

IOWA CAUCUS: BUSINESS LEADERS WEIGH IN



PAUL GREGOIRE, LORI SCHAEFER-WEATON,
BILL BROWN, AND MIKE ESPESET



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**Iowa Association of
Business and Industry**

Iowa Association of Business and Industry. "The Voice of Iowa Business since 1903" is the largest business network in the state (serving as Iowa's state chamber) with a long legacy of advocating for a competitive business climate in Iowa. ABI offers its nearly 1,500 member companies and their employees opportunities to network, learn best practices in lean processes, workforce, workers' compensation, controlling health care costs, employee drug testing, environmental issues and leadership. ABI works "to foster a favorable business, economic, governmental and social climate within the State of Iowa so that our citizens have the opportunity to enjoy the highest possible quality of life."

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A VIEW FROM THE TOP



Paul Gregoire

ABI Chairman

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Business leaders have important job in February

Our focus at Emerson/Fisher is always on what is ahead. As the global leader in our industry, we are continuously working toward meeting our goals for serving our customers and growing our business.

It is that way at every ABI member company I know. ABI members always seek to learn from the past and celebrate successes, but they tend to look ahead. That is one reason ABI members are some of Iowa's very best business people.

A big part of looking ahead to 2016 involves the election in November. In our state, of course, we start Feb. 1 with the Iowa caucuses. And that is a focus of this edition of Business Record Iowa. Inside, you'll find a feature about ABI members and their choices for president and some comments about

other political news.

ABI members support both Democrats and Republicans. What all ABI members support is growing jobs and economic opportunity in our state.

Another focus of 2016 is ABI's 113th annual conference. That event will be held in Sioux City June 14-16. Watch for information soon about an outstanding lineup of nationally known speakers. You do not want to miss this event!

As we continue planning for 2016, I'll finish this month as I always do, because I believe it speaks to ABI's leadership for our state. When the question is asked about who will lead the way in making Iowa an even better place to live and do business, "Why Not ABI?" Thank you for your support.

EXPERT ADVICE

Ho, Ho, Hold It! Check Your List Twice on Holiday and Year-End Bonuses

Being "nice" may mean landing on the Department of Labor's "naughty" list for an overtime violation. With some specific exceptions, all compensation provided to hourly employees must be included in the regular hourly rate of pay. This means that the regular rate includes incentives such as bonuses, cash prizes and gift cards. Employees must be paid time and one-half that rate for each hour worked over 40 hours in a week. Employers often forget to account for these incentives in calculating overtime pay – and the Department of Labor (DOL) is watching.

Can this be avoided?

The following can be excluded from the regular rate of pay:

- Holiday or "special occasion" bonuses in the nature of a gift "made at Christmas time or on other special occasions." (29 CFR § 778.212)
- Bonuses that are discretionary as to amount and whether they are paid. (29 CFR § 778.211)
- Payments pursuant to a bona fide profit-sharing plan, trust, thrift or savings plan. (29 CFR §§ 778.213-215)

Even with these exclusions, employers can still get in trouble:

It's too much! If a holiday bonus is too high, the Labor Department may consider it a part of the wages and not a gift.

Are employees expecting it? Bonuses paid pursuant to a "contract, agreement or promise" are not gifts, nor are they discretionary. Bonuses that are consistently given at the same times (except for holiday gifts) such that employees expect them or bonuses that are announced ahead of time to induce employees to work are not considered discretionary.

Do employees have to earn it? If payment is based on hours worked, attendance, quality or quantity of work, rate of production or efficiency, the Labor Department considers it wages regardless of any attempt to categorize it as a gift, discretionary bonus or profit-share.



Ann Holden Kendell

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◀ EVENT REWIND

Bush Visit

NOV. 11 | ABI OFFICE, DES MOINES



Clockwise from left: Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, a candidate vying for the Republican presidential nomination, addresses ABI board members; ABI Chairman Paul Gregoire, right, welcomes Gov. Bush during his visit to ABI; Gov. Bush shakes hands with ABI board member Rich Phelan.

