Through an informal management style and an ability to persist and motivate, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, chairman of INTERLEGO, has built a remarkable, privately-held organization.

His carpenter father, Ole Kirk Christiansen founded LEGO in 1932 out of necessity. His Billund Woodworking and Carpentry shop was severely affected by the Great Depression. Ole switched production to the necessities — ironing boards, stepladders, and wooden toys made from the scraps of the other products.

In 2 years, the popularity of wooden toys surpassed the other items and Ole began to market them under the name LEGO, a combination of two Danish words, “leg godt”, meaning “play well.” The LEGO Company bought a plastics injection molding machine for toy production and 10 years later, Godtfred perfected the stud-and-tube coupling system of the LEGO brick and, in 1958, received his patent.

In 1961, the LEGO group “invented” the wheel; in 1966, the train; and in 1968, a long-time dream came true as the gates were opened to LEGOLAND Park, an 11 acre minihworld where one can walk through a typical Danish village . . . created with 1.5 million LEGO bricks.
Trammell Crow, the founder of Trammell Crow Company, entered the real estate development business in 1948 and built the most successful company of its kind in the United States. His philosophy is simple... “I was brought up to work, that’s all,” he says. “Work is more fun than fun.”

The son of an impoverished Texas evangelist, he grew up in Dallas, pursued an evening program in law and accounting and, in 1938 became a CPA. With the outbreak of World War II, Trammell Crow joined the Navy and was discharged five years later. Two years later, he began buying up excess warehouse space and leasing it out in the Dallas area. His first major project was the now 7.6 million-square-foot Dallas Market Center, considered the largest wholesale merchandise mart in the world.

That marked the beginning for the man who has built his empire on three foundations: an unexcelled talent for marketing, a sense of style, and a reputation for intelligence, drive and integrity. As one friend recalls, “Back in 1951, he knew what he wanted to do. He wasn’t content just to be wealthy; he wanted to be known as the best and the biggest in the world.” That is exactly what Trammell Crow has become.
“He who brings a lot, brings something to many,” may be the axiom of Faust, but it most certainly is the mantle belonging to Ueli Prager, the president of Movenpick, the innovative restaurant-hotel-catering business founded by Prager in 1948.

Born in 1916, Prager is the son of Hugo Prager, owner of the Carlton-Elite, a hotel in Zurich. Following his graduation from high school, he went to Geneva to learn the restaurant business starting from the bottom. His plans abruptly ended with the outbreak of war.

On July 19, 1948, the first Prager restaurant opened under the name of Movenpick, a name selected by architect and friend, Otto Zollinger, who had chosen it because of an experience the men had while out walking — a seagull had swooped in and picked a piece of bread from his hand. That, Prager maintained, “Symbolically represented what we wanted to offer. In our new restaurant, one should be able to, in an elegant manner, like a seagull in flight, glide in and have a bite to eat.”

It is doing the unexceptional exceptionally well that has brought Movenpick to its position as the leader in catering world-wide.