

Career makeover

# Layoff prodded him in the right direction

■ After taking a buyout from an auto marketer, Joe Dyament landed on his own two feet.

By BRIAN J. O'CONNOR  
*The Detroit News*

Some people pursue change while others — especially in the auto business — have change thrust upon them.

Just last week, workers at Ford, GM and DaimlerChrysler all heard plans for changes that won't give them much of a say, but still can leave them with a lot of choice.

Joe Dyament of Grosse Pointe has gone through that experience. Instead of putting people into cars, he now makes it comfortable for them to walk.

He offers this advice: "The main thing is just believing in yourself. You were successful at your previous job, so there's no reason you can't be successful at something else. It's all in our attitude."

**Early career:** Dyament graduated from college around the height of Michigan's worst unemployment,

when the jobless rate hovered as high as 14 percent. Nonetheless, he landed a job with a graphic arts firm right across from the old General Motors Corp. headquarters on West Grand Boulevard.

He moved on to a small advertising agency, then in 1988 to DCI Marketing, which builds displays for auto dealers and handles direct marketing campaigns.

"I had an uncle who was a tool-and-die maker at Ford and had a good career," Dyament recalls. "I liked the creative side of it and I knew I could make a good living working with the auto industry."

**What changed:** By 1997, Dyament had been promoted to vice president. He felt it was a fantastic opportunity and enjoyed working with clients. Most of his work was with the Buick division of GM, as well as the GMAC finance arm. But things started getting tough and GM started consolidating operations. As GM began to shrink its operations, so did DCI. In 2004, his bosses approached Dyament, then 43, with a severance package.



Max Ortiz / The Detroit News

Joe Dyament used his experience working with an automotive marketing firm to open Foot Solutions, a specialty shoes enterprise.

## Work tips

Joe Dyament's career shift underscores the point that our purpose and passion at work continues to evolve and change as we live our lives, observes leadership and career coach Prudence Cole of Grosse Pointe, author of the Web site beingatwork.com and the recently published book "Finding Power, Passion and Joy Being at Work." She adds these points:



Cole

- Job change is almost never a 180-degree change. The seeds of a new career can be found in what you have already done.
- Mentors are invaluable. Much like a coach, a mentor can help guide you, assist you in sorting through whatever dilemmas you are facing, share their learning and experience, and support you in setting goals.
- A layoff, cutback or dismissal may be a wake-up call. It's an opportunity to question whether you really want to continue with what you've been doing.

"It was outstanding," he says of the severance offer, though he still keeps confidential about the terms. "It really gave me the time to reflect on what I wanted to do with the next half of my career."

**Moment of truth:** "After I sat back and caught my breath, I was traveling all the time, I wasn't seeing my family a whole lot, and it just gave me a good opportunity to pause and reflect on where I'd been and what I'd accomplished."

Part of his package included 12 weeks of services from Right Management Consultants, an outplacement firm. "I found out that what really motivates me and drives me is helping people," Dyament says. "That had been true at DCI, where seeing that succeed really gave me a charge."

**Making the change:** Dyament put his marketing research skills to work. His first choice: something away from the car business.

"I wanted to do a 180-degree turn

away" from the automotive industry, he recalls. Looking at the trends and demographics, he decided that the medical field was taking off in southeastern Michigan.

He also wanted to own his own business, and consulted with a specialist from the Franchise Network, a franchise placement and consulting firm. After investigating a few businesses, Dyament settled on Foot Solutions, a retail outlet that fits people with foot and medical problems with special shoes, insoles and orthotics. The stores work closely with doctors treating the growing number of diabetics in the United States, so it was in the medical field, but it also offered Dyament the opportunity to create a good retail experience and help customers.

Once he selected Foot Solutions, Dyament went into high gear. He made the choice in October 2004 and had the business up and running in five months.

*Please see Makeover, Page 3C*

## Joe Dyament

**Home:** Grosse Pointe, married with two children, ages 9 and 5

**Born:** 1961, Detroit

**Education:** Lakeview High School, St. Clair Shores, 1979; Macomb Community College; Central Michigan University, 1983, degree in broadcast and cinematic arts, minor in advertising and photojournalism

**Old career:** Marketing professional working with automotive clients

**New career:** Owner of a Foot Solutions franchise, creating custom prescribed insoles and orthotics



## Makeover

*Continued from Page 1C*

"Changing gears at midlife, taking on something new that would charge me up and be invigorating, this gave me the opportunity to take on a whole new field," he says.

**What it took:** In addition to talking his wife, Diane, a court reporter, into joining him, he had to raise the capital from business and home equity loans as well as savings, and undergo training, including passing a 3½-hour test to become certified so he could be allowed to make and fit prescribed footwear and supports.

He also got two weeks of training in Atlanta and put together his marketing plan for the business, which opened in February.

"Everything happened really quick," he recalls. After writing his marketing plan, he exceeded it in his first three months, and beat the corporate franchisor's expectations, too.

The store, in St. Clair Shores, broke even in its first year, and he now has two part-time employees. His goal is to open at least one more store in the area.

"It's very satisfying. Rather than trying to market an automotive vehicle, now I'm trying to market my own business."

**Words of wisdom:** Throughout his career, support from mentors has been vital, Dyament says. Mentors from his time at DCI helped his career there and encouraged him to strike out on his own, and he was also assisted by the consultant he worked with in buying his franchise.

"It's kind of comforting," Dyament says. "Having supportive people who can help you achieve your goals is very important."