



CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

CHAMPION SPONSORS



2022: CELEBRATING INNOVATION

Whether you're a startup or a legacy company, innovation is at the heart of what makes businesses succeed. Champions of Innovation allows businesses to share their own stories of how they developed new products and processes that allowed their companies to grow. This special sponsored content section will inspire you as your business travels its own innovation journey.

Understanding your **industry** comes from

walking in your shoes

And chances are, we've walked in 'em.

construction/
real estate



finance



food & beverage



manufacturing



technology



From the boardroom to the courtroom, Davis|Kuelthau is your trusted partner.

Whether a multi-national Fortune 500 company or a fellow Midwestern-rooted entity, our corporate, labor and litigation attorneys are well-positioned to serve as your personal outside general counsel.

First-hand industry know-how. Business acumen. Personalized legal service. We are Davis|Kuelthau.



APPLETON | BROOKFIELD | GREEN BAY | MADISON | MILWAUKEE

2800 East Enterprise Avenue, Appleton, WI 54913

318 South Washington Street, Suite 300, Green Bay, WI 54301

www.dkattorneys.com

© 2021 Davis|Kuelthau, s.c.

Questions about managing your cash flow?

*Angela has
answers.*

To learn more about how we can help your
business, visit [JohnsonFinancialGroup.com/
manage-my-cash-flow](https://JohnsonFinancialGroup.com/manage-my-cash-flow).

ANGELA R.
Treasury Management

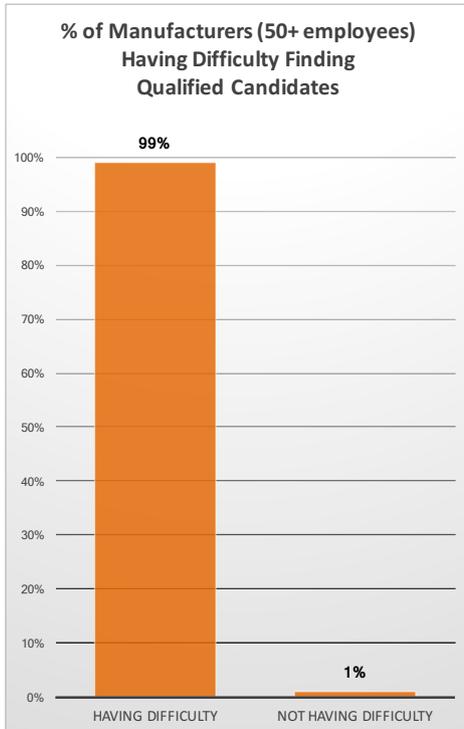


BANKING
WEALTH
INSURANCE

Products and services offered by these Johnson
Financial Group companies: Johnson Bank, Johnson
Wealth Inc. and Johnson Insurance Services, LLC.



99% OF MANUFACTURERS ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY FINDING QUALIFIED WORKERS.



Source: The 2021 Wisconsin Manufacturing Report, October 2021

WMEP Manufacturing Solutions helps companies control what they can to mitigate this challenge.



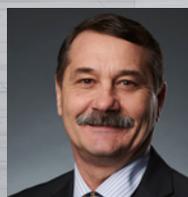
WMEP Manufacturing Solutions can help your organization:

RECRUIT ▶ Buck the workforce shortage trend and become an attractive destination for new employees.

RETAIN ▶ Identify the key reasons people leave organizations and steps you can take to keep more of your employees.

REDEPLOY ▶ Build capacity with existing resources by increasing productivity and efficiency through process improvement and automation.

Contact WMEP today at info@wmep.org to discuss what you can do today to address your workforce challenges.



Contact Mark Hatzenbeller today for a no-obligation, free consultation: hatzenbeller@wmep.org | 920-246-0051
WMEP.org



Brian Rasmussen

Publisher, Insight Publications
brasmussen@insightonbusiness.com

If the last two years have taught us anything, it's that we as businesses and leaders must keep innovating to survive and remain relevant. As a society, we have witnessed tremendous feats of innovation during this time, from the development of several safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and treatments to finding new ways to collaborate and get work done despite the challenges of fighting a global pandemic.

We are delighted to present the annual Champions of Innovation special section, which allows companies to share the stories of their cutting-edge products and processes in their own words. This year's special section includes stories of companies making advances in the areas of sustainability, electrification of vehicles, construction and talent recruitment, just to name a few.

As I read through this special section, I was struck by the problem-solving prowess of companies throughout the region. We all know that a rising tide lifts all boats, so we hope that as you read the stories included on the following pages, you will come away inspired to continue to innovate within your organizations. ①

insightonbusiness.com

- 6 **Oshkosh Corp.:** Electric and hybrid electric vehicles
- 8 **Sargento:** Sargento Balanced Breaks®
- 9 **The Utech Group:** Customized organizational development
Appvion: Phenol-free technology
- 10 **Weidert Group:**
Business development through inbound marketing and hybrid sales
- 11 **Johnson Financial Group:** Automating payment processing
- 12 **Great Northern Corp.:**
Innovation in education — The Great Northern Collaboration Experience
- 13 **Bassett Mechanical:** Virtual design for industrial refrigeration
Sure Controls Inc.: Automating repetitive tasks
- 14 **InitiativeOne:** Crisis leadership with purpose and confidence
- 16 **WMEP Manufacturing Solutions:**
Helping companies with sustainability efforts
- 17 **New North Inc.:** NEW Launch Alliance highlighting cool and innovative products and services in the region
- 18 **Settlers bank:** Creative solutions to make banking easier
- 19 **AZCO Inc.:** Prefabrication and improved construction techniques
- 20 **Element:** Integrated marketing
- 21 **Arrow AV Group:** AV-over-IP
Millennium Construction: Adapting to changing construction needs
- 22 **PayMedix:** Reinventing and simplifying health care payments
- 24 **Optima Machinery Corp.:** 3D printing in mechanical engineering
- 25 **Strategic Solutions Consulting and Wisconsin Family Business Center:** Collaboration brings value to family businesses
Immel Construction: Bridging gaps between generations
- 26 **Seaway Printing:** Increasing productivity with no quality trade-off
- 28 **CR Structures:** Total project integration
Tech4, LLC: Technology for automation
- 29 **A2Z:** A2Z Storyology™ and A2Z Dynamic Digital™
- 30 **WMEP Manufacturing Solutions:**
Creative workforce solutions
- 31 **Davis I Kuelthau:** Helping businesses protect their IP

