

## **Profile of Jerry Beckerman**

Executive Director, Founder, Segue Career Mentors

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For over 40 years, Jerry Beckerman has been involved in a wide variety of activities in the worlds of research, citizen outreach, community non-profits, strategic planning, marketing, and new venture development. Consistent throughout his career, Beckerman has transformed ideas into tangible reality through the management of people and resources. A graduate of UC Berkeley, Beckerman began his career in 1976 by launching the nation's second chocolate chip cookie store, Cookies & Milk, which was later expanded into packages that were broadly marketed to supermarkets. In the early 1980's he guided new product development for Lawry's Foods, a subsidiary of Lipton/Unilever. In the late 1980s he formed an independent venture to develop and market a new snack cracker line, Nutcrackers®, arranged for manufacturing by Safeway Stores' U.S. bakery, and marketed the line nationally through food distributors.

In the 1990s Beckerman's focus shifted to socially conscious ventures where, for example, he directed new product efforts to support the environment, such as a reforestation project for the Lacandon Mayan rainforest. In another venture, he developed and patented a resource-efficient tree-starter kit to provide children with a personal experience of stewardship (distributed by Scholastic Books and the U.S. Forest Service, among others). The tree-kit was also energetically considered by Vice President Gore's staff for the international GLOBE project. Other resource-efficient and zero waste products, were the BoxBook, GreetingBox and BoxDice Sports Games, that called for consumers to re-use the product *package* in order to create the product itself.

Research has been a key component throughout Beckerman's career often driven by the tried and proven concept for commercial success: "Find out what your customers want, and give it to them." In the civic arena with Community Research, Beckerman found this concept well-accepted: to foster a satisfied citizenry, reach out and uncover what constituents truly want and let these realities of what is wanted support public policy formation. Community Research has uncovered realities to support decision-making in the civic/community arena for many clients such as Redondo Beach, Elk Grove, Ventura County Fair Grounds, the U.S. Navy, the League of California Cities, the County of Ventura, SCORE, and universities such as, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, Brown University, and California Lutheran University.

The connective thread that drives Beckerman is present in Segue Career Mentors where he has assembled a stellar 20+ member advisory board of education experts with real world experience. Initiating, developing, and managing have been key components throughout his career where his methodical and practical approach has served his clients well. Within Segue, Beckerman has found a strong bridge from industry to education in the Baldrige Framework. Just as in industry, Baldrige in Education supports the concept of continuous improvement. As industry must focus on cost-effectiveness, so does Segue. During the past decade, Segue has enjoyed substantial success in the efficacy of its turnkey system that has proven to operate as a satellite in distant cities using its online system. The result maximizes student exposures to workplace career options, a recognized need among professional educators. A Harvard University study of Segue found statistically significant student impacts in areas known to increase academic success and reduce dropout: Mastery Orientation, College Intentions, and Future Talk. Segue's in-class career speakers, by following its Speaker's Guide, not only impart valuable tips on how to succeed in the workplace, they share core ideas from their experiences such as the importance of taking initiative, networking, perseverance, and personal responsibility.

Along the way Beckerman has served, or currently serves, on the boards of a number of non-profit organizations, such as: The Sustainability Council of Ventura County, The Martin Luther King Center for Non-violence in Los Angeles, and LIFE (Love is Feeding Everyone). He is a member of the Ventura County Civic Alliance (executive committee), the Ventura County Youth Council (a committee of the Workforce Investment Board), the Ventura Community Partnership for Youth, the Ventura County Partnership for Safe Families, and the Ventura County Open Space District Advisory Committee.