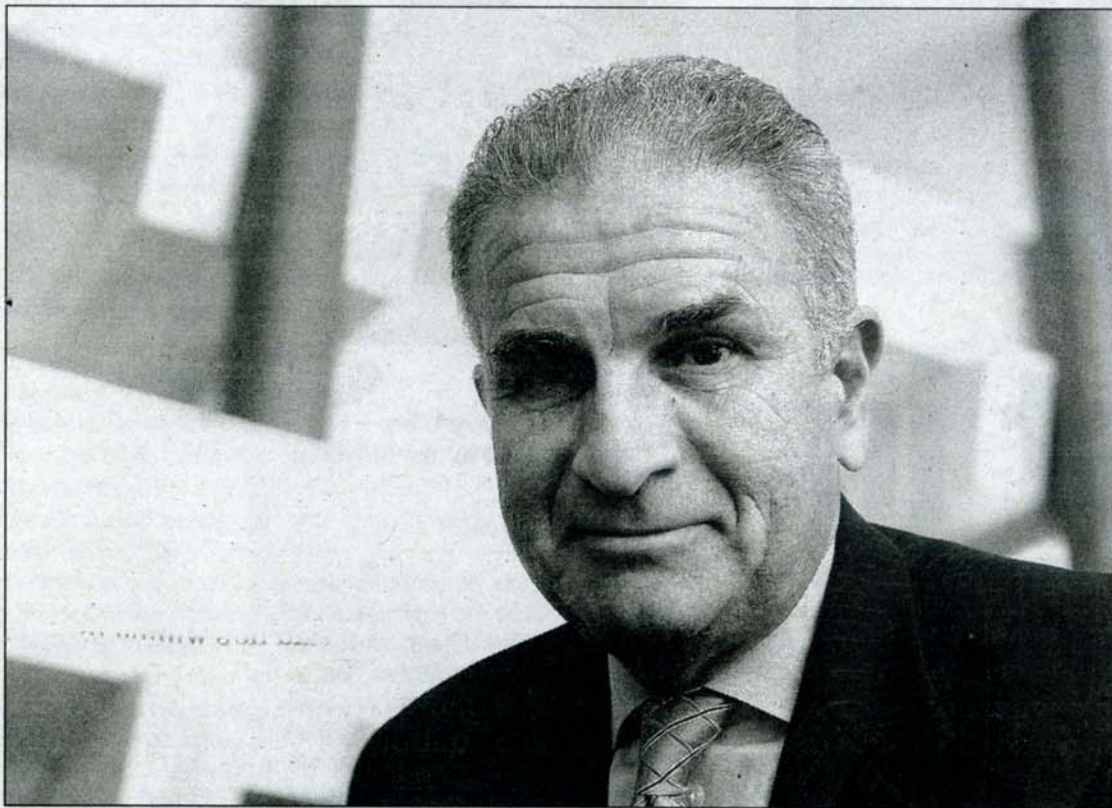


Boston Business Journal

October 12-18, 2007
(c. 15,918)

Guide TO THE BBJ

NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE AND BEYOND



W. MARC BERNSAU | BUSINESS JOURNAL

Next week's Executive Profile: Robert Badavas, CEO of TAC Worldwide, has more than 20 years of executive experience in such industries as technology, venture capital and business services. He recently joined the board of directors of Airvana.

Boston Business Journal

October 19-25, 2007

(c. 15, 918)

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Robert Badavas

Specializing in people

Whether selling vegetables or lining up tech talent, CEO says, business means people

BY JOAN GOODCHILD
JOURNAL STAFF

Robert Badavas credits his father with giving him his first business lessons. As a child, he would accompany his fruit and vegetable-selling dad to the area now known as Fanueil Hall in Boston. The father-son team also sold Christmas cards in the Boston suburbs each year.