Oshkosh Corporation rolls out the next generation of vehicles



Oshkosh Corporation is an industrial technology company with a long history of innovation. We are pioneering innovations in our equipment across electrification, autonomy, active-safety, mobility, advanced analytics, and intelligent products — from autonomous, unmanned vehicles to the first electric, zero-emissions fire apparatus in service in North America. Two team members who have played key roles in the development of Oshkosh’s next generation of vehicles are Rachell Harsh, Chief Engineer – Advanced Products, Controls; and Catherine (Cathy) Linsmeier, Director of Engineering – Global Technology Software.

We have been a leader in the development and manufacture of electric and hybrid electric vehicles and equipment for 25 years, starting with the engineering and delivery of the first electric boom lift in 1994. Cathy and Rachell have contributed substantially to Oshkosh’s progress with electric vehicles, with 20 and 15 years of experience, respectively. Early in their careers, you often would find Rachell or Cathy with a multimeter in one hand and wire strippers or a laptop in the other, working on the electronic systems for advanced technology prototypes equipped with hybrid electric powertrains and semi-active suspension systems.

Today, Rachell leads the controls development team within the advanced products group focused on electric vehicles. Electrification at Oshkosh spans multiple business units, each with its own uniquely defined goals and targeted metrics. While Oshkosh Defense is utilizing electrification for silent watch capability and export power, Pierce and Oshkosh Airport Products are focused on firefighters’ health and safety coupled with increasing demands for zero-emission vehicles.

With her role in the advanced products controls group, Rachell has primary responsibility for designing the vehicle controls architecture, meaning the software integration of all the electric vehicle (EV) components such as the electrical powertrain, high-voltage battery, air compressor, hydraulic pump, etc. To do this successfully, controls engineers need to be well-versed and educated in software development as well as mechanical and electrical engineering. Rachell’s background in systems engineering and integration — in addition to her software, communication, and controls knowledge — allows her to provide great leadership to the controls team and to the programs she supports. She also takes it one step further by not only thinking about the current project but about future use cases as well. Rachell is always identifying what tweaks she can make to her system now that will make the controls easier to implement on future vehicles.

With the complex system architecture Rachell oversees, she works closely with Cathy and her software team to develop a fully integrated system meeting all

customer requirements. As director of a team with more than 50 people, Cathy is responsible for a wide range of areas including software development, intelligent products, cybersecurity, and functional safety.

One technology in our Intelligent Products portfolio is telematics systems. Telematics are used to communicate bidirectionally and allow our customers to monitor their fleets using customer portals. Telematics also allow technicians to remotely diagnose vehicles and support over-the-air updates for our products. Just like electrification, intelligent products are another key technology focus area across every Oshkosh business unit. For example, Oshkosh Defense utilizes telematics for condition-based maintenance, concrete placement uses telematics for vehicle productivity and driver monitoring, and Pierce is unique in its focus on fire departments’ incident response needs, operational efficiency, and total cost of ownership. Cathy’s team writes the software applications and selects the telematics hardware used to connect these vehicles, highly customizing their solutions to meet unique needs and provide more value to our customers in their industries.



Rachell Harsh (left), Chief Engineer — Advanced Products, Controls, and Cathy Linsmeier (right), Director of Engineering — Global Technology Software, have played key roles in the development of Oshkosh’s next generation of vehicles.



Pierce Manufacturing and Oshkosh Airport Products debuted the revolutionary Volterra™ platform of electric vehicles for municipal, airport, and fire & emergency markets.

As vehicle architectures become more complex and connected through various software and electrical systems, no one wants a vehicle that has vulnerabilities. Cathy's team focuses on cyber-hardening the hardware and software systems to ensure that no hackers can access our systems. Think about how your cellphone often requires software updates; these updates are typically to patch vulnerabilities to protect you from being hacked, and this is similar to the critical work Cathy's team does to protect our vehicles.

Product functional safety also has become critically important to ensuring that our products create a safe operating environment for the users. Cathy's team members have become experts in functional safety, providing safety oversight for the electronic and control systems across multiple product lines. Our products go through rigorous reviews to ensure they operate as intended and provide the safest operating conditions for the users.

Recent innovation projects are benefiting from the wide range of experience Rachell and Cathy have in electrical, mechanical, and controls engineering, as well as their leadership. For example, both are heavily involved in the integration of the various software and control systems into the Pierce Volterra™ platform of electric

vehicles. The Pierce Volterra pumper is North America's first electric fire truck in service in Madison, Wisconsin. Pierce and Oshkosh Airport Products, both companies in the Oshkosh portfolio, debuted the revolutionary Volterra™ platform of electric vehicles for municipal, airport, and fire & emergency markets. The electric vehicle platform delivers increased performance, functionality, and safety with zero emissions.

As part of its product development process, Oshkosh captures lessons learned. Some of the lessons learned from the Volterra electric vehicle project quickly led into real gains when applying the same methodology to the eJLTV, another project Rachell and Cathy contributed heavily to. The eJLTV, developed by Oshkosh Defense, is a hybrid electric Joint Light Tactical Vehicle offering for the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps, that shares the same level of performance and protection as the base JLTV with the addition of silent drive, extended silent watch, enhanced fuel economy, and increased exportable power.

