

# Business

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300



Thursday, March 31, 1988 O&E

(F)1C

## Directory assistance for a foreign connection

By Mary Rodrigue  
Staff writer

Got a product to sell but need a market? Looking for foreign-made merchandise?

In either case, Paul Crunk may be your man.

The Livonia-based businessman specializes in international trade. Crunk has a line into just about every market worldwide, with products ranging from food to textiles to tools — and everything in between.

"I can help people interested in buying from foreign manufacturers or selling to foreign manufacturers," he said.

Crunk's Meridian Road apartment serves as his base of operation. His office features a wall of bookcases holding the latest directories from Taiwan, Korea and 20 other countries. Trade books range from thin monthly magazines specializing in automotive parts, equipment and machinery to chunky books chock full of information about a myriad of manufacturers.

The Taiwan Yellow Pages, for example, lists not only the company name, address, and phone number, but also the president's name, telephone number for document facsimile transmission, how long the firm has been in business, and a detailed listing of what they import and export.

After five years in the trade directories business, Crunk claims he has retained exclusive rights to sell the directories in North America — agreements worked out with each individual publisher. He earns a commission on the books he sells.

"PEOPLE BUYING the books range from housewives thinking of going into business, maybe selling tubelocks and linens in flea markets, all the way to businessmen who want to cut out the middle man," Crunk said.

"If you want to start your own business, this could do it. I've had manufacturers' reps buy these because they want to represent some company," he said.

The Taiwan Yellow Pages, with 1,322 pages, covers the entire mar-



Paul Crunk with some of the business directories used to make contact with foreign firms.

ket and sells for \$90.

"It covers all manufacturers and suppliers from A to Z," Crunk said.

"People come here and look through the books, it gives them a whole head full of ideas."

Savings is the motivator behind the idea of eliminating the middle man. Crunk leafed through one catalog and came to a page full of pictures of certain handbags made in Korea. Bought directly from the manufacturer, the cost would be \$44.

The bags retail in stores locally for \$150, he said.

"One U.S. dollar gets \$800 Korean," he said. "They are making money because of the power of the American dollar. We're making money because the product costs less (directly from the manufacturer) than from a local retailer."

Crunk advertises in Income Opportunities magazine and local newspaper classified advertising sections. He only sells the direc-

ries. Customers make their own contacts with individual manufacturers.

"I've had response coming in still from the September issue of Income Opportunities," he said.

ALTHOUGH TAIWAN and Korea are the hot markets right now, Crunk has directories for South Africa, the Middle East, China, Japan, Denmark, Barbados, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Indochina, Mexico, and the Philippines.

Also stocked are listings for Singapore, Switzerland, a book of cluster listings for 32 European nations, the International Food and Beverage Guide, a Swiss watch directory, the Taiwan Yellow Pages Monthly (a more condensed version of the mammoth Yellow Pages), Taiwan Trade Monthly, Importers Directory, a book on how to do business with Taiwan, a Turkey major directory, Turkey general import/export directory, Turkey industrial and trade

directory, a travel importers trade directory and a Yugoslavian directory. All are updated every year.

What Crunk doesn't have in stock takes three weeks to order.

He says the commission he earns provides a livable wage. His office used to be located in the Livonia pavilion at Seven Mile and Middlebelt but became too costly (rent plus tel-

ex and phone bills came to \$2,500 monthly, he said).

Crunk says he is currently looking for sales agents, particularly in other parts of the country, to sell the directories. He is also working out plans to sell at least the more popular directories at 7-Eleven stores and B. Dalton bookstores. The Taiwan Trade Monthly will sell for \$4.58 a copy on newsstands.

While the emphasis to date is primarily for the business community, Crunk is working with publishers to produce a consumers catalog based on Korean and Taiwanese goods.

"The consumer catalog is going through research in Taiwan and Korea," he said.

Crunk anyone who buys a directory to make initial contact to the manufacturer by letter — not telephone. And he provides sample copies of letters to send that will ensure the best response.

He says he will still tell you to make a written request," he said.

Crunk himself has imported grass whips and chain saws, as well as hand and stage lighting equipment.

Leafing randomly through the catalogs, the choices are many: auto parts, tools, electronic items, machinery, bicycles, toys, novelties such as smokeless ashtrays and dust collectors, baby furniture, exercise equipment, and clothes.

No prices are listed in the catalogs.

"You write to the manufacturer. They send you a full color catalog with a detailed price list by sea and air," Crunk explained.

Crunk can be reached at Detroit International Inc., P.O. Box 9108, Livonia 48151. A sample copy of the Taiwan Yellow Pages Monthly plus the Taiwan and a price list for other directories is available for \$7. Or call Crunk at 478-9432.