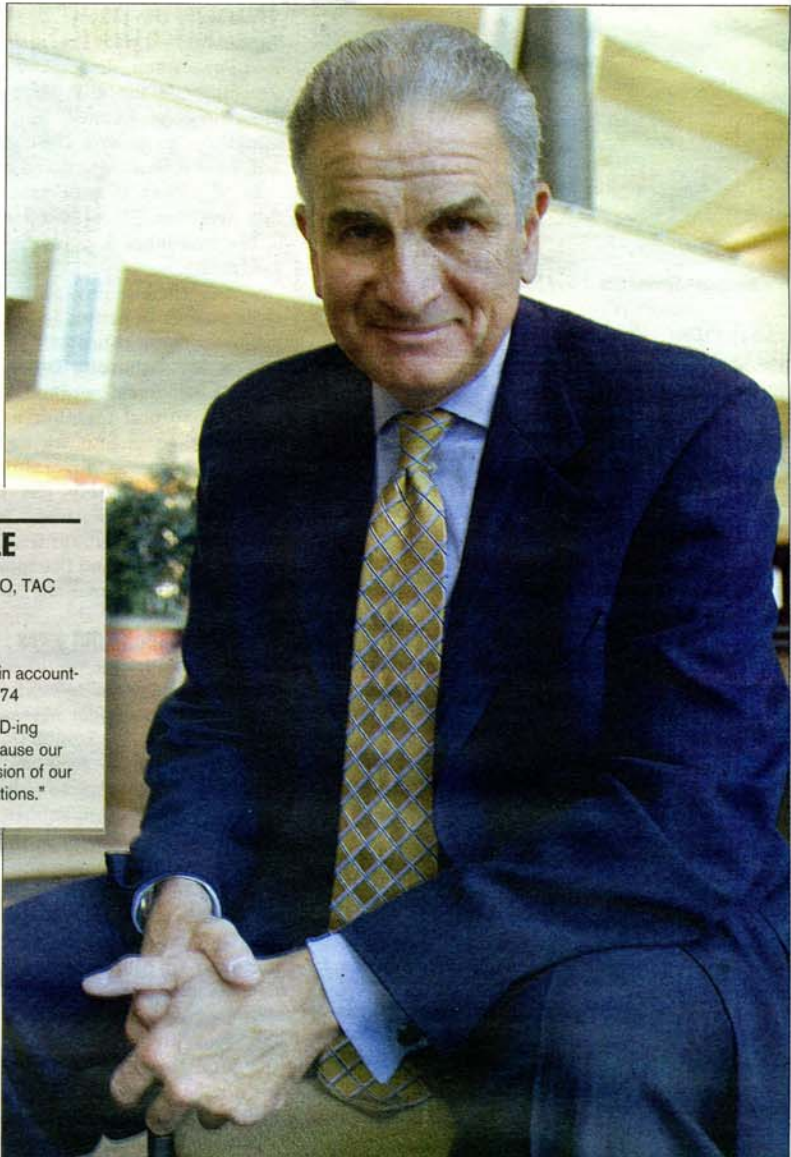
"An 8-year-old kid with a Christmas catalogue is a very powerful marketing tool," said Badavas, chuckling. "The experience didn't teach me a lot about money — because we didn't make much. But it did teach me about people."

As the president and CEO of Dedham-based **TAC Worldwide**, a temporary and direct-hire staffing services firm, Badavas is still using personal touch to bring an edge to his company.

TAC, which offers staffing in areas such as information technology, engineering, technical support, and manufacturing, is about more than "just putting butts in the seats" for clients, according to Badavas.

"I don't believe in that model," he said. "We believe in ID-ing and acquiring talent because our employees are an extension of our client's HR and IT operations. TAC employees are basically ambassadors for our clients."

Learning how to understand and handle people has been the basis for Badavas career over



FROM THE FILE

Title: President and CEO, TAC Worldwide

Age: 54

Education: Bachelor's in accounting, Bentley College, 1974

Quote: "We believe in ID-ing and acquiring talent because our employees are an extension of our client's HR and IT operations."