Looking toward the future, Cathy and Rachell see connected vehicles and electrification as opportunities to advance Oshkosh products. Driving innovation with intent, Cathy and Rachell's teams tackle each new intelligent product or electrification

initiative to meet the needs of everyday heroes who rely on our products to do difficult jobs.

Between intelligent products, autonomy and active safety, and electrification, vehicles are becoming more complex, requiring more electronics and more software. To meet this demand, Cathy believes Oshkosh will continue to make the user experience more intuitive and find value above and beyond the daily operation of the vehicle. Rachell sees a real need to practice a systems engineering approach. From product inception through production, well-rounded and versed engineers are needed to take on the requirements, implement the design, and verify/validate to provide a quality product. 📌



Company:
Oshkosh Corporation

Innovations:
Electric and hybrid electric vehicles and equipment

oshkoshcorp.com

Innovation at Sargento: Blending our heritage with our future



The rich history of innovation at Sargento Foods dates back to 1953 when the company originated. In fact, Sargento was first to successfully pre-package natural cheese in the United States right after its founding and has revolutionized the dairy case ever since. The company continued to bring innovative thinking to the market during the '70s and '80s through products like shredded cheese blends and the first zippered, resealable consumer package. From there, Sargento rolled out individually packaged cheese slices, making consuming cheese easier than ever before.



Kristi Jankowski

The spirit of innovation that built Sargento still exists today. At the helm of the company's innovation commitment is Kristi Jankowski, executive vice president of innovation. Leading a team of nearly 50 employees, Jankowski understands that great ideas can come from anywhere at any time.

"Throughout my career, I've learned that a groundbreaking idea can come from anyone, whether

their expertise is in product development, manufacturing, research or marketing," Jankowski said. "I always encourage my team and those I don't work closely with to keep an eye out for new ideas and consumer needs in today's market."

At Sargento, there is an open-door policy for idea sharing, and every member of the

Sargento Family can contribute to the company's heritage of innovation. We encourage unique perspectives — in fact, employees can formally submit ideas for new flavors, creative packaging concepts or any other compelling idea. If the idea can be legally protected — think patents and trade secrets — Sargento even offers monetary incentives for employees' intellectual property.

When it comes to contributing forward-thinking ideas, one Sargento employee stands out. Aaron Strand, a senior machine design engineer, has 14 U.S. patents under his belt so far. Most recently, Strand and maintenance employees James Abston and Jon Sommer were recognized for their idea to upgrade funnels and lances that would improve package filling, earning them a U.S. patent.

Our leadership team as a whole recognizes the importance of championing new ideas. Fresh thinking has evolved into some of the company's most successful products.

"New ideas may start as seeds that need more work to come to life," Jankowski said. "Some of our most innovative products began as ideas years ago. It takes times to get it right, and sometimes we're even ahead of consumers."

An example of this is Sargento Balanced Breaks® — a seed that was first planted in 2007. Through years of development, the new product successfully solved three consumer snacking concerns — it had to be satisfying to eat, not over-processed and great-tasting. The first edition of Sargento Balanced Breaks® inspired further innovation for the line, leading to Sweet Balanced Breaks® in 2017 and Balanced Breaks® Cheese & Crackers in 2021.

Innovation at Sargento is successful because our leadership team takes personal interest and considers it a priority for the future strategic focus of the company. Staying on top of current trends and leveraging consumer insights is where Jankowski's team shines, and we are eager to continue growing and innovating in the years to come.

Sargento Foods is a family-owned company that has been a leader in cheese production since 1953 and manufactures and markets natural cheese products and ingredients. The company employs more than 2,000 people and is committed to serving the communities and employees who are part of the Sargento family. 



Company:
Sargento® Foods Incorporated

Innovations:
Sargento Balanced Breaks®
Balanced Breaks® Cheese & Crackers

sargento.com

The Utech Group takes a customized approach to leadership development



Innovation is at the heart of any successful organization, and the past two years have taught us that organizations need committed people and a strong culture to drive and sustain innovation. With the “Great Resignation” upon us, it’s even more important for organizations to invest in leadership development and training.

The Utech Group recognizes most leadership development and training programs miss the mark. Generally, leadership programs are broad and do not consider the role a leader plays on their team, the existing team dynamics, or the culture of the organization. Leaders are then unsure how to integrate their learnings within their organizations, which compounds the disconnect and causes frustration. With more than 30 years of change management, organizational development and leadership training experience, Utech takes a more holistic approach to leadership development.

In response to the challenges that organizations have faced, we’ve purposely designed our services to look at the whole person within the context of their organization.

With our Leadership and Executive Coaching processes, we work with our clients to define who they are as a leader, what role they play within their team and how they can influence the overall culture of their organization. By incorporating these components, our clients are better equipped with the tools and strategies that will benefit them in their daily lives and directly impact their organizations.

In 2019 we also launched our Dig-In series, which consists of 24 unique training topics that can be customized for any organization. From 90-minute webinars to weekly Zoom sessions or a personalized program, the flexibility to let clients choose their training topics and delivery methods has empowered them to own their development.

Leaders can impact an entire organization. Their development should not happen in a silo. Working to integrate the needs of the individual, the team and the organization to create an effective, meaningful and actionable development plan benefits everyone involved. ❶



CEO and Owner, Melissa Borowicz, and Utech team members brainstorm ways to create customized leadership development and training opportunities that create lasting, meaningful change.



theutechgroup

Company: The Utech Group

Innovation: Customized organizational development

utechod.com



Ushering in the future with phenol-free direct thermal solutions

Sustainable innovation is not new for us. For decades, Appvion’s research, growth and development teams have integrated sustainable thinking into our designs, providing consumers with more environmentally and socially favorable choices. Although we have made great strides, we are once again raising our bar on sustainable product design.

