



Voters Have Full Plates In Nov. 5 Election

Employers, Secretary of State, county auditors stand ready with trustworthy information

BY EMERY STYRON
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Iowans hoping to cast informed ballots in the Nov. 5 general election have their plates full. As voters sort through the daunting plethora of candidates and causes amidst a barrage of ads, alerts, texts and emails seeking to sway their views and tap their bank accounts, what they really need is “factual, trustworthy information,” says Kim Durcho, senior vice president and chief of staff at BIPAC (Business-Industry Political Action Committee), a Washington, D.C.-based vendor of voter education and civic engagement programs.

In a partnership going back at least 15 years, BIPAC has provided resources and a website for the IAVotes program, also known as the Iowa Prosperity Project, sponsored by Economic Progress for Iowa’s Citizens (EPIC), a not-for-profit entity founded in 1991 by businesses and trade groups, including ABI. The website, IAVotes.com, provides a range of information, including employer get-out-the-vote resources, non-partisan political analysis and databases on legislation, legislators’ voting records and open seats.

“While EPIC believes that Iowa and its citizens will benefit from a ‘pro-business’ environment, EPIC neither endorses nor opposes any candidate for public office. EPIC does encourage the electorate to become informed by publicizing issues and factual information on those issues, and to be active participants in the political process,” IAVotes.com states.

BIPAC itself “is a non-partisan membership organization,” says Ms. Durcho. “We work with large companies and trade associations. Voter engagement and civic engagement is a core part of

what we do. We provide lots of resources, services and education opportunities for our members.”

BIPAC gets much of the information it compiles for clients to pass on to employees from state and county election officials. In Iowa that’s Secretary of State Paul Pate’s office and county auditors, who are the most reliable sources for information on election-related procedures, dates and deadlines for such things as voter registration, absentee and early voting.

The program is “not about swaying anyone or telling anyone how to vote,” but providing factual resources and encouraging engagement in the political process, Ms. Durcho says.

Q&A with Kim Durcho, BIPAC

The following transcript has been edited for clarity and brevity.

ABI: Why do you believe it is important for companies to educate employees about voting and civic engagement?

KD: There is a lot of conflicting information around elections and voting. It can be difficult to find accurate information, know your candidates and make a plan to vote. Employers and employees need a trusted resource. We’ve found through post-election surveys that employees really do trust their employers to provide good information. It’s an opportunity to provide a real value, helps build trust and two-way communication.

ABI: What are some effective ways companies can promote voter education without appearing politically biased?

KD: Over the years, I’ve seen a lot of creative ways companies have found to strike that balance. When I look at civic engagement programs, there is a scale

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2024

OCTOBER 23
LI CONNECT: LI Meet & Greet
VIRTUAL

OCTOBER 29
Engaging Future Talent:
Manufacturing Partnerships and Tours
WOODBINE

NOVEMBER 7
Automation Event
COUNCIL BLUFFS

DECEMBER 5
Connecting Statewide Leaders
OTTUMWA

DECEMBER 10
Webinar: Pre-employment
Testing Process Series (Session 3)
VIRTUAL

2025
JANUARY 15
Legislative Briefing and Reception
DES MOINES

MARCH 6
Connecting Statewide Leaders
CLINTON

MARCH 12
Business Day in Des Moines
DES MOINES

**VISIT WWW.IOWAABI.ORG AND CLICK THE “EVENTS”
TAB FOR DETAILS ON ALL UPCOMING EVENTS.**

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FROM THE CHAIR:

ABI's Commitment to Education, Collaboration, and Public Policy Success

As business leaders and community members, we know the importance of elections and we see the impact that policy positions and decisions have on our employees and our future success. At Winnebago Industries we invite and welcome our elected officials into our facilities. We want them to meet our employees, learn about our business, and see first-hand the high-quality work we do. We hope that helps them understand the impact of their decisions on Iowa employers and on our ability to grow jobs.

As business leaders, when we encourage employees to learn about the candidates and their positions so they can make informed decisions. That is what this edition of ABI's Business Monthly is all about, making your vote count. ABI

has many terrific resources to help you and your employees do just that. These resources will make it easy for you to participate in this fall's election and you can read all about them inside.

