

Just Call Him Chainsaw John

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The Baltimore Magazine published a Feature Story of Interest about John M. Collard, turnaround specialist and equity investor.

Just Call Him Chainsaw John
Steering The Right Course

By Gerald Burstyn
Senior Editor

A profile of John M. Collard, CTP, Chairman of [Strategic Management Partners, Inc.](#), a turnaround management firm in Annapolis, Maryland, and Past-Chairman of the Turnaround Management Association.

Steering The Right Course

Disappointed in the performance of your CEO? Meet John M. Collard, itinerant turnaround artist.

For a healthy tee, the 52-year-old Annapolitan will parachute into your company, rally the troops (and maybe discharge a few), devise a long-term battle plan, and hire his replacement.

"Sometimes I'll get a call on Friday night and be president of the company on Monday morning," says Collard, whose assignments range anywhere from four months to two years.

To turn a company around, he relies as much on his intuition as experienceâ€"plus a pinch of impatience. "I can't stand it when people say 'We can't do it,'" says the former high-school halfback. His response to naysayers is simple: "You clearly don't understand. We are going to do these things. It may not be with you here, but we are going to do these things."

For the past seven months, Collard has been working with private equity capital funds, helping them identify and reform corporate underachievers.

For much of 1997, he worked with a regional printing company. Before that? he advised the World Bank and trained Eastern European entrepreneurs in the fine art of the turnaround.

"If you perform, he's a piece of cake," says Arthur Schafer, general manager at Sowers Printing in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, where Collard was interim CEO in 1997. "If you don't, you're gone."

"Collard saved me, to put it simply," says Howard Shure, owner of The Air Works, an Annapolis-based

inflatable-boat seller. When Shure hired Collard to turn around his business in 1992, Air Works was losing money and in debt. This year, Air Works will gross \$1 million and make a profit.

Schooled in finance and architecture, Collard started out as a financial analyst, then branched out as a consultant. After stops at defense giant Martin Marietta and a Virginia technology firm, the suburban-Chicago native established Strategic Management Partners in 1988.

Now Collard is twice named by an industry magazine as one of the top 12 (out of 2,300) turnaround consultants in the U.S. runs his boutique firm from his home on the Severn River, where he lives with wife Linda, a sales executive, and his dogs, Eliot and Monnet.

When he's not bailing out a client, Collard enjoys skippering his 33-foot sailboat on the Chesapeake Bay, purchased with his "low- to mid-six-figure" income. (He charges anywhere from \$150 an hour to \$500 when you count stock options.)

Collard admits he may not know everyone's business, but knows the fundamentals are the same for all businesses.

As he puts it, "We help those boats that don't have a good helmsman to steer the right course."

Reference:

[Library: Just Call Him Chainsaw John](#)

www.StrategistLibrary.com

www.StrategicMgtPartners.com

About the Principal

John M. Collard, is Chairman of Annapolis, Maryland-based Strategic Management Partners, Inc. (410-263-9100, www.StrategicMgtPartners.com), a nationally recognized turnaround management firm specializing in interim executive leadership, asset recovery, and investing in underperforming companies. He is Past Chairman of the Turnaround Management Association, a Certified Turnaround Professional, and brings 35 years senior operating leadership, \$85M asset recovery, 40+ transactions worth \$780M+, and \$80M fund management expertise to run troubled companies, and advise company boards, litigators, institutional and private equity investors.

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