

# **RONDA L. SAUGET, MBA, BSBA**

**President**

**Validus Business Strategies, LLC**

## **Professional Biography**

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Ronda L. Sauget started Validus Business Strategies LLC, in 2006. The firm is designed to work with clients to competitively position the client's firm or organization for success through the development of comprehensive business strategies, incorporating competitive intelligence and market research. After the implementation of a strong corporate plan is achieved, the firm will be well positioned for success in its industry segment. Validus Business Strategies is noted for its ability to help companies to qualify for economic development initiatives and other federal, state, and local incentive programs. The Validus client list continues to expand to include Solutia, St. Vincent de Paul Society of Southern Illinois, Midcoast Aviation, Jet Aviation, Vertex Chemical Company, General Dynamics Corporation, Afton Chemical Company, Eagle Marine Industries, Gateway Terminal LLC, Center Ethanol LLC, City of Centreville, and other clients. Ms. Sauget also provides consulting services to East County Enterprises serving as the Chief Operating Officer and to Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation System as the Corporate Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications. With over twenty years of experience, Ms. Sauget has an extensive background in executive management, corporate strategy development, corporate finance, communications strategies, executive leadership training, system operations, strategic marketing/planning, competitive positioning, market intelligence, political outreach, market research, media relationships, environmental planning, systems training, and client service. Ronda L. Sauget is currently completing the doctoral program at Webster University's Business Technology and Innovation Center located in St. Louis, MO.

### ***Current Positions and Activities***

#### **East County Enterprises**

As Chief Operating Officer of East County Enterprises, she has been instrumental in economic development activities, specifically attracting new "green energy" businesses and jobs to Southern Illinois in the areas of renewable fuels (ethanol and biodiesel), gasification, biomass, recycling, etc. Ms. Sauget coordinated her activities with the SIUE National Corn-To-Research Institute, National Corn Growers Association, National Soybean Association, Illinois Department of Agriculture, Sierra Club, American Bottoms Conservancy, and many other related groups. She was instrumental in developing a regional "green energy" initiative by working with many area companies including Solutia, Fred Weber Company, Clayco Construction, Center Oil Company, Eagle Marine Industries, and other firms. Ms. Sauget helped Center Ethanol achieve \$5.3M in

financial incentives for a new \$150M ethanol plant and \$90,000 in an AgriFirst Grant for Solutia to study the use of existing equipment in the production of biodiesel. While gaining support from local environmentalists, she has successfully turned Brownfield areas into productive “green energy” and environmentally friendly areas ready for redevelopment. Ms. Sauget also provides executive level management for the businesses under East County Enterprises, including the Gateway Grizzlies Professional Baseball Team, Sauget Business Park, and Stadium Office Complex. In addition, she presented competitive positioning strategies for the Frontier Professional Baseball League, an organization consisting of fourteen Midwestern baseball teams.

Ms. Sauget recently developed a strategic plan for the successful operation and reorganization of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Thrift Store and Kosgroves Soup Kitchen located in East St. Louis, IL. After learning about the challenges the thrift store and soup kitchen were facing, she developed a strategic plan supporting the vital role the store plays in the surrounding underserved area. The plan focused on store reorganization, repairing the aging facility, interviewing all staff and management, writing job descriptions for all employees, providing customer service training, implementing a secret shopper program, creating customized policies and procedures for the store’s operation, developing and implementing a volunteer program, writing grants for store and kitchen upgrades, and following the project for the next year to ensure the plan continued to move forward. Ms. Sauget helped the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store raise revenue from \$400 per month to approximately \$29,000 per month through community outreach, marketing, and communications activities. The revenue generated from the store supports the operations of Kosgroves Soup Kitchen which provides over 44,500 meals per year to underserved residents in the surrounding area.

### **Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation System**

As the Corporate Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications for Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation (SIHF) System, Ms. Sauget coordinated the competitive positioning and corporate strategy for the foundation to unite its three organizations into one overall organization with a conceptual theme of “One team, operating with one mission, speaking with one voice, and it all starts with you! Come join our team and journey into the future of healthcare with us! Together we can continue to make a difference!” The combined SIHF System ranks as the 9<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the Metro East with more than 1,500 employees and 300 participating physicians. The SIHF System is comprised of two hospitals, Kenneth Hall Regional and Touchette Regional Hospitals, and thirty-eight federally qualified health centers.

Ms. Sauget is instrumental in successfully developing and implementing a strategic marketing and communications plan for the SIHF System, including corporate strategy development, financial funding, media relations, community activities, internal/external communications, contract negotiations, brand/reputation management, executive leadership training, marketing strategies, public relations, speech writing, interactive/Web design/graphics/multi-media, marketing research (questionnaire design, competitive intelligence activities, executive interviewing, focus groups, and market research analysis), crisis management, litigation support, public opinion evaluation, and public affairs/government/agency outreach. Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation System serves a crucial mission of providing healthcare to all residents regardless of the patient's ability to pay. It is this commitment of providing healthcare to the underserved, underinsured, and other vulnerable populations that is the driving force of developing a regional healthcare "safety net" system for the future. Ms. Sauget is currently engaged in the strategic and financial planning process in building a new \$150M hospital located along I-255 in Centreville, IL.

