

COFFEE TALK



+ Entrepreneur aims at small businesses

Michael A. Sisti, founder of a Sarasota-based branding and marketing firm, plans to spend some of 2010 getting out a message of his own: Small businesses and entrepreneurs need to start banding together against government power grabs before it's too late.

Sisti, in looking at the federal bailouts of banks and car companies, as well as the health care bill debate, is worried that entrepreneurs are going to regularly be left out of the equation.

"Small businesses need to use their collective voice to get the government to listen to them," says Sisti, founder of **Sisti & Others, Inc.**

"It's a long shot, but that's what we've got to do," he says.

Sisti is taking the direct approach with his fight back message as well.

He has developed a presentation on the issue titled *To Small to Fail: America's Entrepreneurs at Risk*. He has given the presentation to groups in Sarasota and Rhode Island, where he was previously in charge of communications for Blue Cross Blue Shield.

He is planning to speak to a list of business-focused and civic groups in the coming year, both on the Gulf Coast and outside of Florida.

The gist of the presentation, says Sisti, is that for America to continue dominating the global economy, small businesses must succeed.

He also talks about some things small business owners could do on their own to succeed, in spite of the federal government's big reach.

That includes continuing to find ways to innovate and be efficient.

Sisti is also getting the small business survival part of his message out by using another method: He has written a book about bureaucratic bungling inside a large corporate entity.

The book, *"Executive Crumple Zone,"* is told through a series of e-mails that relate how a creative and nimble-thinking entrepreneur navigates his way through a slow-moving corporate behemoth.



"Small business owners, through sweat equity and personal financial risk, drive the economy in this country, while corporate America constantly looks to the government for special treatment."