

Summit connects integrity to success

By Jeff Marshall

Special for The Republic | azcentral.com

Drawing from personal experiences stretching over decades, Arizona leaders will spend this morning sharing how integrity has been a crucial element to building successful careers.

The third annual Integrity Summit, an invitation-only event at the Ritz-Carlton Phoenix limited to 250 attendees, will feature talks from executives of such Arizona-based companies as Avnet Inc., the Plaza Cos. and Able Engineering.

The event, which has grown by more than 30 percent each year, aims to show how displaying integrity and improving organizational success are complementary goals.

For Cheree McAlpine, vice

Integrity

Continued from Page B6

president and general counsel for the Americas at electronics distributor Avnet, and an event speaker, integrity "isn't complex or academic."

"The notions of doing the right thing and acting with integrity should simply be how you live your life," she said. "My ability to lead, my ability to build and establish relationships, my ability to impact change and drive strategy — indeed, my ability to add value to the organization — is based on whether or not I am seen as having integrity."

Sharon Harper, president and CEO of the Plaza Cos., said that integrity can and should filter through the organization by example.

"The recognition that as the CEO you draw a line in the sand in terms of what is right or wrong, that makes a big difference to employees," she said. "Integrity needs to be front and center with every business decision and an important part of every employee handbook."

Able Engineering CEO Lee Benson will share with event attendees the proprietary system



Avnet's Cheree McAlpine says integrity "isn't complex or academic."



Alfredo Molina of Molina Fine Jewelers says respect comes with integrity.

he uses to evaluate employee performance.

"Every six months, our employees must have two examples each to measure how they did what they said they would, with a return on investment to prove it," he said.

"We connect integrity and other leadership traits to measurably improve results through 100 percent of our employees."

Alfredo Molina, chairman and CEO of Molina Fine Jewelers and an Integrity Summit speaker, knows integrity isn't always easy to practice.

"The biggest challenge we all have with integrity — and it's especially hard for young people — is you have to accept brutal reality after you make mistakes," he said. "If you tell peo-

ple the truth and exude integrity the first time there's a problem, the people you deal with will respect you much more. No one kicks a dog that's lying down."

Gregg Ostro, CEO of GO Media Cos. and one of the event's co-founders, said, "The reason the Integrity Summit series has taken off in a big way is that there's a tremendous amount of people who operate with integrity and want more people they do business with to operate the same way."

Ostro, Merchants Information Systems CEO Russ Johnson and Valley sports leader Jerry Colangelo decided to start the event after finishing a collaborative speaking tour at Arizona universities.

Johnson said, "Students gave us some feedback that they'd observed regularly in their scholastic environments people performing without integrity. We saw that as a void we could fill."

"The true leaders and icons in anybody's career or personal life are those who are doers and take action," Johnson said.

"The whole notion of do the right thing — the operative word is 'do.' Many people recognize the right thing, but they don't do it."