**Midcoast Aviation (division of General Dynamics Corporation)**

Working in the consulting position of corporate strategist, Ms. Sauget has worked with Midcoast Aviation (a division of General Dynamics Corporation) to build and enhance the aviation industry in the State of Illinois. Midcoast Aviation grew its expertise and operations by providing modification services to major aircraft companies, such as British Aerospace, Falcon Jet, and Israeli Aircraft. As Midcoast Aviation's reputation continued to grow in the industry, so did its base of high end clients, which resulted in becoming the exclusive partner for Bombardier. Midcoast's 1,600 aviation professionals, extensive facilities and depth of proven performance all add up to top-notch service for the top-tier aircraft.

In 2006, Midcoast Aviation was acquired by Jet Aviation based in Switzerland and then both were acquired in 2008 by General Dynamics Corporation. As part of a worldwide network, Midcoast began looking for expansion sites in North America, which did not include sites in the State of Illinois. Due to the aircraft friendly business environment, Arizona, Texas and Arkansas were top potential site locations. The State of Illinois was not viewed as being a friendly aircraft industry environment by Jet Aviation due to the lack of financial incentives to downstate companies and antiquated aircraft industry laws. With only 10 business days, Ms. Sauget created a team of top aviation regional industry professionals (including Col. Bob McDaniel, Jenny Nixon, Col. Leonard Griggs, and Col. Tim Cantwell), Julie Curry (former Illinois Deputy Governor), and Illinois DCEO Director Jack Lavin to develop a competitive proposal for the Midcoast and Jet Aviation Board of Directors to consider. The proposal included over \$5.3M in

financial incentives, \$750,000 ramp expansion funding, workforce training grants and other local TIF incentives. This opportunity was the first time St. Louis Downtown and MidAmerica Regional Airports participated in a joint proposal and the effort kept Midcoast Aviation in the Metro East and Ms. Sauget led an \$80M expansion activity. The firm was successful and in 2008 was purchased by General Dynamics Corporation.

Additionally, Ms. Sauget and Julie Curry jointly coordinated an effort to change aircraft legislation in the State of Illinois that had been plaguing the growth of the industry for years. Working with Senator James Claybourne, Jr. and Rep. Dan Reitz, the team helped draft Senate Bill 455 in late 2006 and assisted in the development of testimony presented before the Illinois Senate Revenue Hearing Committee on behalf of Midcoast Aviation in early 2007. SB 455 was signed into law on August 20, 2007. In 2009, Ms. Sauget and Julie Curry are working on SB 450 aircraft parts tax exemption legislation with Senator James Claybourne, Jr. and Rep. Dan Reitz, so Illinois aviation companies will remain competitive with aircraft companies in surrounding states. After extensive efforts by Ms. Sauget and Julie Curry, SB 450 passed both houses and was signed into law by the governor during a time of deep state debt and a nationwide recession. On January 1, 2010, the Illinois aviation industry is no longer paying taxes on aircraft replacement parts and maintenance. These efforts have helped aviation companies in the State of Illinois to become more competitive on a world-wide scale and attract new business to the state. Working in coordination with Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Linn Technical College in Missouri, and Southwestern Illinois College; Ms. Sauget is currently building a world-class workforce development network for aviation recruitment and comprehensive FAA A&P certification training programs.

### **Archview Economic Development Corporation**

As a founding member and executive director, Ms. Sauget was instrumental in the development of Archview Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) writing the 501(c) 3 organizational structure, developing mission/vision/values, creating the board of directors, implementing project budgets, and setting yearly objectives. AEDC was originally created to serve the underserved communities of Centreville, Cahokia, Dupo, East Carondelet, and Sauget, by building a strong community fiber focused on networking and integrating business, healthcare, and education resources in the regional area. Over 106 of the regions top companies participate in AEDC from an expanded regional area including Granite City, East St. Louis, Belleville, Columbia, and other communities. Ms. Sauget, in coordination with Upchurch Concrete Company, Shawnee Community College, and East St. Louis Community College developed a new construction and concrete driver program geared to attracting and training local workforce for jobs in the area

which is just one of AEDC's achievements. AEDC members identified a significant need for qualified workforce that was unmet. Since the program began, we have placed over 500 people in construction and concrete positions.

For the past seven years, AEDC hosts an annual career fair with over 400 underserved high school juniors and seniors in the Cahokia and Dupo School Districts. Held at the Gateway Grizzlies Stadium, the annual career fair lets AEDC business members discuss job opportunities in the local area, education requirements, salary expectations, etc. Local colleges, labor unions, military representatives, and workforce investment boards also participate in the event. AEDC emphasizes the importance of staying in school, making good grades, and graduating in good standing because our area has many technical positions where students can work, live, and grow in our communities.