One of those key resources is IA Votes. ABI is proud to support IA Votes, which is a partnership between the Business-Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC) and Economic Progress for Iowa's Citizens (EPIC). EPIC is a coalition of Iowa business organizations administered by ABI, which seeks to promote information about candidates and policies. Learn more about IA Votes at www.iavotes.com.

Earlier this month, we held the Iowa Manufacturing Conference in Ankeny, which saw record attendance. That

event, and the annual Legends in Manufacturing luncheon, were a true celebration of Iowa manufacturing. If you missed these events, you missed terrific programming. I hope you will make plans to attend next year.

Speaking of next year, it is not too early to save the date for two other important events. On Jan. 15, 2025, ABI will hold its annual Legislative Reception. This event draws hundreds of Iowa business leaders and more state officials of both parties than any other similar event. And June 10-12 is the date for the 2025 Taking Care of Business Conference, ABI's 122nd annual convention. This is Iowa's very best business event of the year. Hotel blocks are already open! Find out more at:

Chad Reece
ABI Chair
Winnebago Industries

Business.com

In the meantime, and as always, thank you for your support of ABI! **ABI**

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from information with dates and deadlines, information on finding polling places. Then invite them in to be part of the conversation with webinar or open office hours. Top-tier programs empower employees: Employee resource groups, internal chats on company social media. All depends on companies' culture.

There's always the chance that someone can take something and feel like it is biased. The programs we see are the ones that stick simply to the facts. We're here to provide you a website, a handout, how to be an empowered engaged voter. Focus on facts.

ABI: Can you share examples of how voter education initiatives have positively impacted an organization or community?

KD: When we think of community, we're more focused on employers and workplaces. I've seen inspiring work from our member companies over the years. I've heard stories of employees who registered and voted for the first time ever because the government affairs team showed up and told how to register and vote. I've been witness to some employee-focused webinars that opened dialogue and allowed employees to engage.

ABI: How can employers ensure they're providing accurate and nonpartisan voter information to their employees?

KD: The first thing, you have to be providing information that comes from a reliable source. When we compile that information from all 50 states, we're getting it all straight from the election websites in that particular state. We're not using other third parties. We will even pick up the phone and call secretary of state offices if we have questions.

If an organization decided to provide candidate comparisons, we make sure that information is coming straight from candidate's website or some quoted source.

ABI: What challenges do you foresee in implementing voter education programs in the workplace?

KD: Presidential election years can be pretty divisive. We have heard from members that they are concerned there could be backlash. They want to make sure they are striking the right balance. They are worried people will decide to stay home and not vote because of the top of the ticket. One of the ways to address that challenge is to focus on the local and state races that are impacting the community.

We created a program, Let's Get Local, that's been effective. Sometimes there are many candidates. One area had 15 candidates for school board. Voters wonder where do I even find good information? We help people do their own research. **ABI**

Secretary of State, County Auditors Key Iowa Election Resources

Candidates on the Nov. 5 ballot in Iowa range from the well-known to the obscure. Below the household names in the fiercely-contested U.S. presidential contest, are candidates for four U.S. congressional seats, scores of state senate and state house of representative slots, plus county and local offices, including township trustees, Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners and county ag extension board members.

Voters will also decide the fate of local bond issue and sales tax proposals in some areas. There are also two state constitutional amendments to consider, along with retention of state supreme, appeals and district court judges. With the election just weeks away, it's none too early for voters to begin their research.

A sample ballot for your precinct will allow you to see exactly what candidates and issues you'll be voting on. You can then gather information directly from campaigns, candidates, websites, media reports and sources like IAvotes.com to inform your choices.

Sample ballots are normally published by county auditors in local newspapers four to 20 days before the election. You can also obtain sample ballots by visiting your county auditor's office or website.

County auditors, along with the Secretary of State's website, (<https://sos.iowa.gov/>) can answer voters' questions on everything from election security to key dates and deadlines to absentee and in-person voting.

