

REPOSITIONING THROUGH REINVENTION KEEPS COMPANIES STRONG



Universal Printing Services (l-r)
GEORGE SPRINGER, President
BRIAN SPRINGER, Sales & Marketing Manager
SARA SPRINGER, General Manager



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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



Mark Hanawalt

ABI Chairman

*United Equipment
 Accessories, Waverly*

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2015 shaping up strong for ABI and its members

At United Equipment Accessories, our culture is to work hard. We always use historical knowledge to increase our odds for future success. Even as we are learning from the past, we never stop looking ahead.

That is what this edition of Business Record Iowa is all about: looking ahead. You will find an interesting feature story inside. In it, several of my fellow ABI CEOs reflect on the past year and look ahead to 2015.

Our company has aggressive plans for 2015, as do several ABI-member companies. We know that the governor and lieutenant governor, as well as legislative leaders of both parties, have big plans, too. At ABI, we very much look forward to working with these officials to see those big plans realized in the coming year.

On a different note, please allow me to call your attention to one of ABI's biggest annual events. The first is the annual Legislative Reception. The reception will be held at the Embassy Suites hotel in downtown Des Moines on Jan. 14. Join hundreds of your ABI colleagues and well over a hundred state officials at this always-fun event.

And it is not too early to think about the 2015 Taking Care of Business Conference. It will be ABI's biggest and best annual convention ever, and it will be held in June in the Quad Cities. You can find more information about ABI and ABI events at www.iowaabi.org.

As you develop your big plans for 2015, we thank you for your support of ABI. Because of your support, the year ahead is shaping up to be a huge one for our association.

EXPERT ADVICE

Five ACA issues small employers need to follow

It is more important than ever for employers to keep on top of all the reporting requirements of the Affordable Care Act, or ACA. Here is a brief list of ACA-related issues employers should have on their radar:

- 1 ACA-related litigation**
Pending court cases could have a huge impact on employer responsibility under the ACA, including decisions by federal courts about whether employers in states with federally facilitated exchanges would be liable for penalties if an employee receives a subsidy.
- 2 Employer mandate reporting**
In August, the IRS released draft forms and instructions related to reporting requirements under the Internal Revenue Code.
- 3 Section 510 liability**
ERISA Section 510 is an anti-abuse provision enacted to prevent unscrupulous employers from discharging or interfering with their employees' rights to benefits. Employers should ensure that their employment agreements are modified to notify employees who are not eligible for benefits.
- 4 Alternatives to traditional plan offerings**
The employer mandate will dramatically increase the number of employees eligible for employer-sponsored coverage. While there are legitimate ways to lower costs, there are an increasing number of plan designs and schemes that could expose employers to liability. Beware of every possible legal plan design.
- 5 The 'Cadillac Tax'**
Employers must take action now to restructure their health coverage offerings to avoid the 40 percent nondeductible excise tax on the dollar amount of coverage that exceeds certain thresholds beginning in 2018.



Frank Accurso

*Vice President of
 Business Development,
 Merit Resources*

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◀ EVENT REWIND

Jack Trout Lecture NOVEMBER 13 | DES MOINES



Marketing expert Jack Trout provided the keynote speech sponsored by the Entrepreneurs' Organization and ABI.



The Avenue Jazz Choir from Waukee High School kicked off the event by singing the National Anthem.



Mike Wagner of White Rabbit Group addresses the audience.



Rick Watkins and Nick Van Patton pause for a photo during the workshop.



Representatives from the Entrepreneurs' Organization greeting attendees.



Todd Mendenhall, left, speaks with keynote presenter Jack Trout.

Leadership Iowa NOVEMBER 6-7 | CLARINDA



LI participants pause for a photo while touring a farm.



The LI class held a bonfire at Pinhook Farms.



Matt Helmers of Iowa Learning Farms discusses ag issues with the LI class.



Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey addresses the Leadership Iowa class.



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CAPITOL BUSINESS

NEW FACES HELP ABI EXPAND POLICY REACH

There will be two new faces representing ABI at the Iowa Statehouse when the legislative session begins Jan. 12.

