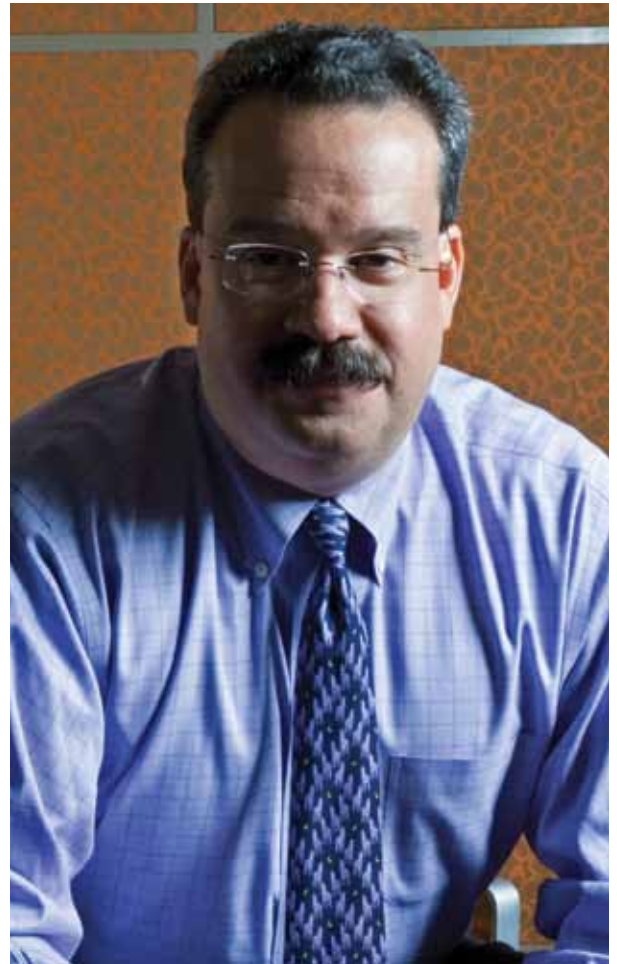




The Investor: Marcos Rodriguez

Interview by Pablo Schneider
Story by Kristin Schneider

A 22-year veteran in the private equity arena, Marcos Rodriguez is a leader in both the business world and in the Hispanic community. Rodriguez serves on the boards of Taco Bueno, Castro Cheese, Wise Snacks, the New York Presbyterian Hospital, the New America Alliance and the Robert Toigo Foundation. The founder and Managing Partner of Palladium Equity Partners, Rodriguez has raised more than a billion dollars in private equity funds. Palladium's current fund of \$775 million has invested in 22 companies in a variety of sectors including money transfer, restaurants, food, sports media and mining.



Latino Leaders: What are some of the criteria that you use when selecting directors for companies controlled by Palladium?

Marcos Rodriguez: At Palladium, we have 18 investment professionals, and we make sure that senior people from our shop are sitting on the boards and can have direct pulse on it. We divide up responsibility for making investments into various deal teams focused by either industry or geography, and members of those deal teams will sit on the board. Additionally, we seek to have board members who are outside of Palladium. We want to make sure these are folks who are going to be very committed to the success of the company, and who have a skill

set and expertise that we don't have. We bring folks with regional expertise, with country of origin expertise, and industry expertise that complement what our team brings to bear. We like to try to look at balancing the board... and making sure that we have a good diversity of views and a unifying theme to maximize the value of the investment in the portfolio company, to improve the business, to grow the top line and to improve the operating performance. It is a balance, and it is very much a mix of bringing together the right talent and the right backgrounds.

LL: How do you find new board members?

MR: First, it's about figuring out what we need, and then the general area of what we're looking at. We have folks inside Palladium and outside in our network of

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Resilience

As an employer, I believe one of the best things you can do for your company is to be an example of resilience as much as possible. There are many characteristics to a resilient person but let's talk about being able to confront difficult situations without falling apart. When something goes wrong, it's important to be strong and think about solutions rather than letting fear or anger take control. Fear and anger are reactions but they aren't useful in solving problems. When you're more interested in solutions rather than complaining about being the victim, others will follow and help find solutions with you. So face it head on. If you fall down, get up, dust yourself off, and go on. Go forward.

In our ever changing society and economy, it's essential to adopt new practices which will help you thrive in all aspects of life. When you practice resilience, **you'll be an example to employees and colleagues that you're doing everything in your power to lead them in the right direction.**

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operating executives that have lots of experience in all the industries we've invested in, from healthcare to media to food, restaurants, and consumer products... and also folks that have had experience all across the country from New England to New York to Texas, the Southwest, to California, to Mexico and Latin America. Those individuals each have their own networks, and we pulse out across those networks... We also talk to the CEO's and ask the prior ownership and past board members, "what do you think you need on the board, and who might be helpful to you?"

LL: What would be your advice to those interested in serving on boards?

MR: The first piece of advice is to network within organizations. The second is to serve on non-profit, and third is to serve on private company boards. I think getting connected with organizations like the NAA, the Robert Toigo Foundation, the

National Association of Investment Companies (NAIC), the National Venture Capital Association, and others is one very good way to get involved and find out about opportunities.

The second piece of advice I would give is to serve on non-profit boards. Each of you has an interest that you love, something that you're passionate about, and you should go and do that... This will help you in ways you never thought of, and allow you to help others as well.

The third piece of advice is to serve on private company boards. There are a lot more of them, and they are very hungry for talented professionals who can devote some of their time. Similar to non-profit organizations, it allows you to hone those skills and [learn] how a corporation works from different areas, or whatever area you need to shore up your experiences before you go to a public company board, where there is another level of scrutiny, expertise and liability required. ●

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