



Surfing Chaos

By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA

In a marvelous book, "Surfing the Edge of Chaos" the authors explain how businesses must obey the laws of nature to survive. One of the laws of nature discussed in the book is, "Any living system that is in equilibrium is beginning to die." This may come as a surprise to you, but the authors go on to show that this is true because in a constantly changing environment, only the organism that are constantly striving to improve themselves survive in the long run.

So if your answer to why you do anything in business is, "That's the way we did it yesterday," you may want to consider revising your thinking. Change hurts, but the alternative is ultimately much more painful. At ILS we have arrived at such a changing point this month. My wife and I have run this business together for the last year and it has grown significantly. I treasure my time at work with Char. She is an incredibly capable business partner, and a good friend. I hesitate to destroy the dynamic of trust and fun we have created as a husband and wife team, but it is time to move on. We have grown to the point where two of us can no longer satisfy the demands of our clients.

As you can see from this newsletter, we have decided to hire a wonderful new employee. M.J. Clark is a wonderful addition to our staff. We are very lucky to have her. She brings a wealth of experience, a fresh perspective, and unbridled enthusiasm. So, like nature we have decided to face our fears, eschew equilibrium, and take the plunge into an uncertain future because we believe that we will only survive if we constantly adapt and reinvent ourselves.

I ask you to take a minute and ask yourself how you are reinventing yourself. Are there areas where you have grown complacent? Are there some difficult issues you should face? Is there an opportunity you wish to pursue, but are avoiding it because the thought of it makes you apprehensive? I encourage you to summon the courage to grow and change. I think you will find, as nature has proven, that surfing is the only way to survive.