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MIDSIZE BUSINESS

Hertzbach & Co. P.A.

Type of company: Public accounting and business consulting

Local executive/CEO: Joel B. Chazen, Donald N. Hoffman and Jeffrey Kleeman form the firm's management committee.

Location: 800 Red Brook Boulevard, Owings Mills

Number of employees: 108 employees, including 45 CPAs

Salary range: Declined to disclose.

Are you hiring: The firm has an opening for a CPA supervisor.

Must have in the recession: Innovative thinking and the best efforts of all employees.

Hertzbach & Co. ups the fun factor in down times

GARY HABER | STAFF
ghaber@bizjournals.com

Hertzbach & Co. P.A. may have been founded in 1948, but its thinking is anything but dated.

Leaders at the Owings Mills public accounting and business consulting firm give their employees summer Friday afternoons off, take them on a trip at the end of tax season — this year 60 employees spent four days in the Bahamas — and assign a mentor to new employees.

"It's a nurturing environment," said Jeffrey M. Kleeman, one of the three members of Hertzbach's management committee. "We really try to give everybody diverse work and interesting work. We want our people to be well-rounded accountants and to think outside the box."

Management at the 108-person firm hasn't had to make any major changes to cope with the recession, Kleeman said. They have neither laid off employees nor trimmed benefits.

"We're just working smarter," he said.

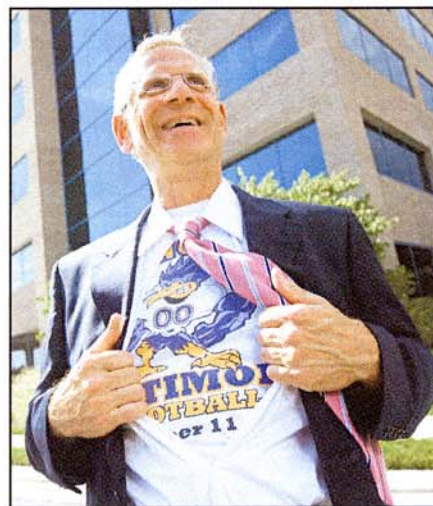
And they're trying to keep the fun factor going. For the office sports enthusiasts, the company fields a co-ed team which plays in a Wednesday night softball league in Towson, building camaraderie.

Hertzbach also has a well-established, paid internship program for accounting students from local schools including Loyola College, Towson University, Stevenson University, the University of Maryland and the University of Baltimore.

At any one time, the firm will have between eight and 12 interns, who receive hands-on training on a wide range of assignments rather than sticking them on a single assignment. Typically, the firm will extend full-time offers to between two-thirds to three-quarters of each intern class, Kleeman said.

Victoria Doby, chairwoman of the accounting, economics and finance department at Stevenson University's David S. Brown School of Business and Leadership, says her program currently has 11 graduates and four interns working at Hertzbach.

"They just love it there," Doby said. "They keep telling me it's a great place to work. They're very comfortable there."



Jeffrey Kleeman breaks out of his suit into casual clothing to enjoy the firm's summer Fridays.

An internship at Hertzbach has meant positive changes for her students, she said.

"You can see a certain level of maturity after they've worked there," Doby said. "They're more professional in their mannerisms."

Doby describes the school's relationship with Hertzbach as "productive and positive."

When Stevenson's accounting program moved to the school's Owings Mills campus from its Stevenson campus last August, Hertzbach threw an ice cream social to welcome the students, she said.

Hertzbach also has many long-time employees, including Kleeman, who joined in 1988. At least 15 of the firm's employees have been at the firm longer than he, Kleeman says.

"Many of our employees spend their entire careers here," he said. "If you work hard and do a good job, there's a place for you."

To encourage current employees to refer qualified candidates, the firm pays an employee-referral bonus of between \$500 and \$6,000, depending on position.

For employees who sit for the CPA exam, the firm pays up to \$3,500 for review classes and gives employees paid time-off to study. Those who pass the exam receive a \$2,500 bonus.