IIPAC Fundraiser

NOV. 17 | TASSEL RIDGE WINERY, LEIGHTON

L to R: Creighton Cox of Olsson Associates, left, speaks with John Gilliland of The Gilliland Group and Senate Republican Leader Bill Dix (R-Shell Rock) during the IIPAC fundraiser; ABI board member Tom Determann speaks with Bob Yeager of FedEx.



Clockwise from left: Former ABI Chairman Jim Tyler of Atlantic Coca-Cola Bottling listens as House Speaker-Elect Linda Upmeyer (R-Clear Lake) addresses the group during dinner; ABI Board Member and owner of Tassel Ridge Winery, Bob Wersen, welcomes the group; attendees talk during the fundraiser reception.



Leadership Iowa

NOV. 5-6 | WASHINGTON



L to R: Heidi Vittetoe welcomes the Leadership Iowa Class to J.W. Vittetoe Pork, Ltd.; Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey speaks with the class about the affect Iowa's agriculture has on a global scale; members of the renewable energy panel who addressed the class include Craig Floss of the Iowa Corn Growers Association and Iowa Corn Promotion Board, Ron Lutovsky of Iowa Renewable Energy, David Engels of Alliant Energy and Nick Smith of Alliant Energy.



L to R: The LI class posed for a photo before touring a hog barn at J.W. Vittetoe Pork, Ltd.; class member Melissa Reade gains first-hand knowledge about pork producers in Iowa; session host Steve Berger of Berger Farms educates the class on the importance of quality soil in farming.

2016 Critical Business Updates

NOV. 17 | DES MOINES

Clockwise from top left: Attorneys Cindy Lande and Alice Helle of BrownWinick Law Firm discuss the Affordable Care Act during the 2016 Critical Business Updates session; Brick Gentry Attorney Paul Drey talks about employee wellness plans; Mike Teachout, co-founder of Focus OneSource, explains strategies companies can use to comply with health care requirements.





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**JANUARY 13****Legislative Briefing and Reception**

Embassy Suites | Des Moines

3:30 PM – 6:30 PM

JANUARY 13-15**Leadership Iowa Session IV: Government**

Des Moines

FEBRUARY 9-12**Business Horizons Gilbert**

Gilbert High School

FEBRUARY 19-20**Leadership Iowa University**

Cedar Falls

MARCH 1**2016 Critical Business Updates**

Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center | 300 Third St. | Sioux City

8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

MARCH 3**Connecting Statewide Leaders**

Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Co. | Grinnell

10:30 AM – 1:00 PM

MARCH 3-4**Leadership Iowa Session V: Business & Industry**

Grinnell

MARCH 8**2016 Critical Business Updates**

Dubuque

8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

MARCH 15**Iowa Business Day on the Hill**

ABI Office | 400 E. Court Ave., Suite 100 | Des Moines

9:00 AM – 11:45 AM



Visit www.iowaabi.org and click the "Events" tab for details on upcoming events.

CAPITOL BUSINESS

**ABI OUTLINES 2016
POLICY PRIORITIES**

It's hard to believe that the 2016 legislative session begins in less than one month. ABI and its 1,500 member companies are ready to educate legislators and the public on policies that will keep Iowa competitive while enhancing economic growth and jobs in the state.

Business leaders are focused on good policy, not politics, and they urge the Iowa Legislature to do the same. Remember: It's about jobs. In 2016, Iowa's businesses have outlined three key areas that provide a pathway to economic growth in an objective light.

Workforce Readiness and Growth:

ABI believes a growing and prepared talent pipeline is needed to support business growth and expand Iowa's economy. Iowa should continue to invest in existing programs and public-private partnerships, such as Elevate Advanced Manufacturing, that educate and expose young Iowans to multiple career opportunities. Why it's important:

- The 2014 Iowa Illustrated study from the Tax Foundation study highlighted the importance of Iowa's employers to the state's economic vitality.
- Iowa Workforce Development's middle-skills report highlights the need for more workers.
- As businesses look to expand or come to the state, the availability of a qualified workforce is a key factor.