Important Dates for Voters

- **Oct. 16:** First day absentee ballots can be mailed; first day of in-person absentee voting
- **Oct. 21:** Voter pre-registration deadline; deadline to request an absentee ballot mailed; both by 5 p.m.
- **Nov. 4:** Last day of in-person absentee voting
- **Nov. 5:** Election Day, polls are open from 7 a.m.-8 p.m.; absentee ballots must be received by county auditors by 8 p.m.

Here's a sampling of other helpful election information from the Iowa Secretary of State website:

Iowa Election Integrity

In a news release, Secretary Pate stressed the integrity of Iowa's election administration. "Despite efforts from bad actors to sow doubt in the elections process, Iowans can rest assured that their vote is counted fairly and accurately. From paper ballots,

pre-election equipment testing, post-election audits, and a range of cyber and physical security protections, Iowans can be confident in our layered approach to election integrity."

Secretary Pate's office has also developed an Election Security in Iowa webpage (<https://sos.iowa.gov/electionsecurityiniowa.html>) to counter mis- and dis- information. It provides a detailed breakdown of the many security measures Iowa has in place to protect elections.

If you have a voting-related question or witness questionable activity related to an election, fill out a form at <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voter-hotline/index.aspx> or call Iowa's Voter Hotline at 1-888-SOS-VOTE.

Secretary Pate: Have a Voting Plan

In a Sept. 26 news release, Secretary Pate said Iowans who plan to vote absentee by mail should be prepared to request their absentee ballot by Oct. 21. Part of that plan should also include tracking your absentee ballot, he advised.

Iowans can visit VoterReady.Iowa.Gov to track their ballot. This process allows them to see if and when their local county auditor has received the absentee ballot request, the specific date that the ballot was mailed out, and the date the county auditor received the ballot back from the voter. Iowa law requires absentee ballots to be returned to the county auditor's office by the time polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Secretary Pate also noted that "in efforts to remind Iowans to head to the polls, political parties and candidates may send voters 'absentee ballot request' mailings, resulting in some voters receiving multiple mailings regarding absentee ballot requests.

County auditors have procedures in place to ensure that if multiple absentee ballot requests do come in from one voter, only one absentee ballot will be mailed out, Mr. Pate said. He encouraged Iowans to call their county auditor if they have questions regarding this process.

Secretary Pate also urged every voter to have a plan in place to be successful in casting their ballot this election. "Whether you plan to vote absentee by mail, early absentee in-person, or in person at the polls on Election Day, it's never too early to make a plan," Mr. Pate said.



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2024 US President Candidate Comparison



Kamala Harris
 Democrat
kamalaharris.com
 FACEBOOK:
www.facebook.com/KamalaHarris
 X (FORMERLY TWITTER):
x.com/KamalaHarris



Donald Trump
 Republican
www.donaldjtrump.com
 FACEBOOK:
www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump
 X (FORMERLY TWITTER):
twitter.com/realdonaldtrump

Education

Howard University; University of California, Hastings College of the Law

Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

Professional Career

Alameda County District Attorney’s Office;
 San Francisco District Attorney’s Office

Real Estate Developer; Businessman

Elected Political Experience

District Attorney of San Francisco (2004-2011); California Attorney General (2011-2017); U.S. Senator (2017-2021); Vice President of the United States (2021-Present)

President of the United States (2017-2021)

Economy & Jobs

“As President, Kamala Harris will build on this Administration’s progress to ensure American industries and workers thrive. Vice President Harris will continue to support American leadership in semiconductors, clean energy, AI, and other cutting edge industries of the future. She’ll also fight for unions, because as Vice President of the most pro-labor administration in history, she knows that unions are the backbone of the middle class. She’ll sign landmark pro-union legislation, including the PRO Act to support workers who choose to organize and bargain and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act to make the freedom for public service workers to form unions the law of the land.”¹

“Republicans will slash Regulations that stifle Jobs, Freedom, Innovation and make everything more expensive. We will implement Transparency and Common Sense in rulemaking.”²