ABI has expanded its public policy team to help provide even more valuable lobbying and political advocacy efforts.

Rachel Geilenfeld joined the organization in November as ABI's new Policy and Political Affairs Counsel. Zach Dalluge also began in November as ABI's Policy and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator.

Geilenfeld and Dalluge will work with Nicole Crain, ABI's Vice President for Government Relations, to help continue to promote a pro-business and pro-jobs climate in Iowa and build on ABI's storied history of successful advocacy.

"As I meet with members, I'm reminded of just how much they value and rely on the government affairs work that we provide," ABI Chair Mark Hanawalt said. "This investment will help us take those efforts even further."

During the 85th General Assembly in 2013-14, ABI monitored nearly 900 proposed pieces of legislation. At the same time, our public policy team worked with state agencies to improve regulation requirements for businesses and led election efforts, which consisted of managing the Iowa Industry Political Action Committee (IIPAC), endorsing candidates and implementing a thorough get-out-the-vote campaign.

"Although the Iowa Legislature is part time, the regulatory work of ABI and its members goes on year-round," ABI President Mike Ralston said. "Zach and Rachel will help position us to be even more effective for our members."



MEET RACHEL GEILENFELD

HOMETOWN: Clear Lake

EDUCATION: B.A. in political science, Iowa State University; law degree and MBA, University of Iowa

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS:

Restaurants, politics, ISU sports, travel, playing tennis



MEET ZACH DALLUGE

HOMETOWN: Grafton

EDUCATION: B.S. in agricultural business, Iowa State University

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS:

I love Iowa and plan to stay here, politics and policy, government, agriculture, Iowa State sports, church (Cornerstone Church of Ames), cars

CHAMBER ALLIANCE

ABI establishes new partnership with Urbandale Chamber of Commerce



ABI and the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce are introducing a new initiative that will provide more programming, educational and networking opportunities for Urbandale small businesses and expand ABI's membership.

The ABI/Urbandale Chamber Alliance, which begins in January, will provide an affiliate ABI membership for all Urbandale businesses with fewer than 25 employees. As members, they'll receive discounted rates to ABI events, access to grass-roots advocacy tools, ABI government relation services and expanded statewide business networking opportunities.

John Irving, the 2014 president of the Urbandale Chamber, called the initiative a value-added benefit for both organizations.

"The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce is very excited about our new partnership with ABI," Irving said. "A member can use the programming, educational and networking opportunities of both organizations to help their own companies grow and build their brand."

For ABI, the alliance offers an opportunity to reach an audience that needs the programming and advocacy ABI offers but may not have the funds in their current budget or time to invest in the organization.

"People buy from people they know, like and trust," said Leisa Fox, ABI's senior vice president for revenue and programs. "ABI provides Iowa's only opportunity for all business types in all 99 counties to cultivate relationships. These relationships lead to idea sharing, problem solving and ultimately, more Iowa businesses doing business with one another. In a competitive global economy, our Iowa businesses need every tool they can get their hands on to be competitive."

Hiram Houghton of LaunchIT said the move will benefit companies as they grow and look to expand their statewide footprint.

"This partnership provides for a natural progression for Urbandale businesses as they grow and look to expand outside the metro area," Houghton said. "ABI is able to offer additional programming and access to potential business partners across the state." LaunchIT, a software programming and information technology staffing company, currently has 12 employees working out of its Urbandale headquarters.

The ABI Urbandale partnership is serving as a pilot program that could be rolled out to other chamber organizations throughout the state at a later date.



ABI Legislative Briefing and Reception

Jan. 14, 2015 | 3 - 6:30 pm

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PHOTO BY DUANE TINKEY

George Springer, President of Universal Printing Services with son Brian, sales and marketing director, and daughter Sara, general manager.

REPOSITIONING THROUGH REINVENTION KEEPS COMPANIES STRONG

The origins of Universal Printing Services date back to 1966, when George Springer's father started a printing company with a single printing press. But Springer's slogan for the company illustrates how it has grown and expanded over the past 48 years.

"We're more than just ink on paper," said Springer, who now manages the Des Moines company – which is still family owned – with his children Sara and Brian.