ART EMANUELE

## Mission: provide cure for ailing businesses

By Filip Pracassa  
special writer

Multi Financial Services, a Birmingham-based financial services and management firm, has increased its annual revenues 40 percent since 1983 by turning more than 90 percent of the failing companies it advises into money-makers.

The company's turnaround management services comprised 80 percent of its \$1.5 million 1987 revenues, derived from firms with annual sales of \$2 million to \$200 million.

Fees range from \$75-\$200 an hour to between 1 percent and 10 percent of a client's annual revenues, depending on difficulty of turnaround.

"Eighty percent of the companies that come to us are losing money, and the other 20 percent are breaking even or making a modest profit," president Gregory Kelly said. "We specialize in keeping companies in business that otherwise likely will fail."

Kelly, whose background includes law, banking and accounting, believes Multi Financial Services has saved 15,000 jobs.

"If all of our clients had failed, even with help, that's how many people would have been displaced," he said. "By keeping our clients functioning, their 15,000 combined employees keep working."

THE ROCHESTER Hills resident does not believe Multi Financial has



Gregory Kelly

been successful with a client until a consistent profit is shown and the company's leadership is on the right track.

"Many failures are the result of the wrong management team," Kelly said. "Just because you're the boss doesn't mean you're the right guy for the job."

"The smart owner hires people better than he is, if available. And the odds are getting better to get someone better because there's a highly educated pool of candidates out there."

"Most owners will not do this be-

*'Just because you're the boss doesn't mean you're the right guy for the top job.'*

— Gregory Kelly  
president  
Multi Financial

cause they're stubborn and will not delegate, but in some cases it's the only way. In others, adding a quality leader to the management team will suffice."

Multi Financial relies on word of mouth, seminars and referrals from attorneys, accountants and bankers to add clients. Gerald C. Myers, a crisis management specialist and former chairman of the board of American Motors Corp., is chairman of the Multi Financial board.

"It doesn't make sense to go out and seek business en masse," Kelly said. His clients are public and private companies primarily in the medical, dental, service, engineering, manufacturing and wholesale industries.

"It's difficult to convince an owner he has a problem. The owner has to know right away that there's a problem and is willing to do what has to be done to correct it. Then, what we can do works."

THREE TYPES OF CEOs approach Multi Financial, Kelly said:

• The CEO who's not sure why he's there and is going through the motions.

• The CEO who's there, really wants to make the company profitable, has the skills to do it but needs direction.

• The CEO who's there, wants to make his company profitable but does not have the skills to do it.

CEO No. 1 is not accepted as a client. CEO No. 2 is advised to sell the firm after initial attempts to help fail. CEO No. 3 offers the ideal situation, Kelly said.

Companies younger than 5 years and those 25-35 years old are generally in the greatest danger of failing, according to Kelly.

Please turn to Page 2

**SUBARU.**

**GRAND OPENING**

IN

*Rochester*

**\$5,572**

**OUR CARS WERE BUILT TO LAST. BUT THESE SPECIAL VALUES WON'T!**

**FREE 4WD**

**GESTATION WAGON**

**JUSTY**

For a limited time, your Subaru Dealer will give you the 4-Wheel Drive option free on any 1988 GL-Station Wagon\*\*\* — the best selling station wagon in America.\*\*\* But hurry. With free 4-Wheel Drive, supplies won't last long.

**THE 1988 SUBARU.**  
We built our reputation by building a better car. \*Suggested retail price. Dealer actual price may vary. Price does not include dealer prep, inland transportation, taxes, license and title fees. \*\*At participating dealers only. Dealer price may vary. Price does not include dealer prep, inland transportation, taxes, license and title fees. 1988 Models Only.

**Crestview Cadillac-Subaru**

555 S. Rochester Road  
Rochester, Michigan 48063  
(313) 656-9500

## Back on its feet

High costs, slow cash flow and persistent calls from creditors put Denis Moore in a bind. His company, Moore Flame Cutting of Sterling Heights, a manufacturer of steel plates, was about to go broke when a white knight galloped to its rescue.

With aid from Multi Financial Services, Moore was able to stem costs with tighter inventory control, obtain capital and work out a less stringent payables plan.

This enabled the maker of plates for steel and paper mills and the automotive and coal-mining industries to avoid closing his doors for good.

"We would not have made it without Multi; right now we're going through some tough times, but with what I've learned we should do OK," Moore said. "Multi set up a payables plan with our creditors, brought money into the company and taught us how to watch our cost-to-income ratios."

"I don't think of Multi as having managers or accountants in the strict sense. We aren't told what we do so much as what we should do in the future. There's no doubt we would not have pulled out without his help."