Energy & Environment

“As Attorney General, Kamala Harris won tens of millions in settlements against Big Oil and held polluters accountable. As Vice President, she cast the tie-breaking vote to pass the Inflation Reduction Act, the largest investment in climate action in history. This historic work is lowering household energy costs, creating hundreds of thousands of high-quality clean energy jobs, and building a thriving clean energy economy, all while ensuring America’s energy security and independence with record energy production. As President, she will unite Americans to tackle the climate crisis as she builds on this historic work, advances environmental justice, protects public lands and public health, increases resilience to climate disasters, lowers household energy costs, creates millions of new jobs, and continues to hold polluters accountable to secure clean air and water for all.”³

“Under President Trump, the U.S. became the Number One Producer of Oil and Natural Gas in the World – and we will soon be again by lifting restrictions on American Energy Production and terminating the Socialist Green New Deal. Republicans will unleash Energy Production from all sources, including nuclear, to immediately slash Inflation and power American homes, cars, and factories with reliable, abundant, and affordable Energy.”⁴

“Republicans will increase Energy Production across the board, streamline permitting, and end market-distorting restrictions on Oil, Natural Gas, and Coal. The Republican Party will once again make America Energy Independent, and then Energy Dominant, lowering Energy prices even below the record lows achieved during President Trump’s first term.”⁵

Immigration

“Vice President Harris and Governor Walz believe in tough, smart solutions to secure the border, keep communities safe, and reform our broken immigration system. As Attorney General of California, Vice President Harris went after international drug gangs, human traffickers and cartels that smuggled guns, drugs, and human beings across the U.S.-Mexico border. As Vice President, she supported the bipartisan border security bill, the strongest reform in decades. The legislation would have deployed more detection technology to intercept fentanyl and other drugs and added 1,500 border security agents to protect our border...

As President, she will bring back the bipartisan border security bill and sign it into law. At the same time, she knows that our immigration system is broken and needs comprehensive reform that includes strong border security and an earned pathway to citizenship.”⁶

“Republicans will secure the Border, deport Illegal Aliens, and reverse the Democrats’ Open Borders Policies that have driven up the cost of Housing, Education, and Healthcare for American families.”⁷

“Republicans will restore every Border Policy of the Trump administration and halt all releases of Illegal Aliens into the interior. We will complete the Border Wall, shift massive portions of Federal Law Enforcement to Immigration Enforcement, and use advanced technology to monitor and secure the Border.”⁸