Universal Printing has always been quick to adapt to changing trends in the printing industry, George Springer said. It has helped the company stay relevant to customers it has had for decades.

That versatility was critical several years ago when other businesses hit by the recession slashed their printing and marketing budgets. Universal lost 25 percent of its business overnight, Springer said. "A lot of people did," he said. "People just stopped buying."

At the time, Universal took advantage of equipment vendors' lost sales and invested in newer technology ahead of many competitors. Springer also bought the equipment necessary to create silkscreen and embroidery products in-house, which provided more offerings for Universal's existing clients and attracted new customers.

"That's why we're here today," Springer said.



“We’ve probably changed our focus 12 times, and we’ll probably change it again. Having an open mind is what has really made us so successful.”

George Springer, *President, Universal Printing Services*

Universal Printing Services offers one of many success stories from across Iowa of businesses that were able to adjust their business model and not only withstand the recession, but position themselves for solid growth in the years to come.

At Universal, printing services – the ink on paper that was once the only product it provided – now accounts for about 30 percent of the company’s business. Silkscreen and embroidery work accounts for another 25 percent, Springer said.

The company also provides many customized promotional materials, from hard hats and flashlights to flash drives, pens and apparel.

“Everyone uses these things, but they didn’t know they could get them from us, and we’re able to provide them a continuity of look from product to product,” Springer said.

As the company continues to move forward, Springer is relying more and more on his children to make decisions about where Universal Printing Services will invest its time and resources in the future.

“We’ve probably changed our focus 12 times, and we’ll probably change it again,” Springer said. “Having an open mind is what has really made us so successful.”

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A CUSTOM PUBLICATION FOR ABI



TOP LEFT: Olsson Associates provides civil engineering and other services for a variety of public and private clients, including West Des Moines-based Kum & Go. Olsson is currently completing about 70 percent of Kum & Go's projects in nine states, including Iowa.

TOP RIGHT: When John Deere was looking to build a new North America Marketing and Sales Facility, it turned to Olsson for development and LEED consultation, civil design and landscape architecture, among other services.

BOTTOM LEFT: Olsson Associates is working with the Iowa Department of Transportation to improve safety and efficiency along several interstate highways, including Interstate Highway 35 between Ankeny and Ames.

For Olsson Associates, Inc., smart business planning during the recession meant re-focusing on its core services, President Brad Strittmatter said.

The Lincoln, Neb.-based engineering and design firm, which has 26 offices in eight states, including Iowa, grew quickly during the decade leading up to the recession.

"We had a lot of things we were trying to do, a lot of people doing new things we hadn't done before," Strittmatter said. "When the recession hit, everything stopped.

"Like a lot of companies, the biggest change for us immediately was saying, 'What's really core for us?'"

In 2007, the company had to lay off about 100 of its 700 employees and narrow its focus to civil engineering and supporting services.

Like Universal Printing Services, Olsson Associates focused on building strong relationships with its existing clients.

"You have to position yourself to be the one consultant that clients choose to do business with," Strittmatter said. "That has paid huge dividends for us to this point where we have more work than we have people to do it."

The firm's employment was steady for about three or four years until it started hiring again around 2011. Today, the company has about 900 employees and an aggressive growth plan for the future, Strittmatter said.

Olsson Associates currently is doing about \$130 million worth of work annually, and its strategic plan calls for growing to \$250 million and about 1,700 employees within the next 10 years.

As the company expands, Strittmatter said he's cognizant of the lessons he learned five years ago.

"We really try to focus on things we know we're good at," he said. "If

we struggled with things during the recession, we're not as anxious to get back into those things."

Beyond Iowa, Strittmatter sees new opportunities in markets such as Colorado and Oklahoma and in the agricultural and agricultural manufacturing industries. He is also optimistic that governments will be placing a greater emphasis on infrastructure in the years to come.

In Iowa, newly re-elected Gov. Terry Branstad has already pledged to address the issue. That is good news for Olsson Associates, which wants to grow its market share in the state.

For TrueNorth Companies, an entrepreneurial insurance and financial strategies firm based in Cedar Rapids, the onset of the recession and a series of major setbacks forced company leaders to take a serious look at how to function more efficiently.

