

# Albany's new power duo can take cues from the Top 100

steve sink • business editor • November 7, 2010

Sandy Parker greeted the huge crowd at the Top 100 celebratory luncheon by promising one thing she was sure everyone could appreciate: They wouldn't be hearing any political campaign ads that day.

It was the day after the midterm elections. Bob Duffy had been elected lieutenant governor, as expected, and so he wasn't at the convention center to help present trophies to the top three companies as he had in recent years. But I'm sure Duffy and Gov.-elect Andrew Cuomo were on a lot of people's minds. What they do in the next 12 months could make next year's Top 100 event an even bigger celebration if they follow the lead of the companies that were honored Wednesday.

The people who run these highly successful companies "have learned how to do business in the new world," Tim White, managing partner of Top 100 co-sponsor KPMG, told me. "They have learned to adapt."

To qualify for the 2010 Top 100, the companies had to achieve revenue growth through three of the toughest years imaginable. Smack dab in the middle of the period was the deepest U.S. recession that has occurred in most of our lifetimes. They managed their way through the downturn and didn't just survive — they thrived.

But just think how much better they could do if the cost of doing business in New York wasn't prohibitive. In response to our survey of Top 100 executives, Jack Whittier of Palmer Food Services nailed it when he rattled off a list of state taxes and fees and said that if they could be cut in half, "We would have more capital to grow and invest in our business and potentially hire more people."

Cuomo is cautioning not to expect miracles right out of the gate, but he does say steady progress toward restoring the state to fiscal soundness is doable.

KPMG's White said he, and the entire business

community, will be watching.

"The state budget is a big issue for everyone," he said. "Government spending and taxes — big issues."

Any opportunity to attract new businesses, and even the ability to retain the businesses already here, depend on what's accomplished in Albany in the next few months, White said. "We'll see what happens."



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