<p>Healthcare</p>	<p>“Vice President Harris will make affordable health care a right, not a privilege by expanding and strengthening the Affordable Care Act and making permanent the Biden-Harris tax credit enhancements that are lowering health care premiums by an average of about \$800 a year for millions of Americans. She’ll build on the Biden-Harris Administration’s successes in bringing down the cost of lifesaving prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries by extending the \$35 cap on insulin and \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket spending for seniors to all Americans. Her tie-breaking vote on the Inflation Reduction Act gave Medicare the power to go toe to toe with Big Pharma and negotiate lower drug prices. As President, she’ll accelerate the negotiations to cover more drugs and lower prices for Americans. As Vice President, she also announced that medical debt will be removed from credit reports, and helped cancel \$7 billion of medical debt for 3 million Americans. As President, she’ll work with states to cancel medical debt for even more Americans.</p> <p>And Vice President Harris has led the Administration’s efforts to combat maternal mortality. Women nationwide are dying from childbirth at higher rates than in any other developed nation. The Vice President called on states to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage from two months to twelve: today, 46 states do so—up from just three near the Administration’s start.”⁹</p>	<p>“Healthcare and prescription drug costs are out of control. Republicans will increase Transparency, promote Choice and Competition, and expand access to new Affordable Healthcare and prescription drug options. We will protect Medicare, and ensure Seniors receive the care they need without being burdened by excessive costs.”¹⁰</p>
<p>Taxes & Fiscal Responsibility</p>	<p>“Vice President Harris and Governor Walz believe that working families deserve a break. That’s why under their plan more than 100 million working and middle-class Americans will get a tax cut. They will do this by restoring two tax cuts designed to help middle class and working Americans: the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit. Through these two programs, millions of Americans get to keep more of their hard-earned income. They will also expand the Child Tax Credit to provide a \$6,000 tax cut to families with newborn children. They believe no child in America should live in poverty, and these actions would have a historic impact...</p> <p>Under her plan, the tax rate on long-term capital gains for those earning a million dollars a year or more will be 28 percent, because when the government encourages investment, it leads to broad-based economic growth and creates jobs, which makes our economy stronger.”¹¹</p>	<p>“Republicans will make permanent the provisions of the Trump Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that doubled the standard deduction, expanded the Child Tax Credit, and spurred Economic Growth for all Americans. We will eliminate Taxes on Tips for millions of Restaurant and Hospitality Workers and pursue additional Tax Cuts.”¹²</p>
<p>Trade</p>	<p>“Vice President Harris will make sure that America, not China, wins the competition for the 21st century and that we strengthen, not abdicate, our global leadership. She will invest in the competitive advantages that make America the strongest nation on Earth—American workers, innovation, and industry—and will work to ensure America remains a leader in the industries of the future, from semiconductors to clean energy to artificial intelligence. She has stood up to China’s unfair economic practices to protect American workers, businesses, and families. And she has advanced our economic cooperation around the world, from rallying international leaders at an AI summit in the UK, to convening semiconductor business leaders in East Asia, to spurring private investment across Africa.”¹³</p>	<p>“Our Trade deficit in goods has grown to over \$1 Trillion Dollars a year. Republicans will support baseline Tariffs on Foreign made goods, pass the Trump Reciprocal Trade Act, and respond to unfair Trading practices. As Tariffs on Foreign Producers go up, Taxes on American Workers, Families, and Businesses can come down...</p> <p>Republicans will strengthen Buy American and Hire American Policies, banning companies that outsource jobs from doing business with the Federal Government.”¹⁴</p>

¹ <https://kamalaharris.com/issues/> - Support American Innovation and Workers

² <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

³ <https://kamalaharris.com/issues/> - Lower Energy Costs and Tackle the Climate Crisis

⁴ <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

⁵ <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

⁶ <https://kamalaharris.com/issues/> - Secure Our Borders and Fix Our Broken Immigration System

⁷ <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

⁸ <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

⁹ <https://kamalaharris.com/issues/> - Strengthen and Bring Down the Cost of Health Care

¹⁰ <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

¹¹ <https://kamalaharris.com/issues/> - Cut Taxes for Middle Class Families

¹² <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

¹³ <https://kamalaharris.com/issues/> - Invest in America’s Sources of Strength

¹⁴ <https://rncplatform.donaldjtrump.com/>

FROM THE FOUNDATION:

Leadership Iowa 2024-25 Participants & Community Hosts Announced

Forty leaders from across the state have been selected to participate in the 2024-25 program of Leadership Iowa, Iowa's premier issues-awareness program offered by the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) Foundation.

More than 1,400 Iowans have taken part in the program since it began in 1982. Participants represent all regions of the state and a variety of industries, companies, and backgrounds. Leadership Iowa exists to educate, inspire, and grow a network of informed leaders, and to encourage their ongoing engagement on local and statewide levels.

The 2024-25 class will travel to communities throughout Iowa for a series of two-day monthly sessions beginning in October and concluding in June. Each session allows participants to delve into an important topic as it relates to our state by way of discussions with subject-matter experts, interactive experiences, industry tours and more.

Session topics and hosts change annually. The following communities and

topics will be represented this year:

- **Algona** – Opening Retreat (October)
- **Shenandoah & Clarinda** – Agriculture and Renewable Resources (November)
- **Ottumwa** – Economic Development & Workforce (December)
- **Des Moines** – Government (January)
- **Clinton** – Manufacturing (March)
- **Sioux Center** – Education (April)
- **Cedar Rapids** – Public Safety & Security / Community Preparedness & Response (May)

The class will graduate at ABI's annual conference next June in Council Bluffs.