Taxes and Tax Reform

ABI believes the Legislature should consider substantial reform to Iowa's tax policies to improve Iowa's competitiveness. Such actions should be equitable, simple, predictable and include an element of government accountability. As part of an overall tax reform or separately, ABI supports the complete elimination of sales and use taxes on repair/replacement parts and consumable supplies used in the manufacturing process. Rationale:

- The Tax Foundation's 2015 State Business Tax Climate Index ranked Iowa as the 10th worst business tax climate compared with other states. Iowa ranked behind Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska.
- Sales and use tax exemptions for items consumed during the manufacturing process are inconsistent. Some items directly used in the manufacturing process are exempt, but consumable supplies are not. ABI supports and encourages sales and use tax exemption for consumable supplies.

Government and Regulatory Reform

Iowans shoulder the expensive burden of supporting too many government entities, which creates excessive bureaucracy and inefficiency for citizens and businesses. Reform is necessary to encourage additional state revenue and spur economic growth. ABI supports legislation and policies that are no more stringent than the federal government and that:

- Eliminate state and local legal barriers that hinder the ability of governmental units to better manage expenses and restructure governmental services.
- Address government cost drivers such as health insurance and pensions.
- Streamline environmental permitting requirements, reducing the cost and time for businesses and the state.

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Kemin's Chris Nelson draws inspiration from Iowa leaders who came before

When Chris Nelson's parents founded Kemin Industries Inc. in 1961, he never imagined it would turn into a global company offering products in the food, health, nutrition and beauty markets. Nelson wasn't even certain at first whether he would join the family business, but in 1980 he took a position as research director for the company's operations in Europe. Three years later, he moved back to the U.S. to serve as research director here before becoming president of one of the company's business units in 1993. In 1999, Nelson took over as president of the entire company.

Today Kemin employees about 600 people in Des Moines and has operations in 90 countries worldwide.

Nelson was a member of the second Leadership Iowa class in 1983-84 and has encouraged several Kemin employees to participate in the years following.

He took time to talk with ABI about Kemin, his LI experience and running a business in Iowa.

ABI: Did you always know you wanted to pursue a career in bioscience?

Chris Nelson: I knew very early on I wanted to do something in chemistry. As a little boy, I had chemistry sets that I used and played with. It was probably in high school that I got into the concept of biosciences. I was very convinced I was going to go to medical school. My senior year in college, however, I realized I'm not very good around sick people. As a result, I made the decision to go into biochemistry.

ABI: You were a member of the second Leadership Iowa class, which graduated in 1984. What were one or two of the most significant takeaways for you?

CN: Leadership Iowa was really one of my first exposures to a lot of leaders outside our own business. I think one of my first takeaways was that that is more than one way to get things accomplished as a leader. I'd been with Kemin for about three to four years at the time and thought there was one way to do things.

I also learned about the importance of manufacturing in the state of Iowa and the wealth it brings to the state. Real wealth is brought into the state when we import money from outside the state. Iowa manufacturers clearly play a key role.

ABI: Over the years, several other Kemin employees have gone through LI. How does this program aid in their professional development and benefit your organization as a whole?

CN: I've watched a number of our Kemin people go through the program, and they all seem to grow significantly as a result of the program itself. It marks another very important career step for them and their training. They probably all have different takeaways than I do, but I find that everyone who's gone through it has come back a much better leader.

ABI: LI has evolved to include a strong focus on civic service and responsibility. You have taken on many important roles, including your recent appointment as co-chair of the Governor's STEM Advisory Council. Why do you consider such programs important to take part in?