As a leading manufacturer of direct thermal solutions in North America, Appvion has developed a technology platform free of phenol-based chemistry such as Bisphenol-A (BPA) and Bisphenol-S (BPS). This patent-pending chemistry will allow Appvion to lead the industry in offering a complete line of phenol-free direct thermal solutions.

Working to eliminate phenols from our chemistry is not new to Appvion. In 2006, we led the industry in removing BPA from our products. Our team has researched diligently over the last decade and launched three innovative product offerings without

phenols: Alpha® Free, CleanSlate®, and most recently, Résiste® Rx. We recognize how important it is to do our part to eliminate phenols on a broader scale. Our long history of material science uniquely positions us to deliver a chemistry design platform that utilizes more socially responsible materials.

Résiste® Rx with Phenol-Free Technology is Appvion’s first commercialized product within this new portfolio. Résiste® Rx is a direct thermal label facestock engineered specifically for pharmacy prescription labels where exceptional image durability against household chemicals and the environment is required.

With more than 100 years in business, Appvion has developed trust in our customer partnerships and a reputation as an industry leader. We continuously strive to protect our natural resources and environment, while also focusing on society and the future of our business. That’s why removing phenols from our solutions is on our radar now, not when legislation requires it. ❶



Company:
Appvion

Innovation:
Phenol-free technology

www.appvion.com



Weidert Group helps businesses embrace remote & hybrid sales



The business shift to digital was underway when the pandemic accelerated the pace of change. In months, industries adopted technologies they otherwise would have taken years to implement. According to one study, 77% of CEOs ramped up their plans and implemented new technologies to stay competitive.



Digital technologies help businesses stay competitive in a shifting landscape.

Technology providers stepped up to make work easier, faster and just plain possible. Companies that failed to embrace the change crashed. But those that pivoted survived — and even boomed — in spite of ongoing challenges like supply chain disruptions, labor shortages and the pandemic.

Digital transformation is a shift in mindset

Purchasing behaviors and customer expectations shifted immediately with the pandemic. The safety of remote buying drew people online, where they soon realized it's easier and more convenient, too:

- 74% see digital sales model as effective
- 70% are doing large deals online
- Video is preferred over phone contact
- 89% expect the changes to stick

The most successful companies resisted panic and committed to creating seamlessly integrated experiences, whether selling products or services, or recruiting for new talent.

“Without the right tools in place, growth can be tough to sustain. But technical innovations can prevent the pain of scaling a business. Growth doesn't have to hurt.”

— Greg Linnemanstons,
Weidert Group president

Easy-to-use technologies support growth

Weidert Group develops and executes inbound programs that support clients' growth goals using HubSpot software, which integrates marketing, sales, content, customer relationship management tools and more into a single platform.

The agency helps clients use HubSpot's automation, analytics, content management and other tools to create websites and content-based marketing programs that integrate email, social media, blogs, advanced content, video, search engine optimization and more.

According to Weidert Group President Greg Linnemanstons, HubSpot is the right tool at the right time to help businesses of all sizes streamline marketing, sales, service, recruiting and more. “It's built and priced specifically for small- to medium-sized businesses, and it's not hard to use, even without specialized education or training,” he said.

Hybrid and remote aren't going away

Before the pandemic hit, the agency launched a new website and inbound

program for a client. Within 90 days, without the support of trade shows or in-person visits, that client achieved 58 new marketing-qualified leads. Within nine months, results exceeded expectations:

- Sales increased 39%
- A six-month sales cycle was reduced by 67% to as little as eight weeks
- No additional sales staff needed

Ongoing work for the client incorporates digital technologies to improve efficiency and productivity, to ensure those new customers are well taken care of without burning out employees.



Used correctly, technologies and tools like HubSpot's CRM platform can alleviate growing pains.

According to Linnemanstons, there's a tool to meet virtually every need for the shift to hybrid and online sales. “We see clients getting more leads, shortening sales cycles, supporting long-term customer relationships and successfully recruiting for talent in a competitive market,” he said. **I**

WEIDERT GROUP

inbound marketing for complex industries

Company: Weidert Group

Innovations: Business development through inbound marketing & hybrid sales

weidert.com

Automating your payment processing — what's holding your business back?

While investment in new business processes and technology can appear daunting, a modest commitment upfront can lead to significant long-term efficiencies and cost savings for your business. We understand businesses need to streamline and be more efficient with resources, especially given the impacts of the pandemic, including recruiting challenges and staffing constraints. One way to become more efficient is by exploring alternatives to manual payment processes that exist today.

Traditional payment methods — weighing the risks

Check writing is arguably the most manual payment process businesses use. Although checks have long been used as a payment method, the high demand on resources and costs to facilitate their processing, not to mention the increase in fraud and the delay in mail delivery, are giving companies compelling reasons to implement alternative payment options. As instances of fraud rise, fraudsters unfortunately are still looking to checks as one of the easiest ways to commit fraud.

In addition to the fraud loss, in October of 2021, the United States Postal Service released a statement that all out-of-town mail will take an average of up to five days for delivery. This may have a large supply chain impact for companies sourcing material from other regions, creating significant time delays in receiving payments. In the long run, optimizing payments can save your company time and money, as well as improve supplier relationships.



Angela Rust
VP, Treasury Management



I CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

Optimizing your payment process

By leveraging the latest in payment processing technology through commercial card and virtual card payments, your business will benefit now and in the future. Through cardless payment accounts, your organization can reduce paper check processing costs and increase accounts payable efficiency — all while retaining your existing payables processes and systems.

