

# Business

## When it takes more than just having a good idea

### Firm helps clients find the right market

By Maureen Costello, Globe Correspondent

**CONCORD** — With 30 years experience in public relations and marketing, Michael Shenkman is no stranger to product branding.

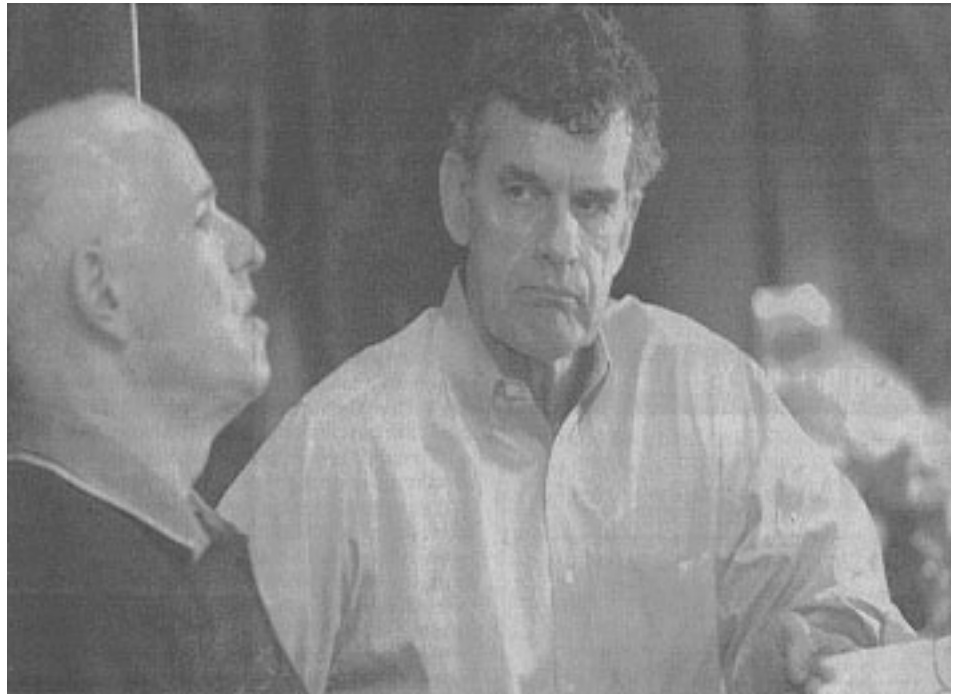
But when the New Mexico resident began a solo venture, the Arch of Leadership executive mentoring program, seven years ago, he was on unfamiliar ground. His product, based largely on theories to create high-quality business leadership skills in individuals, didn't lend itself easily to branding — other than the baseball caps and T-shirts that sport the embroidered logo of an arch aglow with energy.

To gain exposure for his concepts, Shenkman turned to Ken Lizotte, principal of Emerson Consulting Group Inc.

Lizotte, a former ghostwriter, freelance writer, the author of six books and hundreds of magazine articles, and a self-proclaimed "thought leader," makes his living helping people in the business of ideas like Shenkman make theirs.

"My job really is to listen to see if I can throw out some feedback," said Lizotte, who opened his consulting company in Concord in 1996, and now boasts a staff of eight, including his wife, Barbara A. Litwak.

Lizotte sees his job as helping clients, individuals like Shenkman or organizations such as law firms, to transmit original ideas to the public,



Michael Shenkman (left), author of the new book *The Arch and Path*, meets with Ken Lizotte, whose job is to help Shenkman take his concept to the public.

whether it be through writing an article or a book for publication, or by standing before an audience and discussing the ideas.

"We help people get a new career. We repackage them and help them market themselves," said Lizotte. "We help them get published. We do basically everything except writing the first draft." Other services include setting up speaking engagements and developing websites.

Quite often, he works with individuals who have left the corporate world to go out on their

own, like Shenkman. During a week in June, Shenkman touted his book, participated in an on-air radio interview for a business talk station, and spoke at the Business Authors Festival at the Lexington Sheraton. All engagements were set up through Emerson Consulting Group.

"Promoting Michael's book and concepts is particularly gratifying," Lizotte explained, "because the business world really needs to hear what he has to say. Michael explains how companies can create true leaders, not just managers, and how to groom them, grow them, nurture

**Excerpts from  
The Arch and the Path: The  
Life of Leading Greatly  
by Michael Shenkman**

1. There are certain patterns or practices of living— thinking, feeling, behaving – that are conducive to leading greatly; and some people and not others engage in those actions with the express purpose of being fit, ready and able to lead. Pg 4
2. The leader’s unique qualifications as a transforming agent is that he takes the vision into the form of an organized collaborative effort to change interactions among people rather than into an art object or a pronouncement of some prophetic myth. Pg 15
3. The leader succeeds by, first, imparting to us an ability to envision and then make real something that makes a difference, for the better, in this world; and secondly, by displaying, exemplifying, and imparting to us the ability to grow into larger, more encompassing, inclusive, and expansive visions of our own lives. Pg 26
4. Successful creative leaders don’t have to be the sole source of inspiration, thinking, and decision making for an organization, but instead can accept the more modest role of offering a context (an arch) within which people can coalesce their energies into collaborative action pg 127
5. Great leaders may not transform the world, but they do make a difference in the lives of those they touch... media-based fame or even high positions of established institutional power or title have nothing to do with