### ***Past Positions***

#### ***Fleishman-Hillard International Communications, Inc.***

As a Senior Vice President and Corporate Director of Competitive Intelligence, Ms. Sauget developed and directed the Fleishman-Hillard International Competitive Intelligence and Global Research Practice Group. The group consisted of more than 150 employees and 40+ interns working in 24 countries. In this capacity, she conducted numerous industry and competitive positioning analysis and strategies for many of the agency's largest clients including SBC Communications, Nortel Networks, Charles Schwab, Kelloggs, P & G, Emerson Electric, Hallmark, Exxon Mobil, Monsanto, The Danforth Foundation, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Reebok, J & J, Hasbro, Yahoo!, The Wall Street Journal, NASA, U.S. Mint, U.S. Library of Congress, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Harvard University, U.S. Department of Justice, Bayer (Pharmaceuticals and Environmental Services Groups), Bunge International, U.S. Army, Federal Reserve System, Abbott Laboratories, United Healthcare Systems, and other clients. She focused her research activities on industry and competitive analysis, statistical interpretation, and financial analysis. She developed, managed, and implemented corporate/marketing strategies, executive leadership coaching, communications/PR plans (including special events), and business/finance plans for many of the firm's largest clients.

#### ***Federal Reserve System***

As the Director of Market Intelligence, Ms. Sauget developed the intelligence function for the Federal Reserve System where her work focused on market research activities (i.e., planning/designing/implementing surveys, interviews, focus groups, and formal written reports), communications/PR activities, strategy development, and financial auditing/projections analysis.

Ms. Sauget conducted extensive research in electronic and emerging payment system strategies, safety and compliance policies/procedures/operations, and treasury direct payment system strategies working in coordination with the U.S. Department of Treasury and other multi-agency task force teams. She also coordinated all of the activities for the Eighth District Financial Services Advisory Group and was appointed to the Federal Reserve Customer Service Task Force. Ms. Sauget conducted extensive primary and market intelligence research activities as well as coordinated activities for the senior Federal Reserve System executives, Advisory Group members, the NACHA Association, and the Joint Utility Partners Commission.

### **Academic Background and Recent Board Appointments**

Ronda L. Sauget is currently completing the doctoral program at Webster University's Business Technology and Innovation Center located in St. Louis, MO. Ms. Sauget received her M.B.A. with B.S.B.A in Finance and Marketing from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville with a minor in Mathematics/Statistical Analysis (A.S.) from Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville, Illinois. Recent board appointments include the following:

- 2008-2010 member of the St. Louis Metropolitan Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA)
- 2008-2010 member of the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois and part of its public policy committee
- 2007-2010 Illinois Public Affairs Committee (St. Louis RCGA IPAC) to help advance the effectiveness of legislation in the State of Illinois
- 2006-2010 member for the SIUE Technology Park Board of Directors
- 2004-2010 member of the SIUE School of Business Professional Advisory Board
- 2004-2010 founding member of the SIUE Dean's 1000 Club for outstanding professionalism
- 2003-2010 board member and public information officer for the St. Clair Special Emergency Services Association (i.e., bio-terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, hazardous materials response, and technical rescue for Southern Illinois representing 49 police and fire departments)
- 2002-2003 Chairman of the Southern Illinois University Masters Degree in Market Research Professional Advisory Committee.

### **Past Awards, Recognition, and Affiliations**

Ms. Sauget has achieved many awards and recognition for her work and professional participation, including the following:

- 2008 St. Louis “Winning Women Executives Influencing Now” Regional Economic Development Award - Nominated by the Southwestern Illinois Leadership Council
- 2007 FOCUS St. Louis “What’s Right with the Region!” award for Fostering Regional Cooperation with the St. Clair Special Emergency Services Association
- 2006 three awards from the Illinois Hospital Association Society for Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations in building regional access to healthcare
- 2002 Silver Sabre Award of Excellence for use of Competitive Intelligence by Corporate Communicators – Fleishman Hillard International Communications
- 2001-2003 Outstanding Company Leader Awards from the St. Louis YWCA
- 1999 two awards from the Eighth District Federal Reserve for Outstanding Performance
- 1997-98 Board Member of the St. Louis Professional Chapter of the American Marketing Association
- 1997 SIUE Outstanding Leader of the Year from the Kimmel Leadership Center
- 1997 Outstanding Marketing Award from the St. Louis American Marketing Association
- 1996-97 President of the SIUE Collegiate Chapter of the American Marketing Association
- 1995-97 PR/Publicity Officer for the Collegiate SIUE Financial Management Association
- 1996 Board Member of the SIUE Collegiate Government Finance Committee
- 1996 the Finance Faculty Award for Outstanding Academic Achievements
- 1996 Harold Boeschenstein Award for Outstanding Academic Achievements
- Ms. Sauget has participated in the World Affairs Council of St. Louis activities exchanging business knowledge with representatives from several third world nations while serving as a Senior Vice President and Director of Competitive Intelligence at Fleishman-Hillard International Communications.