TrueNorth saw tremendous growth from its 2001 founding until 2007, President Duane Smith said. The company grew from \$100 million in annual sales to \$260 million and did not have any debt.

"Quite frankly, during that period for us, it wasn't quite as easy as showing up to work and things just worked out, but with the wind at our back, we really did not focus on operating efficiencies and processes," Smith said.

Then in 2008, TrueNorth was faced with what Smith describes as a perfect storm: In addition to the recession, Cedar Rapids faced devastating flooding and two senior partners transitioned their ownership.

"We faced all of those issues at the same time, and, quite frankly, it was the best thing that has happened to us," Smith said. "It forced us to really re-engineer the company and build a stronger platform that could withstand the storm."



“You have to position yourself to be the one consultant that clients choose to do business with. That has paid huge dividends for us to this point where we have more work than we have people to do it.”

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Duane Smith, *President, TrueNorth Companies*



TrueNorth developed a new company strategy based on four key indicators: finance, client experience, culture and business development.

The company cut its staff by about 35 percent while maintaining its same revenue numbers. “That positioned us to be opportunistic as the economy started to come back again,” Smith said.

From 2011 to today, TrueNorth has increased its sales by 92 percent and increased its workforce from 130 people to 240. During that same time, Smith estimates that the insurance industry as a whole has grown 15 to 20 percent.

He attributes TrueNorth's success to its entrepreneurial culture and innovation.

“Our mission statement is to attract high-performing talent with this entrepreneurial platform, and as you know, the key to any successful business is really the people,” Smith said.

The model allows more people to have a stake in the company (it has grown from six original owners to 49), which is a valuable recruitment tool. Part of the staff increase has come through acquiring other businesses – 12 so far throughout the Midwest. It was named the fastest-growing company and largest privately held company in the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City area by the Corridor Business Journal. It was also recognized as the coolest place to work.

While offering a good workplace culture is important, Smith said one of the greatest lessons the company's leaders have learned in recent years is that providing guidance and demanding accountability are also important.

“I thought that entrepreneurs, if we gave them an opportunity and the tools to be successful, most could do it without a track to run on,” he said. “But everybody can perform at a higher level if they're given a track to run on with some degree of discipline and accountability.”

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 2014 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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AHEAD OF THE CURVE

LEADERSHIP IOWA OFFERS UNIQUE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAWMAKERS

State Rep. Joel Fry of Osceola did not have any plans to run for public office when he applied for Leadership Iowa 12 years ago. However, the people and issues he was exposed to during the program have proved invaluable to him as a legislator.

“Leadership Iowa gave me a renewed and deeper understanding and passion for Iowa, which I think helped drive me to run for office some years later,” Fry said. “It was that passion for Iowa and an understanding of what we have to offer the rest of the world.”

Fry was a member of the 2004-05 Leadership Iowa class and was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives in 2010. He is one of six Leadership Iowa graduates who will return to the Iowa Legislature in January.

Many agree that the time they spent traveling across Iowa and learning about the issues facing the state have provided them a unique perspective with which to approach issues at the Statehouse.

“We focused on different issues of importance to the state’s economy and business climate and visited other parts of the state I otherwise would not have been to,” state Sen. Charles Schneider of West Des Moines said.

Leadership Iowa sessions on Iowa’s gaming industry and education, for instance, helped “lay a foundation for me of knowledge in those areas that has helped me on a few issues at the Capitol,” Schneider said.

Rep. David Dawson of Sioux City had already run for office when he applied to be a member of the 2011-12 Leadership Iowa class. Dawson fell short in his first election but ran for office again in 2012 and was successful.

“It motivated me to decide to run again,” he said. “It definitely is a program that encourages professionals in the state of Iowa to become involved in their community and know the issues.”

For Dawson, a former county prosecutor, it meant stepping up and providing a voice he felt had been missing in the Legislature. “I thought some of the issues facing the county attorney’s office weren’t that well-represented or well-understood, and I thought my perspective would be well-served,” he said.

For Fry, Leadership Iowa also provided the skills, motivation and understanding to seek a leadership role within his caucus. He serves as an assistant majority leader in the Iowa House of Representatives.