CN: As soon as you've been around Iowa for a long enough time, you realize the incredible opportunities given to you by being in Iowa. I do a large amount of international travel, and when I see the opportunities here in the state for growing a career that has truly worldwide significance, I feel that I should give back. Oftentimes, the opportunities we have, have been there because of the volunteer efforts of those leaders in front of us. We have a responsibility to give back to the state.

ABI: Kemin has operations all over the world, and the company has had opportunities to expand or relocate elsewhere. What keeps you in Iowa?

CN: Iowa is a very good place to do business due to a couple of factors. The foundation is a very strong educational system. The team members who join Kemin have excellent educations. There is a real spirit of creativity in the state, and that is something that has oftentimes been missing from other locations where we do business today.

From a fiduciary standpoint, every time we're looking at putting a major asset here in the state, we have to look elsewhere to see, is this still the best place to put this asset? I'm being encouraged to expand nearly everywhere we do business. In Iowa, incentives have helped make it competitive for us to remain here and pay high wages. If we were looking solely for the lowest-cost location, we probably would have moved by this point, but given the educational foundation, quality of team members we're able to recruit and incentives we receive, the whole package makes Iowa a place to stay.

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PHOTO BY DUANE TINKNEY



PAUL GREGOIRE, LORI SCHAEFER-WEATON,
BILL BROWN, AND MIKE ESPESET

IOWA CAUCUS: BUSINESS LEADERS WEIGH IN

When it comes to meeting presidential candidates, the opportunities for Iowans are endless. Candidates from both major parties have spent significant amounts of time here over the past year, and that will continue through the caucuses on Feb. 1.

Much has been made of Iowa's outsized role in the presidential nominating process, and business leaders are not taking for granted the opportunity to educate candidates on the challenges they and their employees are facing on a daily basis.

"Iowa is in a unique position to influence the national conversation surrounding the election," said Lori Schaefer-Weaton, president of Agri-Industrial Plastics Co. in Fairfield. "Playing the role we do in the national election process is an opportunity for Iowa business leaders to communicate in person with candidates about the issues we feel are most important."

Like many Iowans, ABI members are meeting with candidates, doing their research and trying to identify the one they feel will best represent their beliefs and serve as an effective commander in chief.

And like many Iowans, their top issues and selection criteria vary.



BrownWinick shareholder and attorney Bill Brown threw his support behind former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum early in the process because of his commitment to rejuvenating America's manufacturing sector.

"In my mind, that is the best way to restore the middle class in the U.S.," Brown said. "We need to focus on manufacturing and the high-paying jobs it can provide."

Schaefer-Weaton has not selected a candidate, but identified as her top priority an issue important to many manufacturers: the workforce.

"Workforce availability and quality continue to be the most pressing issue for the continued growth and success of our company in Iowa," Schaefer-Weaton said.

She identified initiatives at the state level, including Elevate Advanced Manufacturing, a program that educates Iowans about the career opportunities available in advanced manufacturing, but she said, "I believe there is more to do on the national level."

Issues that help businesses grow and remain competitive are top priorities for many business leaders, including Kirk Tyler, president of Atlantic Coca-Cola Bottling Co.

He supports former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, in part because of his position on such issues.

"I like a lot of his views on trying to get rid of all the cumbersome regulations that are hurting businesses in general but particularly small businesses," Tyler said.

"It's not only laws, but the regulations that agencies impose on businesses that create trouble," he said. "It would help us tremendously if we could get someone in there who paid attention to those regulations."

“

Business leaders must provide candidates with 'real perspective,' not extreme positions to make a point.

Mike Espeset

”

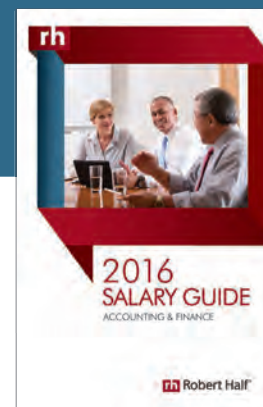


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A CUSTOM PUBLICATION FOR ABI

Business leaders have a responsibility to help educate candidates and the public on the affect particular policies could have, said Paul Gregoire, ABI chairman and global vice president of human resources at Emerson/Fisher in Marshalltown.