Benefits of converting to virtual card payments

- 1. Enhance accounts payable processing.** A virtual card rebate may exceed the cost of an accounts payable automation solution, putting money back in your company's budget to invest in other initiatives. You can earn cash rebates while paying your vendors or suppliers.
- 2. Better insight into cash flow.** Enhanced reporting allows your business to quickly see the full picture of your current cash flow instead of waiting for checks to clear.
- 3. More efficient remittance to your vendors.** Vendors get one

email that includes both payment and remittance information. Virtual cards provide vendors with immediate payment and certainty of receipt.

- 4. Provides added fraud protection.** Unique, randomly generated numbers are designated for one-time use and for a specific payment amount.
- 5. Increase working capital.** Payments can be executed immediately, providing your business the ability to pay faster and accounts payable teams the ability to hold on to larger payments longer.

Contact us to discuss your company's unique needs. We'll help you identify the right mix of payment options for you, your organization and your vendors, and discuss the optimal payment solutions for your cash flow. **i**



Company: Johnson Financial Group

Innovation: Automating payment processing

[JohnsonFinancialGroup.com](https://www.JohnsonFinancialGroup.com)

Products and services offered by Johnson Bank, Member FDIC, a Johnson Financial Group company.

Innovation in education



The innovative four-year Great Northern Collaboration Experience kicked off with the 2021 fall semester at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The collaborative course was co-developed by Great Northern and UW-Stout instructors. Great Northern produces packaging and merchandising displays for CPG and retail customers.

“The Collaborative Experience is a multidisciplinary design and packaging class that replicates the way we work with our customers on design projects,” says Great Northern CEO John Davis. “The students will learn that teamwork and problem-solving skills are critical in any collaborative effort and that these skills are highly valued by employers. I can’t imagine a better learning environment in which to bring two disciplines together to simulate the real-world challenges of creative problem solving.”

Great Northern employs 30 UW-Stout alumni and has provided funding for the collaborative course, which supports the co-teaching model and course development including objectives and outline, evaluation methodology, registration criteria and promotion.

UW-Stout Chancellor Katherine Frank met with Davis at Great Northern’s headquarters in Appleton to discuss the experience. “Our relationship with Great Northern and ability to design a curriculum in collaboration with our industry and business partners are intended to best prepare our students for what they will encounter in their professional lives and make them most competitive in the job market and exemplify what is distinct about a UW-Stout education,” Frank says. “We are incredibly thankful to Great Northern for their generosity and ongoing support of students, faculty and the UW-Stout learning experience.”

This past fall, six teams of packaging and graphic design students were



Examples of the fall semester work at UW-Stout. Presentations were given to fellow students, faculty, and Great Northern and Reckitt representatives.



tasked with creating new sustainable packaging for Reckitt, a Great Northern customer that makes Air Wick plug-in scented oils and diffusers. When the fall semester wrapped up, the students presented their final projects to the class and industry professionals.

Attending the presentations were Great Northern Structural Design Manager Kris Johnson, Graphic Design Manager Sarah Murawski, and eight other Great Northern and Reckitt representatives. “I was impressed with the diversity of packaging concepts developed,” Johnson says. “The students’ efforts into this project were impressive and ultimately what made this class a success. They are leaving with an experience they can draw from throughout their careers.”

The teams learned to look ahead in the design process, especially in short timelines. “We didn’t have time to backtrack or address problems,” says Lance Anderson, a packaging design student. “The tight timeline forced us to think ahead and confirm that our ideas would be sufficient for the next steps of our design process.”

When asked what the most significant benefit of this class was, Anderson said, “Having experienced professors from both majors, along

with the personnel from Reckitt and Great Northern, really made for a massive number of resources to learn about careers in both fields and to see how they intermingle and depend on each other throughout the design process.”

The students’ final packaging designs were printed at Great Northern. Johnson and Murawski say the course exceeded their expectations, as the students worked together to develop a sustainable solution to a real-world packaging challenge. “I learned so much and was energized by the students’ work,” Murawski says. 



Great Northern

Company:
Great Northern Corp.

Innovation:
The Great Northern
Collaborative Experience at the
University of Wisconsin-Stout

[greatnorthernpackaging.com/
2022/01/19/first-year-of-
collaborative-course-produces-
sustainable-packaging-designs](https://greatnorthernpackaging.com/2022/01/19/first-year-of-collaborative-course-produces-sustainable-packaging-designs)

A unique look at virtual design for industrial refrigeration

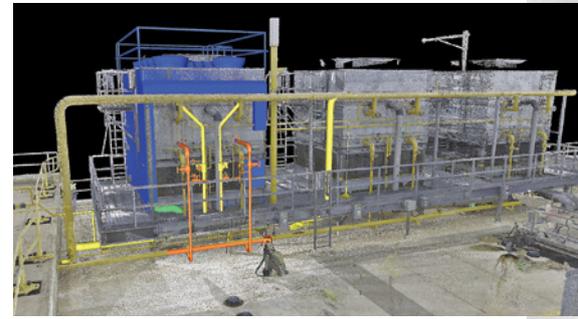
Pre-construction solutions like virtual design and construction (VDC) have been used in HVAC construction for many years, benefiting customers and contractors with transparency and cost effectiveness. Conversely, the industrial refrigeration market has not seen abundant use of these tools. With our growing expertise, Bassett Mechanical has exposed industrial refrigeration customers to the importance of VDC and offers a unique look at refrigeration solutions through this rising platform.

VDC, the method of planning a project collaboratively using 3D CAD and BIM, models installation using digital representations of mechanical systems, components and equipment. Using scanned data from the customer site, we provide a real-life representation of the site conditions, allowing project partners to discuss concerns related to safety, accessibility and project schedule before the work begins. This is a crucial step in maximizing

efficiency and minimizing downtime to support manufacturing best practices and food safety requirements.

