

Local SCORE organization, where retirees volunteer free business advice, offers services other chapters don't.



# COVERing

all the bases

## SCORE at a glance

SCORE, formerly the Service Corps of Retired Executives, is a volunteer organization allied with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Local chapter name: SCORE 114

Address: 200 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Suite 700, Santa Ana, CA 92703

Phone: 714-550-7369

Web site: [www.score114.org](http://www.score114.org)

Membership: 95 volunteer counselors

Services: One-on-one counseling, workshops and seminars, cybercounseling, advisory boards, classroom mentoring, speakers' bureau

Number of hours spent working with local entrepreneurs, 2005-2006: 35,000

Number of one-on-one counseling meetings, 2005: 11,000

Attendance at SCORE workshops, 2005: 3,500

Awards: National SCORE chapter of the year, 2003; national co-chapter of the year, 1998; runner-up, national chapter of the year, 2001, 2005

By JAN NORMAN  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

About four years ago, the Orange County members of a nonprofit business-counseling organization decided they should be as entrepreneurial as the clients they advised.

SCORE, formerly the Service Corps of Retired Executives, has provided free one-on-one counseling in person and over the Internet and low-cost business workshops since 1964. The local chapter has a reputation as one of the best, named national chapter of the year twice from among 398 nationwide.

Instead of telling the experienced men and women members what they had to do, the local chapter asked them what they wanted to do to help small businesses thrive, chapter Chairman Bill Morland said.

Their ideas have given Orange County entrepreneurs access to resources their counterparts in other regions don't have, such as:

- Counseling and workshops at dozens of satellite offices and libraries around the county.
- A local electronic newsletter and Web site with dozens of how-to articles and financial templates for running a business.

- Advisory boards for more-mature businesses.

- Specialized counseling from members who have decades of experience at such companies as **Hewlett-Packard**, **IBM**, **Omaha Steaks** and **Federal Express**.

- Programs for faculty and students at UC Irvine's Paul Merage School of Business and Cal State Fullerton, including coaching of students for annual business-plan competitions.

"Another thing that has propelled us forward is computerization developed by former president Daryl Watton," Morland said. "We follow up with clients and track how we're doing. For example, about 48 percent of our clients come back for repeat help. Three years ago, it was 30 percent."

The continual assistance and range of services have helped many SCORE clients, including Youngsong Martin, Vic Liu and Adam Bonner, grow their companies.

## WILDFLOWER LINEN, FOUNTAIN VALLEY

Youngsong Martin was a fashion designer whose clothing was acclaimed by fashion publications but whose business wasn't very profitable.

So in 2001, she closed that business and started a service in her garage that rents specialized fashion table linens to event planners.

She offers delicate fabrics, hand-sewn with ornaments, in hundreds of colors and styles. She rents them for \$50 per piece and more and sells them for \$150 and more.

"Most people I told about this business didn't get it," Martin said. "The minute I met (SCORE counselor) Terri (Carr), we clicked. She understood it."

Carr, a former IBM executive, is a marketing expert, but Martin's main need was financial advice, so Carr brought in Jim Anderson, who worked for



YGNACIO NANETTI, THE REGISTER

**A PLACE AT THE TABLE:** SCORE counselor Terri Carr, left, and Youngsong Martin show off some of Martin's table linens. Martin started a service that rents specialized fashion table linens to event planners.

Honeywell and other major companies before owning a management consulting firm.

"Youngsong is a really sharp businesswoman," Anderson said.

Martin disagreed.

"My creativity is this much," she said, making a beach ball-size circle with her hands, "and my logic is this much," she said as she formed a circle with her

forefinger and thumb.

Anderson helped Martin understand cash-flow projections and limited her spending on raw fabric. He helped her set up a profit-sharing plan for her 25 employees.

"Now I feel like I'm a real businessperson," Martin said.

They still meet regularly.

"The best thing that ever happened to me was SCORE,"

she said. "Jim asks brilliant questions. He makes me think, but he won't run my business for me."

Martin has provided table décor for parties after the Academy Awards and Grammys and for numerous charity fundraisers. Her clients include residents of Montecito, a