



MORRISON & COMPANY

IN THIS ISSUE:



NEW PRINCIPAL

Morrison & Company is delighted to announce Toni Scott's promotion to Principal!



LEAD, FOLLOW, OR...

Managing Principal Brent Morrison's advice on evolving business to stay competitive in the market (Brent's grandparents Christian and Thurid Morrison photographed above).



MORRISON SNAPSHOTS

We welcomed new Morrison & Company team member, Jeannette Rummell (bio coming soon), in addition to a busy quarter full of events. Check out the fun we've had!



CHICOBAG: A REVOLUTION TO REUSE

A decade ago, on a second-hand sewing machine, Andy Keller began a small project that revolutionized the way people carry their groceries and other items.

After a trip to a landfill, where he saw an abundance of single-use plastic bags that had been tossed in the trash, Keller was motivated to find a solution to reduce waste and promote good environmental stewardship. His hand-sewn personal shopping bag paved the way for the now global company, ChicoBag, which markets quality reusable shopping bags. The bags, which range from simple shopping slings to produce bags, can be found in the hands of shoppers in grocery stores, farmers markets, and shopping malls across the globe.

Based in Northern California, ChicoBag has evolved over the years to offer a wide selection of bags and environmentally-conscious products. ChicoBag customers can buy duffel bags, bottle slings, day packs, and snack and sandwich bags to send with children to school, among other items.

In addition to their own branded products, ChicoBag offers custom promotional branded products bearing

logos from other companies and organizations. In fact, Morrison & Company has our own ChicoBag, which we use and love to give our clients as gifts. ChicoBag also offers a school fundraising program that helps students earn a 40% profit for their schools by selling ChicoBag products.

Morrison & Company is thankful to have had the opportunity to work with ChicoBag, providing our recruitment services to help the company fill a key position on their financial team. We're looking forward to a continued relationship with ChicoBag and more trips to grocery stores using our customized ChicoBags!



NEW PRINCIPAL TONI SCOTT

We are thrilled to announce Toni Scott's promotion as Principal at Morrison & Company! Toni joined our team in 2011 as a consultant and has made a significant impact on our firm. She now manages our grants practice and oversees marketing. Beginning in January, she will join Brent Morrison and Geoff Chinnock in ownership of Morrison & Company.

Prior to Morrison & Company, Toni worked as a reporter for the Chico Enterprise Record and continues to write freelance. She's published articles in Ag Alert, the California Farm Bureau Federation newspaper, the Chico News and Review, and California Bountiful magazine.

Her strong involvement with the local community has given her vast knowledge on regional and industry affairs. Toni is actively serving as:

- City of Chico Planning Commission Chair
- Chico Chamber of Commerce Chair-Elect
- Butte County Farm Bureau Board of Directors
- Butte Agriculture Foundation Board Member

FUN FACTS ABOUT TONI:

FAMILY: Husband Nick and adorable puppy son Conner, age six.

EDUCATION: MS in Print Journalism from Boston University; BS in Political Science and Agriculture Business from CSU, Chico.

CURRENTLY READING: *Theodore Rex*, a biography of Theodore Roosevelt.

DREAM VACATION DESTINATION: I'm hoping to make it to Alaska in the next few years!

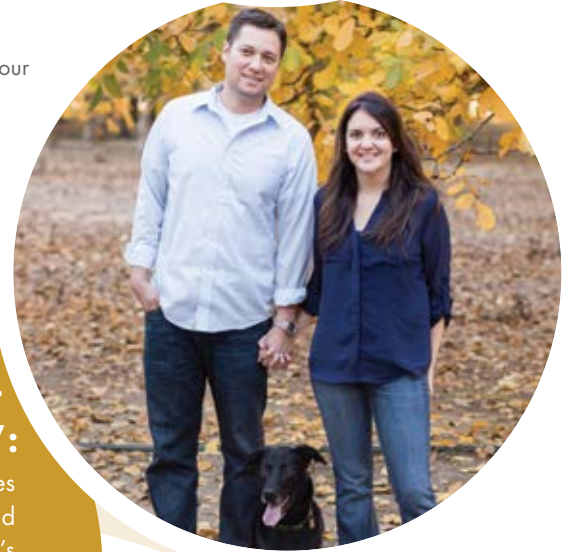
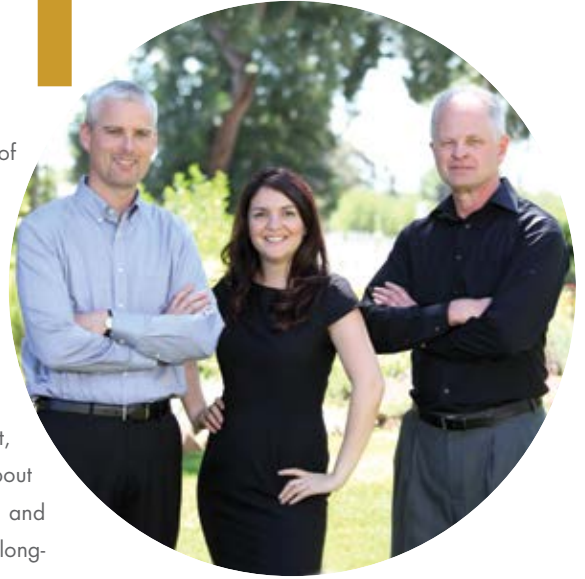
BEST MOTIVATOR: I'm motivated by deadlines – which we see a lot of in our line of work. Ice cream is also helpful in motivating me to complete a task.

