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From this week's Business of Life

555 International's James Geier on 'Modern Family,' the Tao and essential apps

By: Christina Le Beau July 04, 2011

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As president of Chicago restaurant and nightclub design firm 555 International Inc., **James Geier**, 49, is all about staying current. His media tastes:

Eater.com's zoned editions (including Chicago, New York and Los Angeles) offer restaurant buzz. For design and architecture trends: **CoolMaterial.com** and **DesignerPages.com**. Also **Frame** and **Mark** magazines. General news scoop: **CNN**.

On his iPod for weekly business trips: "about 10,000 songs" and "**Tao Te Ching**," the ancient Chinese philosophical text. "It's nice on late flights, after tough business trips, to be reminded that I can succeed if I persevere and try to do good things."

Kicks back with HBO series like "**The Wire**" and ABC's "**Modern Family**" (recommended by his kids, 10 and 12). "It takes shots at everybody in a low-key, humorous way. It's really smart." Thinks the show echoes themes explored by satirist siblings **David Sedaris** and **Amy Sedaris**, "if you turned it up a notch with some slutty words."

A sculptor who creates large-scale pieces from found and industrial objects (which he displays on his property in Wyoming), he likes **Sculpture** magazine and **the Art Newspaper**. Fueling a passion of a different kind (both playing and watching): **the Hockey News**.

Fiction variety: **Ayn Rand**, **Tom Clancy** and **John Steinbeck**, especially short stories. Best bet for losing an hour: looking at **maps and atlases**, from ancient to modern times.

Flashlight and **iHandy Carpenter** (with five leveling and measuring tools) are essential iPhone apps. "It's amazing how often I have to stick my head in ceilings at job sites."