“That is a whole other aspect of this, coming in and proving to your people why you’re worthy to be their leader,” Fry said. “LI helped give me energy and understanding of how I could position myself and work hard – with integrity – to get into a position of leadership and influence.”

LEADERSHIP IOWA LEGISLATORS

NAME	CITY	LI CLASS
Sen. Michael Breitbach	Strawberry Point (SD28)	2007-08
Rep. David Dawson	Sioux City (HD14)	2011-12
Rep. Joel Fry	Osceola (HD27)	2004-05
Rep. Ruth Ann Gaines	Des Moines (HD32)	1996-97
Rep. Helen Miller	Fort Dodge (HD09)	2001-02
Sen. Charles Schneider	West Des Moines (SD22)	2003-04



“Leadership Iowa gave me a **renewed and deeper understanding and passion for Iowa**, which I think helped drive me to run for office some years later. It was that passion for Iowa and an understanding of what we have to offer the rest of the world.”

Joel Fry, state representative from Osceola



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Charles Schneider, state senator of West Des Moines

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Clear Lake couple live out *entrepreneurship dreams* with help from NIACC

John and Colleen Thompson are entrepreneurs who moved to northern Iowa in 2007. John wanted to start a business in Clear Lake that would bring jobs and value to the community he loves. As John considered his options he was introduced to resources available to businesses in northern Iowa through the North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC).

John and Colleen started their work with NIACC by meeting with NIACC Small Business Development Center Director, Ted Bair and JPEC Director, Jamie Zanos. Together they worked to develop a plan to model their business on peer discovery and industry best practices. Once they completed the discovery process, the Thompsons enrolled in NIACC's Launch & Grow Your Business class to learn how to write a business plan. The Thompsons found they learned to be very helpful as they talked with bankers to secure financing for their company, Iowa PowderCraft LLC, which provides powder coating and media blasting.

Iowa PowderCraft then worked with NIACC's Jody East to take advantage of the Iowa Jobs Training (260F) Program to access funding to acquire needed training in OSHA compliance and associated written plans.

"It's good to know we have partners at NIACC who can offer such great resources and who truly care about our success."

Iowa PowderCraft continues to work with NIACC with ongoing business coaching, the development of a marketing plan, the identification of additional training needs and on expansion plans in response to the company's successful growth.

The Thompsons said they are thrilled with the benefits they've gotten from their work with NIACC.

"We continue to have things to learn as we build our business and serve the needs of our customers and team members," John said. "It's good to know we have partners at NIACC who can offer such great resources and who truly care about our success."



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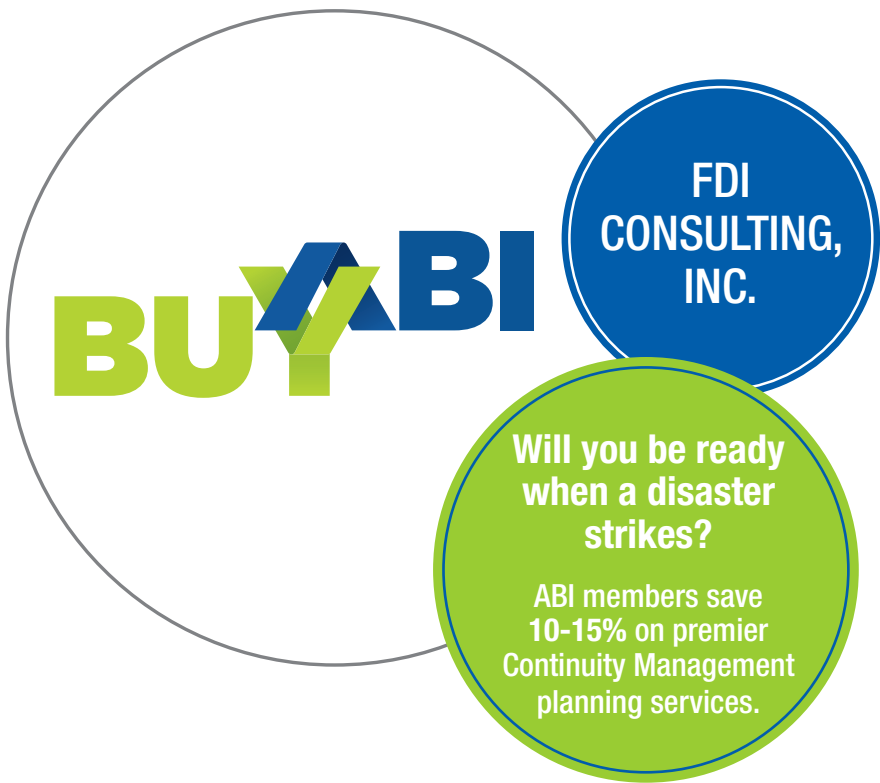
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