Toni previously served as the Chico Chamber of Commerce's Young Professionals Organization President and was a Butte County Library Advisory Board Member. She is also a graduate of the California Farm Bureau Leadership Program.

Managing Principal Brent Morrison notes "Along with her talents as a writer, foresight, and entrepreneurial nature, Toni truly cares about our clients. Serving well comes first with Toni and we are delighted to have her be a part of our long-term growth."

We will be celebrating Toni's promotion during our Open House event in January; please join us!

Toni can be reached at 530-893-4764 ext. 205 or at tscott@morrisonco.net.



BEST PART OF WORKING AT MORRISON & COMPANY:

"Working on projects that help businesses grow, strengthen our economy, and support the sustainability of our nation's farmers, ranchers, and business owners. I come to work each day knowing that I'm blessed with the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to supporting and sustaining the economic viability of our clients, and the people they serve."

OPEN HOUSE

You're invited to our Open House event! Please join us in celebrating our new principal, Toni Scott, and come see our recently expanded office.

APPETIZER • DRINKS • FUN • SOCIALIZING

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22
COME ANYTIME BETWEEN
4 & 6 PM

LOCATION

Morrison & Company Office

Please RSVP to Jeannette Rummell at jrummell@morrisonco.net

WELCOME NEW CLIENTS



LEAD, FOLLOW, OR...

“...get out of the way!” But in business today it’s more like “... get knocked out of the way.”

My family is a case in point. My grandparents emigrated from Denmark to Los Angeles in the 1920s; my grandmother baked pastries at home, which my grandfather sold from a handcart. By the time I was born, family lore has it they owned the second largest commercial bakery in southern California, selling everything from cakes for weddings, pastries to drop-ins, and bread, rolls, and buns to the biggest grocery stores of the day.



BRENT'S FATHER, PAUL MORRISON, DECORATING A CAKE AT A WEDDING ON CATALINA ISLAND.

A few national bakeries existed, but locals and regionals ruled. National firms came to dominate commercial baking, and today it’s rare to see a loaf of locally baked bread in most supermarkets. Wonder Bread (Flowers Foods) buys wheat by the trainload, and they don’t make wedding cakes or sell Danishes out the door.

I doubt my favorite pizza parlor has had so much as a coat of paint in 50 years – but most of us can grow, shrink, sell, or fail but we can’t stand still. Where are you headed?

Is your product or service clearly differentiated? I have often said that if I can open the Yellow Pages and find a dozen companies doing something, I don’t want to do it. A big part of our differentiation is in the nature of our services but that’s not the only way. Do you do what you do better, or cheaper? Is your service better? Do you serve a distinct underserved market? If you answered no to all of these you have a problem. If you had some yeses and it works now, don’t get too cozy. Someone will catch on and catch up. Keep working on something special.

How does the future look? This is not a hypothetical question and you don’t need a crystal ball, just an eye to what’s happening in and around your industry. “Disruptive technologies” or innovations are just that, advances that disrupt and ultimately replace an existing product or service. Remember Palm Pilot, Hollywood Video, Borders Books, VCRs, and travel agents? A few in these businesses saw change coming and adapted but many held the course straight to bankruptcy.

Caution can kill. In the 1980s I worked briefly for a California manufacturer that had two major product lines: sugarbeet harvesters and structural steel components for offshore oil rigs. The writing was on the wall for sugarbeets in California and today they are a very minor crop. Drilling off California’s shore was also under pressure

A big part of our differentiation stems from the nature of our services

but the company’s owners were reluctant to spend the money to re-tool for other products or mechanize, though skilled labor was getting harder to find and afford. “Times are tough so let’s hang on to what we know and our money” were the driving principles. The company finally diversified to metal storage containers that could easily be made by anyone who could cut and weld sheet metal. Extreme fiscal conservatism killed the company.

Are your distinctions without a difference?

There is value in attributes like “local,” “natural,” and “American-made” but most buyers won’t notice unless you tell them, and loyalty to such things can pale next to factors like cost and quality. And they can be tricky. For example there is no one agreed-upon definition for “locally produced” or “natural” products. And Cars.com’s 2015 “American-Made Index,” which rates vehicles by their US-made content and place of assembly, finds that the “most American” new cars sold in the US today is the Toyota Camry. Toyota and Honda each hold one other spot in the top five. There are other reasons these “imports” are top sellers; don’t neglect those factors as they relate to your business.

Success is never a final destination in business (just ask Polaroid or Blackberry). Stop too long to enjoy it and the world will pass you by.

Brent Morrison is Morrison & Company’s managing principal. Contact him or any member of the Morrison team to discuss strategy and business planning.



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MORRISON SNAPSHOTS



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL LAND TRUST DINNER AT LLANO SECO RANCHO

Our team has made this event an annual outing, and we were lucky to be joined by some great clients including Alpha Sun Seed and Northern California National Bank.



BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT GRANT CONFERENCE

Morrison Consultant Toni Scott had the opportunity to meet up with our client, Dave Reed, of National Farmers Organization at a conference for all awardees of the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grant. Toni helped write the successful grant proposal and had a great time with Dave hearing about other projects and touring agriculture operations in Nevada, including a winery and distillery!

MORRISON & COMPANY BBQ

We keep upping the ante on our annual summer BBQ, and this year there was no lack of fun and excitement! Though we did fit in a meal together in the madness, the Morrison team and our families took scuba lessons in Brent's pool, rode ponies (kids only!), played with baby goats and tortoises in a petting zoo, and even got some face paint. We were almost too tired to come into the office the next day!