The benefits of VDC in the industrial refrigeration space go beyond 3D mapping, expert design and engineering, food safety, and regulatory compliance. We provide customized prefabrications including pressure vessels, skid packages, and modular engine rooms — a complete solution that is unlike others in this market. Using this technology, approved designs are exported to our CNC pipe cutting machines, allowing us to incorporate robotic precision and prefabrication into our unique process. With 80% of the welds taking place in our manufacturing facility, we see a reduction in hot work/fire watches required onsite, debris associated with the construction process, and overall installation time, among many other benefits.

Our approach to refrigeration projects, combined with our VDC expertise, is



giving new meaning to innovation in this market and advancing the future for industrial refrigeration facilities. **i**



Company: Bassett Mechanical

Innovation: Virtual design for industrial refrigeration

www.bassettmechanical.com

The future of manufacturing is now



Sure Controls and Kaysun partner to solve labor challenges, improve machine performance and increase profit.

The situation: Kaysun had an existing automation cell that assembled a faucet subcomponent for its customer. The previous cell used two bowl feeders that experienced frequent jamming issues due to vestiges on the fittings. The bowl feeders also required considerable maintenance and repair. To increase quality and production, Kaysun chose to have Sure Controls build a new cell that uses the world's best flexible feeders and modern control architecture.

The Results

#1 – Eliminated jamming issues and reduced maintenance costs — Replacing the bowl feeders with the Asycube and EYE+ system provided Kaysun with increased flexibility and decreased production costs.

#2 – Reduced cycle time — After the cell upgrade, Kaysun was able to produce 1,200 more parts every day for its customer. Cycle time was reduced from 22 to 24 seconds to 16 to 17 seconds, resulting in substantially increased profit.

#3 – Better documentation — Electrical design was developed in E-plan, and Sure Controls provided all relevant schematics, HMI programming with instructions, and recipe files.

#4 – Reclaimed floor space and decreased noise — Sure Controls provided an innovative, advanced machine which was half the size of the previous cell and provided significant noise reduction.

#5 – Reduced need for labor — The solution automated a repetitive task, which in a highly competitive labor market was a great benefit.

The Customer Feedback — “I want to thank the team at Sure Controls for their great work on this project. They were easy to work with, bright with ideas, willing to make improvements rather than just re-create the wheel, and punctual to the schedule in a very difficult supply chain.” — **Bob Reeves, operations director, Kaysun** **i**

Want to learn more?



Company: Sure Controls Inc.

Innovation: Automating repetitive tasks
surecontrols.com



10 leadership insights for innovation

Viewing leadership development through a human lens is a crucial innovation in every business sector. Rehumanizing leadership isn't easy, and it begins with getting honest about the reality of innovation. Many companies seek our advice for leading rattled employees through uncertain, fear-inducing environments.

We have engaged with leaders in practically every business sector. Uncertainty has touched health care, education, manufacturing, retail, public, private, for-profit and not-for-profit leaders. We have helped leaders achieve heightened levels of problem solving through radical, trust-building honesty.

Throughout the pandemic, we have been listening to organizational leaders with well-deserved reputations for strategic execution and operational excellence. Like you, these leaders have encountered formidable obstacles. At InitiativeOne, we work with leaders who care about their people and companies. They crave innovative solutions to match and overcome today's extraordinary challenges. And there are no easy answers.

Sometimes leaders need permission to voice their internal frustrations. The mantra "knowledge is power" has

hindered openness and creativity for too long. However, when every team member has unbound knowledge at their fingertips, leaders innovate by leaning into purpose and influencing their teams in new ways. As admissions of "I don't know" and "I don't have all the answers" become regular aspects of daily life, healthy cultures quickly shift away from knowledge-based management and dive headfirst into influence-based leadership.

Our most significant innovation has been helping leaders shut out the noise, galvanize trust, and lead with purpose and confidence. InitiativeOne has incorporated the following 10 Innovative Insights that guide leaders toward increased results during crisis moments:

Trust your history

You have been here before. So has your organization. You both made it through. The perspective gained from past experiences gives credibility to present conversations and inspires hope for a preferred future. Initial vision during a crisis is foggy, and the truth is often uncertain. Sometimes the flow of pertinent information slows. Sometimes information is plentiful, but it takes time to filter what is true versus counterfeit. Emotions cloud clarity, needs are

critical, and resources appear scarce. It may seem counterintuitive to look back instead of forward in demanding moments. But during a crisis, it's vital to trust your history.

Treat your team like adults

Some leaders treat teammates like children, protecting them from hard news, pain or difficult decisions. Why are they then surprised when these same teammates act like children?

Credibility grows in the soil of healthy trust. Effective crisis leadership requires an extreme level of professional maturity. One of the most significant maturity measures is the way you give and receive information. In the most challenging moments, transparency is a leadership essential.

Scan the horizon

Ferry captains will tell nervous passengers in a storm not to focus on the waves immediately in front of them. Instead, to avoid seasickness, they urge them to look out in the distance to settle the mind and the stomach. We frequently tell leaders who come to us for crisis instruction that every wave is another wave toward the back of the storm. When many waves come at us, remember: The storm is finite. It will end. There will be bad days. It's just a



CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

Leaders gather each month for Think Tanks centering on practical personal and professional growth opportunities.

wave toward the endpoint. They will come less and less, but it is just part of the process.

Practice a 100% Responsibility Mindset

Great leaders choose to respond instead of reacting. You are not responsible for everything in the world; to believe so is pathological. However, you are responsible for your thoughts and actions. A 100% Responsibility Mindset is a shift from victim thinking toward solutions. In contrast to emotionally charged reactions, your choice to respond is intentional.

Focus on your locus of control and give it all you have

Choose to filter out factors beyond your control. Focus on how you can directly impact a better outcome. One best practice for decision-making in times of crisis involves three steps: evaluating your emotions, evaluating the information you have, and choosing an intentional response.

Self-awareness and social awareness will allow you to connect your best self and inspire the best in others. Self-regulation will enable you to stay calm, focused and move forward amid uncertainty. Emotional intelligence will allow you to be open and honest about discomfort.