**“It took me five years to hone these concepts,” Michael Shenkman said about his newly-published book *The Arch and the Path: The Life of Leading Greatly*. During one week in June, he was interviewed by major newspapers and radio, and spoke at the IMCNE Business Authors Festival.**

their creativity and help them learn how to do good. His ideas are original and significant and their value extends beyond business per se. He exemplifies what I call a ‘thought leader.’”

Lizotte's company grew out of his 12-year career as a freelance writer and CareerScapes, a career consulting company he ran with his wife. "I developed this by putting the two together," said Lizotte. "I was helping a lot of consultants get published because some of the consultants asked me if I could do that."

A career journalist, cofounder of the National Writers Union, and a recent past president of the New England Chapter of the Institute of Management Consultants, Lizotte had the experience and resources necessary in both industries to support his clients' endeavors. Publishing and public speaking, he said, are vital assets to getting clients before their target markets. But, Lizotte said, the client has to make the first step.

"If you develop the ideas, you should do the initial hard work to express those ideas," said Lizotte. He likened the process to a song that sounds great when remade by a musician, yet sounds best when performed by

the original artist. "I have seen too many situations where even the best ghostwriter has to do a lot of guesswork to get it right."

Shenkman agreed. "It took me five years to hone these concepts," he said about his newly published book, "The Arch and the Path: The Life of Leading Greatly." "I could hardly expect someone else to really do that for me."

Lizotte's company has assisted 120 clients in its nine years. Revenues and profits have grown each year, said Lizotte, adding the need for additional staffing has also increased. Clients may pay based on an hourly fee, a menu of services available, or by setting up a retainer.

Lizotte refers to his clients as "thought leaders," but he knows that publishing is not easy for everyone. So he starts small.

Through the Socratic method of bouncing ideas off the client, he helps clients generate a list of topics for articles they publish. He then refers to his growing catalog of periodicals, mostly trade publications such as the Boston Business Journal, MassHigh Tech, and The Journal of Business Strategies, and selects those appropriate for the ideas.

our standard of creative leader's 'greatness'. Pg 167

6. One becomes a great leader not only by being aware of one's own life, but how one's life plays within a larger context of family, society, world and environment. Pg 168
7. In the Arch of the Leader's Ethic, a leader's recollections and values are no longer taken to be the final word to be accepted "as is." They are taken as the raw material for a new challenge as the basis from which whole new perspectives on how they can be effective leaders in the world begin to be formed. Pg 175
8. Creative leaders...relish stressful times and find ways to thrive on the tensions created by ambiguity. Pg 186
9. (A leader's) ethic impels an attitude of responsibility, of being full witness to what occurs as the process unfolds, all the while maintaining the openness to be affected, changed and educated by what occurs. Pg 258
10. Creative leaders are rarely overnight wonders who instantly turn failures and limitations to glorious successes... Expecting instant gratification keeps most people from leading successfully. Pg 271
11. The idea of practice is to do the practice. The practice itself creates the imperative that it must be done just because it's time to do it and for no other reason. Pg 274

Instead of forwarding a press release about the client or a prewritten article to the publishers, he pitches them a list of ideas.

"Editors are always looking for these kinds of articles from business experts like my clients," he said, citing financial planners, human resource professionals, and market strategists as a sampling of his client base. "We can guarantee that we can get you published."

If the publisher finds the concepts appealing and agrees to save space in upcoming issues, Lizotte informs the client, who composes the article. Lizotte edits the article and submits it to the publication with his client's byline. Once published, the client can add that feat to his resume. The same process works for speaking engagements.

This process also benefits publishers, according to Martin Desmarais, editor of IndUS Business Journal, a Waltham-based biweekly that focuses on the South Asian business market.

"He might pitch a topic, saying his client wants to write about a legal area on patents, and that tips me off that his client is probably a lawyer," said Desmarais. "I might not need a piece on patents, but I could use one on copyright law, which is the same sort of thing, but a little different."

Lizotte has always come through, Desmarais said, adding that through the years, he has even called Lizotte in a pinch to see if he had any relevant articles available for publication. He also likes the style of Emerson Consulting Group, which works differently than a public relations firm.

"Being a national publication, I get sent a lot of press releases, and a lot of the stuff we get is prepackaged," Desmarais said. "But Ken's is a little bit more personable. I guess that's the difference."

The business of communicating great ideas, Lizotte said, is centuries old. It's been incorporated successfully, he said, by such people as Henry David Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, for whom Lizotte named his company.

Emerson, Lizotte said, is best known as a writer, but made his living as a public speaker. "For Emerson," said Lizotte, "speaking, coupled with writing, were principal vehicles for getting his message out."