

Broward

SFB
ULTIMATE CEO AWARDS
2011

GIL COHEN

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EDUCATION

- Bachelor's degree,
Florida International University

PERSONAL NOTE

- Cohen was born and raised in Israel, served in the Israeli air force and came to the U.S. with the security department for El Al and the General Consulate of Israel in Miami.

Gil Cohen believes vision is the defining characteristic of today's effective CEO. The executive needs "a clear vision and be able to lead, foster and inspire others to align their goals with that vision." Cohen runs Cypress Financial Group with the deep expertise and assistance of his team. Part sounding board, part touchstone, they back his efforts to drive the company.

"They keep me focused on my vision for the firm and encourage me to delegate," he says. "My team has many strengths that pick up where I fall short."

Founded locally in 2004, today Cypress Financial Group is an office of MetLife that was awarded the 2010 MetLife Firm of the Year and Individual Distribution Firm of the Year.

GAMA International honored it with the 2010 Master Agency Award, an award given to firms achieving commission levels in the top 125 in the world. Today, the firm has 350 employees.

Cohen believes his approach to leadership taps three important attributes: humility, attitude and perseverance. Successful executives should "always stay humble and remember where you came from, possess the right attitude – as it impacts work, performance and relationships – and be willing to endure and overcome difficulties, and have the determination to find solutions.

"To be a good leader has more to do with the type of experience and what you have learned from it, rather than how many birthdays you have celebrated," Cohen says. "You only fail when you stop trying. Although most want to live on the top of the mountain, real growth occurs while climbing."