"Because the economy is such a huge part of the conversation, business leaders must lead the education of candidates through the nominating process," Gregoire said. "We can do that by staying in close contact with probusiness candidates and helping them develop well-thought-out plans."

Mike Espeset, president of Story Construction Co. in Ames, agreed that business leaders have an important job in helping candidates identify issues that are important amid the many conversations surrounding the race.

"Business leaders must provide these candidates with 'real perspective,' not extreme positions to make a point," he said. "We need to be part of the solutions, not part of the problem of gridlock."

Gregoire said he is backing Florida Sen. Marco Rubio: "Sen. Rubio is articulate, has solid political experience at the state and federal levels, and he is far ahead of his GOP rivals in developing an actual policy vision."

Espeset hasn't selected a candidate yet, but he said he has eliminated many.

"We have the privilege of seeing many candidates in Iowa, and each time I see one, it informs my perspective," Espeset said. "My field of possibilities continues to narrow through time."

Candidates have been visiting businesses throughout Iowa during this election cycle, where they get to see how companies operate and speak with employees face to face.

"I think it helps candidates to relate to a person or a specific business rather than speaking in generalizations," Schaefer-Weaton said. "It is easy for people to talk about business as if we are the bad guy, but when you humanize the business and introduce them directly to the individual employees and the community, perceptions are changed and a meaningful conversation can result."

"Of all the Iowa business leaders I have met, the overwhelming majority are driven by what is best for their employees and their communities. That's what makes it so easy for us to advocate on behalf of them for probusiness policies," she said. "If business in Iowa succeeds, we all succeed and are stronger for it."

"Business leaders must provide candidates with 'real perspective,' not extreme positions to make a point," Espeset said.

Of course, while the issues that have the greatest impact on Iowa businesses are important, they're not the only priorities on the minds of ABI members.

National security is a top priority, which has helped garner support for candidates with experience in such issues, including Rubio, a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and Santorum, who served on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Experience, electability and the ability to collaborate are three other factors weighing heavily with ABI members.

"My primary focus is finding a leader that can win in the general election, then move the needle for the country once in office," Espeset said. "We have been stuck for too long."

Tyler said Bush's experience as governor of Florida helps make him a top contender.

"There's a lot of noise out there, a lot of screaming and yelling, a lot of people promising a lot of things; when it comes down to it, Gov. Bush will make the best president at this time," he said.

All of the ABI members interviewed for this article agree on the importance of engaging employees in the electoral process.

"Educating the public is a critical step to making sure more people understand what is at stake in 2016," Gregoire said "We can agree to disagree on what should be done to address the issues, but an ignorance of the issues and a vote based purely on ideology is destructive."

Tyler said it's important to extend an invitation, regardless of whom you're supporting.

"We try to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible to get exposed to many of the different candidates," he said. "I want them to have a chance to interact with our employees and to learn what our company is all about."

IOWA CAUCUS TOOLKIT

Visit www.iavotes.com for valuable information to help you and your employees prepare for the caucuses on Feb. 1, including instructional videos on how to participate and side-by-side comparisons of the candidates.



From left, Presidential hopefuls former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, business woman Carly Fiorina and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush have all visited ABI member companies to talk with business owners and employees.

NEED TO KNOW

NEW EMPLOYEES ROUND OUT POLICY TEAM



The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) is pleased to announce two new members of its public policy team, Jessica Harder and Myron Linn. These new employees bring a wealth of experience and expertise to their work representing ABI members at the Statehouse.

Harder has lobbied in Iowa for many different organizations and brings a background in environmental legal policy to ABI. Linn is a former ABI chairman who served as an executive with Pella Corporation before retiring last year.



