

Rancho Mirage couple presents stories of 'real people'

Talking business with... James and Carolyn Ausman

John Hussar • Special to The Desert Sun • January 2, 2011

Rancho Mirage residents James and Carolyn Ausman didn't necessarily consider themselves savvy marketers or TV producers, but they figure they beat the odds of 50,000 to 1 by tapping into the largest market in America: The baby boomers.

"This is the fastest-growing market in the United States and no one is paying attention," James Ausman, a neurosurgeon by trade, says with a slight smile.

Ausman, 73, and his wife, Carolyn, 72 — an honors graduate with a background in television, radio and film — are embarking on their second season of half-hour TV shows profiling "real people" and how they have made a difference in their own lives and in the lives of others.

And yes, everyone is over age 40, including co-host Gino Lamont, a KMIR-TV6 anchor.

The 13 shows will air over 144 public television stations, including KCET in Los Angeles and KVCR in San Bernardino, and throughout the United States and Canada.

Their booming business was borne out of their collective professional and personal backgrounds and asking one question: "What will you do for the rest of your life?"

"There is a vast wasteland of information out there from a medical point-of-view about growing older," James Ausman said. "Retire? There is no basis for that physiologically. I, like a lot of people, would like to wear out rather than rust out."

These baby boomers — or what the Ausmans call "The Leading Gen" for the leading generation — are a cross-section of the melting pot of primarily folks from the Coachella Valley.

Carolyn Ausman is meticulous about researching

possible interviews, talking to as many as 150 at a time and narrowing to 100 to get before the camera. The research took five years.

"We want people from all walks of life. You want to talk about their problems and their solutions," Carolyn Ausman said.

Typically, there are myriad topics from loss of a spouse to finding a new career to volunteering to coping with catastrophic illnesses.

Not surprising, the Ausmans say, everyone has a good story to tell.

"Almost everyone has such vast experience that is not being shared or used. It's really a show about "if they can do it, you can do it.

"This show is not about negativity or failures. The show is about success," Carolyn Ausman said.

"We interview all kinds of people: seniors, gays, the homeless to multimillionaires," she said. "They talk about everything: abortion, interracial marriage, drug abuse, their children, caring for parents — all the challenges people have."

Interviews have included Shirley Jones, the famous musical and Broadway entertainer; and George Schlatter, the producer of the hit television series "Laugh In;" and Alvin and Heidi Toffler, futurists who wrote the books, "Revolutionary Wealth" and "Future Shock," which were acclaimed best sellers that predicted the future.

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This new business venture has also been successful for their Waymaster Corp. marketing, research and television production company that focuses on the older generations. Just don't say "seniors."

Winning praise

The series has been praised by "Variety," the entertainment industry publication, and has won two "Telly" awards for achievements in culture and education.

The series is being considered by the new Oprah Winfrey Network and Discovery Channels, the Ausmans say.

The Ausmans produce their show at their office in Rancho Mirage after filming.

John Hussar is a public relations/media consultant and freelance writer in Palm Desert. Have an idea for "Talking Business With"? He can be reached at john@prnewsworks.com.



Dr. **James Ausman** and his wife, **Carolyn**, have created a 13-part series featured on 120-plus PBS stations. They used their home as part of the setting. (Omar Ornelas, The Desert Sun)

About the Ausmans

Names: James I. Ausman, MD, PhD; and Carolyn R. Ausman, BSS

Business: The Waymaster Corp., marketing research, and television market that focuses on older adult market.

Home: Rancho Mirage

Family: Two daughters, Susan, LLD, MBA, JD; and Elizabeth, MBA.

Education: Dr. James Ausman is Professor of Neurosurgery at UCLA, and former Chairman of the

Department of Neurosurgery at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit and Professor and Head of the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Carolyn Ausman graduated with honors from Northwestern University's School of Speech with a major in radio, television and film.

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