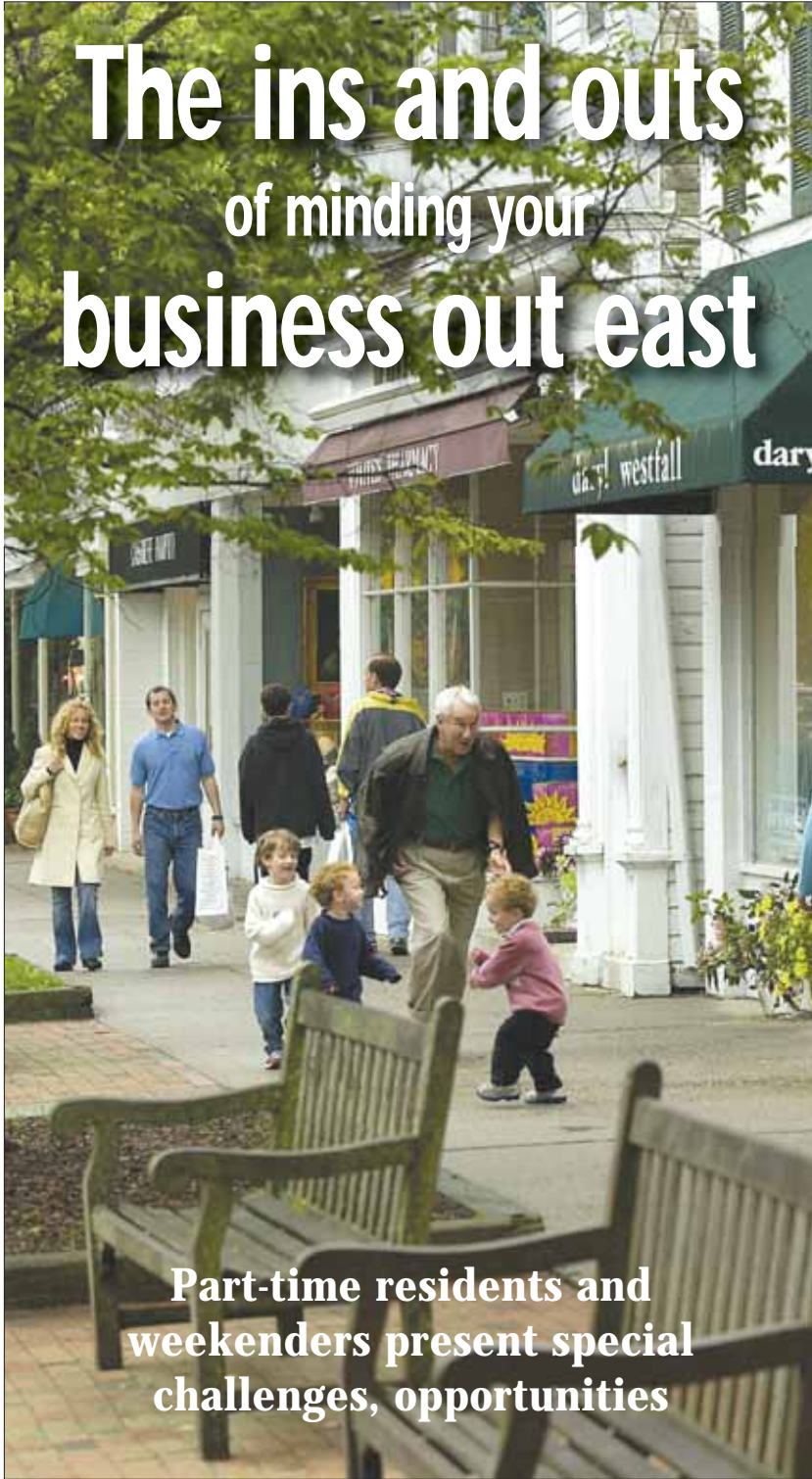


As Seen In

# Long Island Business NEWS

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## The ins and outs of minding your business out east

**Part-time residents and  
weekenders present special  
challenges, opportunities**

A lot more than mileage separates life on the East End from the rest of Long Island. The term “shares” refers to part ownership in a home rather than what’s traded on the stock market. Weekenders outnumber full-time residents in the summer months. A weak dollar is making the Hamptons home to Europeans.