PLEASE SEE BADAVAS, PAGE 32

STUART GARFIELD | BUSINESS JOURNAL

| EXECUTIVE PROFILE |

BADAVAS: Growing the business of finding the right people — fast

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the years. His financial education came after his days selling produce while attending **Bentley College** in Waltham, where he received his B.S. in accounting. As part of the school's first honors internship program, a then 19-year-old Badavas worked for a semester at what was then **Price Waterhouse**, the professional services firm.

More accustomed to his humble beginnings, Badavas said the job was an eye-opening exposure to the white-collar working world.

"I went to Anderson Little, where you could buy a jacket and two pairs of slacks for \$99. That was my going-to-work attire," said Badavas.

The internship turned into a job as an auditor with the firm, and Badavas stayed nine years before leaving for short-lived executive positions with **Datamedix** and then **Lexidata Corp.**, both of which were acquired.

In 1986, Badavas was hired as the chief financial officer for **Chipcom Corp.**, a Southborough-based network computing company. **Chipcom** went public in 1991 and was acquired by Marlborough-based **3Com Corp.** (Nasdaq: 3Com) in 1995. Badavas says he came into his own as a financial executive at that time.

"Whenever you take a company you're involved with through an IPO, it's an unsettling time," said attorney **Peter Tarr**, general counsel with **First Marblehead Corp.** in Boston and a former partner at **WilmerHale**. Tarr served

'We did a lot of M&A deals and Bob would always ask the tough questions. ... I would always get nervous.'

Art Coviello
President, RSA

as outside counsel for **Chipcom** during its IPO. "Bob just rolled up his sleeves and got the job done. He is not someone who is afraid to make decisions."

The experience also gave Badavas the chance to prove he was more than just a number cruncher. In 1995, he was presented with his first chief executive officer opportunity at **Cerulean Technology**, a wireless application software company.

"I think it's hard to morph from CFO to general business unless you are more of an extrovert and a people person," said **Art Coviello**, president of **RSA**, the

security division of **EMC Corp.** (NYSE: EMC) in Hopkinton.

Coviello, who has known Badavas since his days at **Chipcom**, at one point tapped him for the board of **RSA Security Inc.** The company was acquired by **EMC** in 2006.

"We did a lot of M&A deals and Bob would always ask the tough questions," said **Coviello**. "At the same time, he is unfailingly modest. I would always get nervous when he would ask these Columbo-esque questions. He would say 'There is just one thing I don't understand.' And I would be thinking: He probably does understand. I'm the one who doesn't understand and Bob is just being polite."

After **Cerulean's** acquisition by Marlborough-based **Aether Systems** in 2000, Badavas had a stint as a senior partner and chief operating officer at **Atlas Venture**, a venture capital firm in Waltham.

"I knew after a period of time I should go because I would eventually get bored," Badavas said about the job. "I knew it would be short-lived."

And it was. The corporate world called Badavas back in 2003, this time as the CFO of **TAC Worldwide**.

"The years after Y2K were difficult for much of the staffing industry," said Badavas. "I was intrigued by the notion

of how do you rekindle a company and get its swagger back, so to speak."

TAC was acquired in 2005 and is now a wholly owned subsidiary of **The Goodwill Group Inc.**, a publicly traded staffing, workforce management, and health care services company headquartered in Tokyo. Badavas was promoted to president and CEO after the deal closed.

As head of **TAC**, Badavas said understanding what motivates people is just as integral as it was in those days selling Christmas cards. He says generational issues are among the biggest challenges facing the staffing industry today, as companies often struggle to gauge how younger workers view employment.

And while the years immediately following Y2K were slow for technical staffing, Badavas said 2005 ushered in a boom of technical investments made by businesses. As a result, talent outsourcing — as well as the use of H1B visas for international workers — are among companies' primary needs.

"We're constantly filtering through the pool to find clients the talent they need quickly," said Badavas. "We find people. But it's a full-time job."

JOAN GOODCHILD can be reached at jgoodchild@bizjournals.com.