucci is the second tax partner from Marcum & Kliegman to join Grassi and Co. in the last 18 months. He will join Schosid and Logan, both late of RSM McGladrey, in stepping-up Grassi & Co.'s presence in the real estate market.

Paolucci also does accounting for multinational companies – another bonus for his new company, which has one of the highest employee retention rates in the industry.

"We make people feel that they're part of an organization, and that's what they really want," Grassi said, citing his twice-monthly "Seinfeld breakfasts" – breakfast meetings about nothing in particular, designed to foster a feeling of community.

The company also focuses constantly on training; 2,000 training hours have already been recorded this year. "The entrepreneurial nature of the

firm allows people to grow and keeps them happy," Wolf said.

Grassi & Co. also grows by remaining on the technological cutting edge. The firm was one of the first on Long Island to go entirely paperless, a standard it

has maintained for eight years, Grassi said.

To maintain that sort of technological advantage, Grassi & Co. is now looking to upgrade its online communications, including a revamping its Web site, a project slated to launch in about a month.

"We want to give [the site] an updated feel and make it easier to navigate, because it is the first place people go" for information on the firm, Wolf said.

"The Web site was not at the right level," Grassi added. "We want to be perfect in everything we do."



Lou Grassi.