

Profile of Jerry Beckerman

Executive Director, Founder, Segue Career Path Mentors Program

For over 30 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 the Segue Program 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 the Segue Program, 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 it measures results and plans new actions based on the data, the Segue Program will evolve to be ever more valuable both to students who participate and to the communities and economies that enjoy the benefits of these students' developing careers skills and a strong sense of personal responsibility.

Along the way Beckerman has served, or currently serves, on the boards of a number of non-profit organizations, including: 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 (serving on its 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 41-member Ventura County Open Space District Advisory Committee.