You don't need to be superhuman

If you could have solved the situation by yourself, you would have. During intense crises, you need all of the leadership capacity you can muster.

Effective decisions happen when you have the correct information and people are committed to the decision. To get the best info, you need the perspective of others; they see things you don't. Where appropriate, involve others in decision-making because people support what they create. Note the previous sentence doesn't say people reinforce what you create. Get others involved.

Choose to become comfortable with being uncomfortable

You have always been uncomfortable. Tension and discomfort have propelled you forward from your first steps, first kiss or last promotion. You are who you are because you have successfully dealt with discomfort. At InitiativeOne, we talk about stretching a rubber band, pulling it beyond its



The InitiativeOne headquarters on S. Adams Street in Green Bay.

resting state. Stretch causes tension, and while tension is uncomfortable, nothing happens without it! Without pressure, there is no movement, no growth or satisfaction.

Choose to stay calm and resolute; believe in yourself

Typically, we have systems, protocols, regulations, applications, routines, and norms to direct our path and keep us "in line." In crises, these standard guardrails may break.

Rapid, unexpected changes provide the tension for something to happen, and, counterintuitively, constraints actually sharpen thinking and improve creativity. Learn to recognize tension as a catalyst for positive change.

Is your team the one to provide new solutions?

Catch the knuckleball

You don't know the ball's exact path, but you know it's been thrown, and it's coming toward you. Don't allow fear to prevent you from seizing unexpected opportunities. When faced with discipline, random times can yield surprising bursts of creativity. Put fears on the table and unleash your team for collaborative problem-solving in the present.

Stay balanced, be focused, and respond as the ball nears.

Face the fear head on

Effectively address fear by admitting it to yourself and others. Get it from underneath the table and out in the open. There is no weakness in being afraid. Fear can inform us, but we must choose not to be dominated by it. Instead, rely on your sense of purpose and values to make critical decisions.

We know meaningful organizational change isn't about learning new skills. It's about changing at the human level — within the hearts and minds of your company's leaders. And it starts with you. Innovation begins and ends with people. Organizations do not transform spontaneously.

Transformed leaders transform organizations. That's why we call what we do leadership transformation. People are your most valuable resources. They will create the momentum to overcome the challenges of change and expand into the future. We don't just train leaders — we build partnerships that help leaders find a more profound understanding of the future. **i**



Company: InitiativeOne

Innovation: Crisis leadership with purpose and confidence

www.initiativeone.com

Innovation through a focus on sustainability



Green Bay Austin Straubel Airport became the world's first airport certified to the Alliance for Water Stewardship Standard.

Sustainability and innovation can be looked at as two sides of the same coin. Focusing on innovation often leads companies to do more with fewer resources, and focusing on sustainability often leads to product and process innovations that better meet the needs of the market.

Executives of companies are realizing this connection with 62% of executives indicating that a sustainability strategy is necessary to be competitive today. Companies focusing on sustainability are also outperforming their competitors. In 2020, Corporate Knights reported that the 100 Most Sustainable Companies increased their stock price 26% compared to 16% for their benchmark. Focusing on sustainability is increasingly important for recruitment/retention with 70% of millennials saying they will stay long term where there is a strong sustainability plan.

WMEP Manufacturing Solutions (WMEP) and the Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council (WSBC) took to heart a seminal Deloitte study finding that sustainability leaders are more likely than average to be innovation leaders. WMEP and WSBC have developed, customized and applied a broad range of tools to create the core competencies of sustainability leadership to unleash the innovation potential in companies and individuals. Below are two recent examples.

Green Bay Austin Straubel International Airport (GRB) became the world's first airport certified to the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) Standard, a globally recognized

certification for water stewardship. GRB stepped out of its comfort zone and engaged with stakeholders and the community to understand and address water quality, water quantity, water governance and important water-related areas.

"When you consider the volume of impervious surfaces that flow into natural waterways and watersheds, the number of aircraft and airfield de-icing chemicals that are used, and the amount of land we own that is farmed, we have a significant impact on water quality," said Airport Director



Marty Piette

Marty Piette. "That's why, in recent years, we really focused on implementing best management practices designed to make us good stewards of our environment, including our waterways and watersheds." Innovation is coming through the integration of water stewardship into GRB's business systems, business decision-making and the application of systems thinking.

Birchwood Foods, a processor of made-to-order fresh and frozen ground beef products and fully cooked proteins for retail and foodservice customers, went from fielding infrequent general questions about environmental, social and government performance to developing an organized, systematic approach to sustainability.

WMEP and WSBC adapted 21st Century Pathways — a program they

developed to strategically elevate sustainability in an organization by better aligning its strategic, organizational and sustainability priorities — to provide Birchwood Foods the tools and documentation needed to conform to two sector-specific standards (U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef and Sustainability Accounting Standards Board).



Birchwood Foods employees

Carbon, energy, water, resource efficiency, capital expenditures, food safety, employee health and safety, and employee recruitment and retention are now integrated with strategic and tactical decision-making at the company. The company can now take strategic action to reduce emissions and proactively engage with customers in addition to more efficiently responding to inquiries and audits. 



Company: WMEP Manufacturing Solutions

Innovation: Helping companies with sustainability efforts

www.wmep.org

Cool and innovative products, services and places in our region



New North is launching a marketing campaign to highlight the cool and innovative products, services and places in our region. It will further our strategy to recruit and retain top talent, while showcasing vibrant entrepreneurship and creativity. The campaign starts with regional awareness.

Did you know?