Iowa Association of
Business and Industry

ABI Legislative Briefing and Reception

Jan. 13, 2015 | 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Embassy Suites
Downtown Des Moines

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Rowena Crosbie, President



The Iowa Area Development Group established the Iowa Venture Award to honor entrepreneurial achievement, innovation and leadership. Our organization and its member-owned electric utility sponsors take great pride in presenting our 2015 Iowa Venture Award recipients. Each of these companies have made a profound contribution to their community, our state and the economy of Iowa.



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BY THE NUMBERS

35,000

The number of Iowa students out of work and unemployed, according to information gathered by Opportunity Nation, a national, bipartisan campaign pushing the importance of economic mobility.

8

Iowa's rank on the Opportunity Index, which uses economic, educational and civic information to evaluate the level of mobility across states and counties.

63.4

Iowa's Economy Score as part of the Opportunity Index. Iowa's score was significantly higher than the average of 53.5. The score includes seven indicators of a region's economic health: unemployment; poverty; household income; income inequality; and access to banks, affordable housing and high-speed Internet.

58.3

Iowa's Education Score as part of the Opportunity Index, which was also higher than the national average of 52.0. The score is based on three indicators of educational success: the number of 3- and 4-year-olds in preschool; the number of students who graduate from high school within four years; and the number of adults who attain at least an associate degree.

To learn more about the opportunity index, visit www.opportunityindex.org.

JOIN US

SHARE TOP PRIORITIES AT 2016 LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

What issues will take precedence during the 2016 legislative session? Do you have priorities you'd like to share with Iowa policymakers? The 2016 Legislative Reception is an opportunity to meet with lawmakers and other business leaders to discuss the top challenges and opportunities for the coming year.



ABI Chairman Paul Gregoire, ABI President Mike Ralston and Senate Republican Leader Bill Dix (R-Shell Rock) during the 2015 Legislative Reception.

What: ABI Legislative Reception

When: Jan. 13, 2016, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Where: Embassy Suites, Des Moines

THE ABI LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. TO REGISTER, VISIT WWW.IOWAABI.ORG AND CLICK ON "EVENTS CALENDAR."

EMBARRASSED EXECUTIVE

Is Your Company Maximizing the Value of Its Intellectual Property?



Brian Laurenzo

Shareholder, Brick
Gentry Law Firm

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Every business has intellectual property (IP). It could be the company's name, logo, inventions, custom software and other technology, customer lists or even the company website and advertisements. IP can be protected primarily through patents, trademarks, copyrights and license agreements. Alternatively, it may be determined that the best way to protect certain IP is by maintaining it as a trade secret.

Businesses should be proactive in developing and protecting IP for many reasons. A company's IP is an important asset, which may be reflected on the corporate balance sheet. IP can provide a company with a competitive advantage. For example, a patent may allow the holder to preclude others from making, using or selling an invention. Likewise, a company's IP may provide it with a marketing edge such as trademark rights, which allow the senior user of a distinctive word or design mark to stop others from using confusingly similar marks on related products or services. IP can provide revenue streams in addition to the direct sales of products or services through the licensing of protected technology to others. Finally, IP can be important for raising capital, as many lenders and venture capitalists put a premium on an IP portfolio. There are many additional reasons to consider protecting IP as well.

Of course, one size does not fit all, and the specific circumstances of a particular company may dictate the priorities for protecting its IP. With a new year quickly approaching, it may be a good time to conduct an IP audit. Recent changes to the patent laws and advances in technology and social media make evaluation and potential protection even more important. An IP audit includes a review of your company's protected and unprotected intellectual property and provides customized recommendations on steps that should be taken going forward. It may also result in the implementation of corporate clearance and protection policies. The IP audit is the first step in developing a clear IP strategy, which should be part of an overall business plan.