The Presenting Sponsors of the 2024-25 Leadership Iowa program include Chevron and EMC Insurance. **ABI**

Leadership Iowa Class of 2024-25 (Communities listed denote work city | home city)

Melissa Baker

Tippie College of Business
University of Iowa
Iowa City | Cedar Rapids

Zach Bohannon

First Interstate Bank
Cedar Rapids | Marion

Seth Brown

Iowa Medical Society
Des Moines | Windsor Heights

Adam Buckentine

Pillar Property Management
Council Bluffs | Council Bluffs

Nick Callison

Forvis Mazars
West Des Moines | West Des Moines

Aaron Curtis

ITC Midwest
Des Moines | Waukee

Jason DeVries

INVISION Architecture
Des Moines | Des Moines

Erika Elbert

Pritchard Companies
Clear Lake | Garner

Ellie Evans

First Mainstreet Insurance
Cedar Rapids | Cedar Rapids

Jose Garcia

MHCS
West Des Moines | Des Moines

Matthew Henkes

Iowa West Foundation
Council Bluffs | Council Bluffs

Julie Heuton

Two Rivers Marketing
Des Moines | West Des Moines

Christy Hickman

Iowa State Education Association
Des Moines | West Des Moines

Sarah Hruska

Eagle Grove Coop /
Prestage Foods of Iowa
Eagle Grove | Fort Dodge

Amy Jones

Royal Neighbors of America
Rock Island | Bettendorf

Patrick Jones

Jones Contracting Corp
West Point | West Point

Erlin Kakkanad

Principal Financial Group
Des Moines | West Des Moines

Travis Kieffer

Plastics Unlimited
Preston | Spragueville

Dustin Lantz

Des Moines Public Schools
Des Moines | Redfield

Theresa Lewis

The Arc of East Central Iowa
Cedar Rapids | Cedar Rapids

Natalia Leymaster

Arconic
Bettendorf | Bettendorf

Aaron Loan

Acumen Advisors
Cedar Rapids | Cedar Rapids

Sarah Luth

McKee, Voorhees & Sease PLC
Des Moines | Des Moines

Wade Nasheim

Keen Project Solutions, LLC
Ankeny | Ames

Eric Nelson

Puck Enterprises
Manning | Madrid

Abi Reiland

Sara Hopkins Real Estate Team
Des Moines | Grimes

Marc Roe

Greater Ottumwa Partners in Progress
Ottumwa | Ottumwa

Alyssa Saunders

Anthologic
Des Moines | West Des Moines

Samuel Stagg

10Fold Architecture + Engineering
Ames | Ames

Angie Stepsis

Greater Des Moines Partnership
Des Moines | Clive

Sheritta Stokes

1619 Freedom School / Waterloo CSD
Waterloo | Cedar Falls

David Storey

Corridor Media Group
North Liberty | Shueyville

Emily Stork

Bankers Trust Company
Des Moines | Johnston

Melissa Strovers

Grinnell College
Grinnell | Grinnell

Jonathan Sukup

Sukup Manufacturing Co
Sheffield | Dougherty

Casey Wenstrand

Southwestern Community College
(Iowa STEM)
Red Oak | Red Oak

Sue Wilber

City of Marion
Marion | Center Point

Jan Williams

Ames Regional Economic Alliance
Ames | Ames

Mindy Williamson

Iowa State Fair
Des Moines | Earlham

Michael Wilson

Chevron
Ames | Ames

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Learn more at www.Leadershiplowa.com.

Q&A: Digital Strategies for Manufacturers

What are some ways a digital strategy can help our manufacturing business?

Having a detailed digital strategy can help manufacturers lay out a roadmap for the future by addressing areas to improve financial and operational performance, which in turn, can improve competitiveness in the market, increase efficiency and drive long-term, sustainable growth.