JANUARY 14
Legislative Briefing and Reception
 Embassy Suites | Des Moines
 3:00 PM - 6:30 PM

MARCH 5
Connecting Statewide Leaders
 Fairfield
 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM

MARCH 9
Lobbying 101
 Des Moines
 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

MARCH 10
ABI Day on the Hill
 ABI Office | 400 East Court Ave, Suite 100 | Des Moines
 9:00 AM - 11:45 AM (8:45 AM Registration)

MARCH 25
Workers' Compensation Program
 The Meadows Events & Conference Center | Altoona
 8:00 AM - 3:30 PM

APRIL 9
Connecting Statewide Leaders
 Storm Lake
 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM

MAY 7
Connecting Statewide Leaders
 Dubuque
 3:30 - 6:00 PM



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

TOP TIPS

Preparing for the Future: Create a Winning Strategy



Mike O'Donnell
Program Director, CIRAS
modonnll@iastate.edu

As we wrap up 2014 and look toward 2015, this is a great time to revisit your business strategy and refine your priorities for next year and beyond. Here are some research-based tips for putting together a winning strategy:

Mission, Vision and Values aren't just corporate buzzwords. They're your compass points. Spend time. Get them right. They'll provide the framework for all other business decisions.

Get your SWOT correct. Get outside help identifying your Strengths and Weaknesses. Look at other industries, technologies and trends to identify potential Opportunities and Threats.

Be watchful for the "five forces." Competition comes from all directions – suppliers, customers, threats from substitutes and new entries, and your existing competitors.

Align performance goals with strategy. If it's not in your strategic plan, don't do it.

Make your strategy focused and a real differentiator. What is the one thing that you can do better than anybody else? Hint: It probably is not quality, cost or customer service.

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Peter Drucker said it best. Don't develop a strategy that conflicts with your culture, because culture will win every time.

ARE YOU AN ABI MEMBER? CHANCES ARE THE ANSWER IS YES.

ABI is Iowa's oldest and largest business network, representing almost **1,500 businesses** of all types and sizes employing **over 350,000 Iowans** in all **99 counties**. If you are not sure if your organization is a member of ABI, contact Dorothy Knowles at 515-235-0568 or dknowles@iowaabi.org.

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As Iowa's oldest and largest business network, we understand fully that none of us is as smart as all of us. Not only is it lonely at the top; it's also lonely in the middle.

Are you a manager or executive looking for:

- An opportunity to develop your strengths (knowledge, skills and talents) to fully fill your role in the driver's seat?
- A safe place to share challenges and opportunities?
- Unvarnished advice from a group of trusted peers?
- A group that understands your world and can help guide you through it?
- A process to help you find your own answers to the challenges before you?

The power of a peer group can make a pivotal difference.

In February, ABI will roll out "BizWise," our newest collection of learning opportunities. Groups available include:

MarketWise: A group dedicated to the challenges of those in marketing professions.

FinanceWise: A group of financial professionals studying and analyzing the challenges faced by financial executives

RiskWise: A group of safety directors, managers and executives concerned with their operation's safety culture.

LeanWise: A group studying the latest lean principles, sharing best practices in efficiency and process improvement.

Watch for more information announcing details about these groups in the near future. If you are interested in a peer learning group that isn't listed above, please contact Leisa Fox at lfox@iowaabi.org or 515-235-0575.



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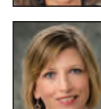
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