Valley’s Rare Technology Pioneer Moving On

**TUCKER:** Founder says the decision left her ‘teary eyed.’

**BY ANDREW FOERCH**

Tucker, 60, talks about the aftermath of Black Lives Matter, coupled with August being Black Business Month, may be helping to draw more business generally to Black-owned businesses. Some have had to reconfigure workspaces to spread out employees and others were forced to close temporarily when employees became infected — since manufacturing workers can’t work from home. Business is down for many, but costs are up for most. Still, local companies are learning how to cope in the pandemic.

New Course Set For Golf Club

**SALE:** Local pair buys slipping Woodland Hills Country Club.

**By MICHAEL AUSHENKER**

The Woodland Hills Country Club, well patronized over the years by local business leaders, has sold to two longtime members. Equity members, who each own a slice of the private club, expressed relief that they no longer have to pay assessments to keep the club maintained and that they got some money from the transaction.

Car Sellers Click On Online Sales

**LIST:** No-touch transactions revving up during pandemic.

**By AMY STULICK**

The coronavirus pandemic caused auto sales to skid, but many local dealers — who assumed buyers would always prefer ogling cars in the showroom — quickly learned to make a sharp turn to online sales. "The digital department is, of course, booming," said one dealer.

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Photograph by Thomas Wasper

**THE LIST**

Local investor Alon Goren, right, is laying odds on the blockchain. Placing a Bet on Wagering Platform

**MANUFACTURERS** See page 13

**AUTO DEALERSHIPS** See page 17

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**SPECIAL REPORT MANUFACTURING**

The coronavirus pandemic has been hard on one of the Valley area’s most vital sectors: manufacturing. Some have had to reconfigure workspaces to spread out employees and others were forced to close temporarily when employees became infected — since manufacturing workers can’t work from home. Business is down for many, but costs are up for most. Still, local companies are learning how to cope in the pandemic.

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**SUDDEN SUPPORT**

Some Black-owned businesses are seeing new customers.

**BY AMY STULICK**

Black-owned restaurant in the Antelope Valley has seen business pick up recently — but with a changed customer base.

Chef Michael Brignac said he’s seeing more people from the Black community ordering at his Lee Esther’s Creole and Cajun Cooking.

“I know it’s really strange. Through this whole pandemic and the protests for Black Lives Matter, we are starting to get a bigger Black customer base,” said Brignac.

“I was kind of well diverse in our restaurant. We had Hispanics, Blacks, whites, Asians. Since this whole thing we’re starting to see a lot of this,” he may not be alone. Momentum from the movement, coupled with August being Black Business Month, may be helping to draw more business generally to Black-owned businesses.

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That's not something that I've done before.

Line to that next level of $1 billion in revenue.

It was really emotional when the board actually passed the resolution to promote him to CEO Jan 1. I was surprised I got all teary-eyed. Of course, a lot of my identity is tied up in this company. But that only lasted a few minutes. This is the best for the company, and it's going to be fun for me to watch it grow to its next phase.

Tech, of course, remains an industry where women are overwhelmingly underrepresented. How did you break in and what was it like when you started gaining clout as a tech entrepreneur? The way you break in is to start as a programmer, which is something I still love. But being a woman makes you stand out. If you're good at what you do, it can actually help you get noticed. I bootstrapped BlackLine up until the end of 2013. We started to pick up attention when we started gaining size, making noise about doing an IPO and getting in front of investors. Obviously, the IPO was a big moment. A woman with pink hair just rang the bell, you know? But I don't love the attention. What I love is building a company. The results speak for themselves.

Because tech has been so heavily male for so long, do you feel a responsibility to be a role model for women in the industry? Initially, I was always annoyed when interview panels would focus on my gender. But I had a change of heart. I realized there are so few women leading tech companies – especially publicly traded ones. Younger women and girls need role models. Maybe they're female. Maybe they're of color. Maybe they have weird hair. I went from thinking it was a burden to thinking it's an honor and a privilege.

Since this is our last opportunity to ask – why did you dye your hair pink? I try not to lose a game of chicken if I can help it. My marketing people, almost five years ago, wanted me to do this horrifically boring video. We're already in accounting software, and this was just going to put people completely to sleep. But they kept pushing back, saying, “we need you to do this.” Finally, I said, “Fine, I’ll do it, but I’m going to dye my hair pink.”

What happened then? I found it’s an amazing sociological experiment. Everybody in the world feels like they can talk to you when you have pink hair. Little kids at the beach, goth teenagers in the bookstore – you just have so many more conversations with people.

Did that quality extend to the business community? Internally, it sets the tone at BlackLine. We don’t care what you look like or how you dress. What counts is what you contribute. Now, not unlike being a woman in tech, having pink hair also makes you stand out. Thankfully, BlackLine has performed very well over last four years. We certainly stand out to investors as well. People readily recognize you, call out to you and remember you. I was kidding Marc Huffman he needs to dye his hair blue!

If you could go back to the start of your career knowing what you know now, what would you do differently?

If you asked me how many times I failed, it’s hundreds. Big usually your mistakes are the things you learn the most from. I wouldn’t want to take away from any of that.

What were some of your biggest learning experiences?

In the early days, we had an employee leave and create a competing product and company. We were competing against each other for a client, and the client picked us. Then, a day later, they called us and said our competitor had offered to give them their software for free. My heart dropped. I got on a plane and flew to speak with their CFO. I essentially assured them we’d be successful and offered them some additional products, but I did not offer them a price break. They came back and still picked us. They said the reason was because a good deal has to be good for all parties and a free deal is not going to be good in the long term. We went home and cracked a bottle of champagne. Today they are still a client.

Anything else? The first three years of BlackLine I was building wealth management software. We completely pivoted at end of 2004. It’s not working, make a decision to change and keep trying things until they work.