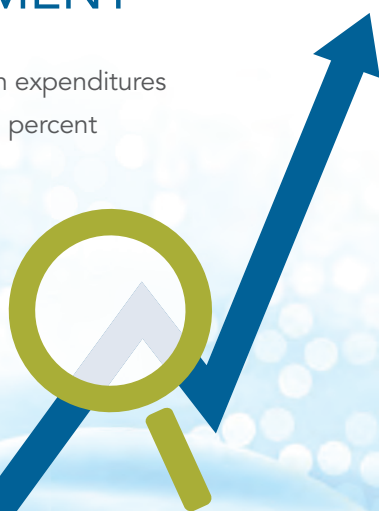
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TOP TIPS

Do You Know What People Are Saying About You Online?

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These days, almost everything that occurs offline will eventually find a home online, and your business is not immune to this phenomenon. If there is negative chatter surrounding your brand, you could be limiting your prospects. Here are a few tips for managing your brand online:

Monitor:

Monitor online mentions of your business. A Google search for your business name is a great place to start. Frequently check platforms where users are likely to leave reviews about experiences they've had with you.

Address criticism and learn from it:

If you find negative comments, you should do two things. First, address the comment in a polite way. If you were rightly criticized, apologize. Assure the commenter that all precautions have been taken to ensure that the mistake won't be repeated. Second, learn from it. Devise a plan to avoid similar situations that could arise. If someone is spreading slanderous lies about your business, legal action may be an option as well.

Earn respect and credibility:

Customers do their homework before doing business. Leverage this to your advantage. Show your good character through acts of good will and give people something good to talk about. Be an active member of your community and take advantage of volunteer opportunities. Don't forget to promote your good deeds online! Being proactive before there's a problem will help lessen the impact when problems do arise. Ask customers for reviews and give special offers to customers who have spread positive messages about your brand.

Seek out a professional:

Managing your reputation is a full-time job. If you don't have the resources to treat it like one, it's probably best to seek out a professional. One thing is for sure: To stay relevant, accept that reputation management is not an option, but a vital part to any marketing plan.

EYE ON INDUSTRY

IN MANUFACTURING, OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS

At 17, I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted to do after high school. One thing I did know was I couldn't see myself in school four to six more years. What really intrigued me was working with my hands and turning something that was only an idea into reality. A neighbor who was a production manager at Montezuma Manufacturing told me about the great opportunities in manufacturing. He said that not only did manufacturing offer exceptional pay and benefits, but the opportunity to advance was unlimited. He told me that I could write my own ticket if I was willing to put in the work.

After my two-year technical degree at Indian Hills Community College, I started in the tool and die room at Montezuma Manufacturing. I spent countless hours machining, building dies, building fixtures and developing myself personally and professionally. I was fortunate to learn from some of the best toolmakers I have ever met. It wasn't long (two years) until I was approached about an engineering role where I would work on redesigning current tooling to maximize effectiveness and efficiency through a process called Six Sigma. After a few months, I was promoted again to assistant production manager, and I continued to advance from there. This advancement inspired me to go back to school. I graduated from Buena Vista University with a bachelor's degree in business and finance and attended Villanova University, where I received my "master black belt" in Six Sigma. I am currently the supplier quality engineer at Lennox Industries, a company that has continued to support my professional growth. Lean is a particular passion of mine and I have led lean initiatives for Montezuma Manufacturing and Osmundson Mfg., saving these companies over \$25 million. My background in tool and die and the mentors I had along the way have been the foundation behind this career I love.

People ask, "Why manufacturing?" My answer comes naturally. Do you want to work for a company that believes its greatest asset is its team of employees, or one that only sees you as a number? I was so fortunate to have so many talented people around me. They saw potential within me and pushed me further than I ever could have pushed myself. The opportunities in manufacturing are endless, and most companies will pay for all the additional schooling and training you choose to take advantage of. In manufacturing, you are the company's greatest asset, and it will treat you that way. Here is my advice: Choose a career in manufacturing. You will be a team member in the greatest industry this nation has ever seen!



GET TO KNOW:

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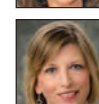
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