Once implemented, here are some of the ways a digital strategy can help manufacturers in today's business environment:

- I. Improving operational efficiency - Digital solutions can help manufacturers streamline their operations, automate processes, and reduce costs. One example is an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, which can help manufacturers manage their supply chain, inventory, and production processes more efficiently.
- II. Enabling data-driven decision making - Digital solutions can provide manufacturers with real-time data and analytics, which can enable them to make quicker and more informed decisions about their operations. Digital strategy can also provide improved visibility into inventory levels and other key metrics.
- III. Improving cybersecurity - Digital solutions can help manufacturers protect against cyber threats by implementing cybersecurity measures with the end goal of keeping your data secure. A comprehensive plan can include penetration testing to reduce risks on the front-end and an incident response plan to swiftly respond to incidents that do arise.

What are the steps our company can take to develop our own digital strategy?

It is important for a company considering developing a digital strategy to first define its goals by identifying what it is they are trying to achieve. A digital readiness assessment is a discovery session that can help your organization evalu-

ate your current digital capabilities and identify areas for improvement based on your goals. This process sets a baseline for where your organization is today and will help to develop a roadmap for what needs to be done to accomplish your goals and objectives in the future.

Through this process you will be able to explore the possibilities a digital transformation can bring to your business and come up with a methodical approach to implementing the various action steps necessary to meet your goals. Once the digital roadmap has been completed, it is time to allocate resources to it and begin to execute.

Our company has a lot of outdated and manual processes. It sounds like this is something a digital transformation can help with.

Automation is a small piece of the many capabilities a digital transformation can lead to for a business, but it can have a direct benefit for an organization in a variety of areas, such as accounting and inventory management through increased efficiency and quality. Some of the major benefits include:

- IV. Increased efficiency - Automation can help manufacturers streamline their production processes, reduce waste, and increase output. This can lead to lower costs related to labor and materials and result in higher profitability. Increased efficiency is becoming more important as labor costs increase and hiring is more difficult.
- V. Improved quality - Automation can help manufacturers improve the quality of their products by reducing errors and defects. This can lead to lower costs associated with rework, scrap, and warranty claims. In regard to accounting, manual processes are high risk areas for errors and mistakes. Automating processes such as Accounts Payable can reduce the risks of human error, while increasing employee morale by removing monotonous tasks.
- VI. Reduced downtime: Automation can help manufacturers reduce downtime by minimizing the

need for manual intervention and maintenance. This can lead to lower costs associated with equipment repairs and maintenance.

- VII. Faster time-to-market: Automation can help manufacturers bring products to market faster by reducing the time required for production and testing. This can lead to lower costs associated with product development and launch.
- VIII. Better inventory management: Automation can help manufacturers optimize their inventory levels by providing real-time data on production and demand. This can lead to lower costs associated with excess inventory and risks of not having inventory on hand when it is needed.

What is an example of a success story around automation?

A metal products manufacturer with complex production processes requiring advanced levels of materials management, engineering, and institutional knowledge needed help to streamline the production process. The business uses continuous production flow versus stock-keeping units and lots, which involves significant tracking at each stage of the production process. One process was based on the experience of metallurgists, who determined production variables using a combination of anecdotal information and educated estimates. They manually worked out complex parameters involving customer requirements, machine capacity, raw material characteristics, and more. Inaccurate order recipes would result in significant scrap, and time-intensive rearrangement of schedules caused delays for other orders.

Working side by side with the metallurgists, CLA's digital team gathered three years of historical data and built a custom machine learning model for production management. The model was fed with chemical and physical properties of materials and each customer's required specs — which created a bottom-up view of how to efficiently drive each order. But that provided only half the picture, and engineers were con-



Tyler Lind
Principal, CLA

cerned about balance. So CLA expanded the model to include a top-down inverse view of an overall production parameter target and its downstream impact on the day's blend of customer specifications.

With balanced bottom-up and top-down views, the client is now driving production based on data science instead of guesswork. What used to take a metallurgist a full day — an average of 15 orders at 30 minutes each — now requires just 30 minutes to plan all 15 orders. More accurate recipes resulted in 75% reduction of scrap and improved factory floor scheduling, which reduced disruptions and created capacity to scale the business. Metallurgists are now spending their time improving testing in the lab to continuously refine the model for even better results. **ABI**

For more information on Digital Strategies for Manufacturers in Iowa, contact Tyler Lind at tyler.lind@claconnect.com.