If living on the East End with its estates, galas and summer influx can be distinct from life further west, business on the East End is also worlds apart.

With its mix of small-town feel and cosmopolitan population who call the Hamptons home for part of the year, the area presents a different business environment than Nassau and Western Suffolk. Companies turn to different strategies to thrive there.

Len Scioscia, president of Cook, Hall & Hyde, a provider of commercial and personal insurance, sees a few approaches as most effective out east.

“The East End strategies are really longer hours, staffing the office with people from the community and embedding ourselves in the local service organizations,” Scioscia said.

While most service providers are closed on weekends further west, the influx of weekenders makes weekend hours business as usual, even for some professional service providers.

Cook, Hall & Hyde’s East Hampton office is open Saturdays, unlike sister offices in Melville and Fairlawn, N.J.

“A lot of people may be working in the city during the week and they’d like to take care of

some details, change some coverage on the home and meet with someone on the weekend," Scioscia said.

Price doesn't matter as much as service, especially for Europeans encouraged by strong currency exchange rates. "People want quality," said Carol Schnittlich, general manager at the 12-room The Hedges Inn in East Hampton. "They want special treatment."

#### **Part-time equals profits**

The part-time nature of many residents provides opportunities for companies to extend their business far beyond Long Island.

Cook, Hall & Hyde, licensed to sell insurance in 48 states, parlays local clients into business insuring homes and other properties in Manhattan, Westchester, California, Florida and Europe.

"Our ultimate goal is to handle all of a person's insurance," Scioscia said. "Our customers have homes, automobiles and businesses in a lot of places other than New York."

Due to the smaller East End region, business people often live in the area where they work, increasing the importance of community involvement.

"We're involved in our communities everywhere," Scioscia said. "But on the East End, we have a lot of concentration in these communities. We're engaged in a lot of community-based organizations."

A Cook, Hall & Hyde salesperson sits on the board of the Southampton Youth Services and a partner was commissioner of the East Hampton Little League.

Scioscia is involved in the East Hampton Kiwanis. In addition, the company contributes to dozens of East End charities.

#### **Help me help you**

Networking matters everywhere, but nowhere more than on the East End. Companies network with each other, cooperating to grow business in a communal corporate culture.

Service providers network through professional organizations, meeting accountants, money managers and lawyers who work for wealthy clients.

"[Affluent clients] rely on other professionals to get it right," Scioscia said. "We get to know those other professionals. And then we ask them if they have any other clients who could use the same service."

**'The East End strategies are longer hours, staffing the office with people from the community and embedding ourselves in the local service organizations.'**

Attorneys handling real estate closings can be key connections for other professionals seeking to win business.

"That's how a lot of our relationships begin with many people," Scioscia said, "the transaction of the attorney handling the closing calling one of us up."

In another example, Bedell Cellars helps put on wine dinners at local restaurants such as Jamesport Manor Inn and Jedediah Hawkins, both in Jamesport, and North Fork Table and Food in Southold.

"We put the word out on our end," said Holly Palm, operations manager for Bedell Cellars, in Cutchogue. "The

restaurant puts the word out on their end."

Bedell also distributes cheese platters from the Village Cheese Shop in Mattituck (complete with that store's logo) at wine tasting tours.

The Hedges gives guests passes to the East Hampton Gym. When London Jewelers holds watch fairs, London Jewelers gets business and the Hedges gets guests.

Companies use culture and entertainment to reach customers. The Long Island Wine Council and East End Arts Council in February held "Jazz on the Vine" in which bands played at wineries on weekends.

"Customers could go to one vineyard to see one jazz group and then go to the next to see another," Palm said.

#### **Drawing on history**

Companies sometimes stress history on the East End, showing they're as much a part of the area as the beautiful landscape. The Hedges has been an inn since 1870. People escaping from the present like being transported hosted guests, but with modern technology.

"That's part of the charm," Schnittlich said of the inn's historical feel, reinforced by books at the Hedges about historical houses.

Cook, Hall & Hyde, founded in 1946, benefits from its own history.

"Our history and traditions are very important to us everywhere," Scioscia said. "It's not unusual for someone to say to me that Ed Cook (who passed away more than 20 years ago) sold them their first home in 1962. That's a nice feeling that people feel connected to the firm enough to tell me how far back they go with us." ■

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