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EXPERT ADVICE:

How Presidential Elections Historically Impact the Value of Your Business

As the U.S. presidential election approaches, the political discourse is intensifying, and its potential impact on the markets and business landscape is a pressing concern for investors and business owners.

Election periods often introduce short-term market volatility, driven by heightened anxiety and uncertainty as Election Day nears. Historically, the CBOE Volatility Index (VIX), commonly known as the Wall Street “fear gauge,” tends to experience notable increases approximately two months before the election.

However, this volatility generally diminishes within 30 days post-election and returns to normal levels approximately 60 days thereafter. Furthermore, the year leading up to an election typically witnesses reduced market returns due to investor uncertainty. Conversely, the 12 months following an election often show stronger market performance, irrespective of the party in power. Spe-

cifically, when a new party assumes the presidency, average stock market returns tend to be around 5%. In contrast, if the incumbent president is re-elected or the same party retains the presidency, returns average slightly higher at 6.5%.

For small businesses that are not publicly traded, the impacts of elections can be more challenging to discern. Nevertheless, many businesses are already grappling with the effects of inflation, interest rates, and overall market volatility. It is crucial for business owners to recognize that the maturity risk and systematic risk associated with investing in small businesses are integral to determining the appropriate cost of capital (P/E or valuation “multiple”). For instance, a decrease in a business’s risk profile from a multiple of 5x to 4x can significantly affect the owner’s net worth.

Additionally, the upcoming elections will likely bring renewed focus



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to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), particularly regarding its provisions set to expire at the end of 2025. With ongoing discussions about the future of these provisions, both individuals and businesses should prepare for potential legislative debates next year concerning whether to extend or amend the current tax laws. **ABI**

WHAT’S TRENDING:

The Iowa Clinic Signs Multi-Year Agreement with Counterpart Health to Deploy Proven AI Technology to Hundreds of Providers Across the Midwest

Counterpart Health, Inc., the world’s leading AI-powered physician enablement platform, announced a partnership with The Iowa Clinic, P.C. This partnership positions The Iowa Clinic as Counterpart’s anchor partner in a broader strategic expansion across the Midwest.

The Iowa Clinic is a frequent collaborator in national research and an early adopter of advanced diagnostic technologies. The Iowa Clinic will implement Counterpart Assistant, Counterpart Health’s cutting-edge cloud-based software platform, to clinicians serving its Medicare Advantage and Medicare Shared Savings Program patients. The platform will also be made available to The Iowa Clinic’s clin-

ically integrated network partners throughout the Midwest.

Built on technology originally developed by Clover Health, Counterpart Assistant is an AI-enabled solution designed to seamlessly integrate into physicians’ workflows, supporting earlier diagnosis and management of chronic diseases, and is currently used by thousands of physicians as part of their daily workflow to enhance patient care. By leveraging insights from more than a hundred data sources and utilizing over one hundred machine learning models, providers using Counterpart Assistant can identify, diagnose, and treat some of the most costly chronic diseases earlier, resulting in over 1,000 basis point medical cost ratio (MCR) differential between re-

turning members whose PCPs use Counterpart Assistant versus those members whose PCPs do not.

“We take great pride in being a leader in the adoption of innovative medical technologies and treatments, always with the aim of elevating the quality of care our patients receive,” said Ben Vallier, CEO of The Iowa Clinic, P.C. “Counterpart’s ability to harness clinical data to drive improved outcomes, combined with its intuitive design that understands the needs of practicing clinicians, stood out among other potential solutions, and makes it a perfect fit for our organization. We are very optimistic about the immediate and long-term clinical and financial value it will bring to our providers and patients alike.” **ABI**



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The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) has been the voice of Iowa business since 1903. Its mission is to provide a strong, unified voice to business and industry on issues affecting Iowa employers. ABI is comprised of member companies representing all industries and sizes in Iowa's 99 counties. ABI members employ more than 330,000 Iowans.

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