- Skee-Ball and Connect 4 come from **Bay Tek Entertainment** – The Village Companies in Pulaski.
- The athletic green and orange Gatorade bottles are manufactured at **N.E.W. Plastics** in Luxemburg.
- **Johnsonville** is the largest sausage brand in the United States.
- **Schneider**, the premier provider of trucking, intermodal and logistics services, will operate one of the largest fleets of battery electric semi-trucks in the industry. The Grove, Schneider's innovation center, will house the newest technologies to support its future growth.
- **Paper Converting Machine Co.**, part of Barry-Wehmiller, opened a new Packaging Innovation Center as a hub for training, research and development.
- **Georgia-Pacific** and **gener8tor's 1915 Studios** accelerate consumer goods and innovative products from early-stage companies inside an R&D center that houses more than 250 scientists, engineers, technicians and support staff.
- From a state with over 10,000 lakes, it's no surprise that a leading boat engine manufacturer, **Mercury Marine** is located here.

- **Kohler**, partnering with Sanergy, is developing a container-based sanitation option for people living without access to safe sanitation systems. Kohler's innovation incubator explores products and solutions for pressing global social and environment issues.
- From Tide Pods to Scent Boosters, there is a solid chance that your regular laundry routine can be linked directly to **Encapsys**. Thanks to the leader in microencapsulation, scientists and engineers have brought us biodegradable, phase change, and fragrance technology.
- From city to city across America, iron grates surrounding trees, storm drains and manhole covers are trademarks of the hard work, determination and impact from **Neenah Enterprises**.
- As the largest kraut company in the world, it's no secret that this fermented powerhouse is the backbone of **GLK Foods'** brand offerings, including an exciting range of flavors and a wide breadth of packaging.
- Every day, nearly a quarter of the world's population uses a **Kimberly-Clark** brand product to enhance their health, hygiene and well-being in more than 175 countries.
- **EnTech Solutions**, a division of Faith Technologies Inc., was created to bring energy distribution into the future. It has installed two renewable energy microgrids on the site of Agropur's new 210,000-square-foot cheese production facility being built in the region. Agropur's new



- facility will enable the company to more than double its milk processing capabilities, while using clean energy.
- Formed out of a partnership between the Green Bay Packers and Microsoft, **TitletownTech** is building and investing in early-stage high-growth startups.
- **Whistling Straits**, home of the 2020 Ryder Cup, is included in the top 25 golf courses in the United States, according to golfdigest.com.
- **EAA AirVenture** is home to the busiest airport in the world during the one-week event.
- **Door County** has over 250 miles of shoreline, more than any other county in the United States. The Wall Street Journal coined this the "Cape Cod of the Midwest."
- **Road America**, with its glacier-created topography, is America's Favorite NASCAR Track, according to USA Today. Each year, this venue brings over 800,000 visitors from around the world.
- Marinette County is the **Waterfall Capital** of Wisconsin, with 15 waterfalls to explore. **i**

Please feel free to forward suggestions for future stories highlighting cool and innovative efforts and products and intriguing places in our New North region to renee.torzala@thenewnorth.com



Company: New North, Inc.
Innovation:
 NEW Launch Alliance
thenewnorth.com

At Settlers bank, experience paves the way for innovation



When Settlers bank opened its doors in 2007, our founders sought out innovations to make banking easier for our clients, wherever they happened to be. The result was a banking platform that is non-traditional in both form and function.

Technologies we embraced early on have now become more commonplace. But our commitment to innovation continues to drive us toward new or unconventional ways of doing business with our clients. Our business model innovation strategy centers on our mission and focuses on bringing simplicity and customization to our client experience.

Be accessible

In the wake of the pandemic, we reimagined our staffing model, realigning departments and redistributing responsibilities. These changes resulted in a streamlined client experience. Now, approximately 95% of callers



Todd Bestor
VP, Private Banking

“Todd listened intently...and came through with a fully customized solution. Settlers had the right blend of products and experience...”

to our clients, using whatever form of communication they prefer!

Offer solutions

Our experienced bankers employ innovation every day to bridge the gap between what clients need and what products and programs typically provide.

When innovation is not inherent to the culture, clients may be frustrated

Our Mission:

Be accessible through technology and in person.

Listen to learn, then offer solutions.

Build relationships through collaboration.

when their situation falls outside the static parameters of standardized programs. So, the loan application process for the self-employed borrower or prospective homeowner experiencing a life change (loss of loved one, divorce, change in employment) may end in disappointment. Here, thanks to an experienced staff committed to innovating creative solutions, those individuals are much likelier to leave with financing in place or action plans for achieving their goals.

The blend of experience, fresh thinking and program expertise allows the Settlers bank team to help borrowers navigate through

less-traditional opportunities with better results. Our lenders' deep understanding of local industries and available loan programs equips them to craft ideal and often unique solutions to meet our borrowers' needs. The benefit of this difference extends far beyond the application process. After a loan closes, having the proper structure and products can contribute to a project's success and enhance overall business operations.

Build relationships

At traditional banks, departments can be siloed. Such financial institutions may make loan decisions behind closed doors with little client collaboration. At Settlers bank, the opposite is true. Our bankers work with our clients to properly analyze what they want to accomplish and how best to do so. Then, in the end financing package, our bankers work together to consider

the entire client relationship. This practice removes the potential for frustration and ensures that all aspects of the client's banking relationship (treasury management, private banking, personal accounts, mortgage loans) work in harmony. The result is a better client experience that allows our clients to develop relationships with several of our bankers versus just one — bankers the client can easily access for help in their areas of expertise.

Since 2007 much has changed, but one thing never will: our commitment to innovating creative solutions that make banking easier for you. 



Company: Settlers bank

Innovations: Creative solutions that make banking easier

settlerswi.com

Innovations breathe new life into established prefabrication and construction techniques

I CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

Amid all the talk of construction labor shortages and supply chain constraints, some things haven't changed: Project owners are still demanding fast schedules, unrelenting focus on quality and strict budget discipline. These challenges — to do more in less time while keeping costs as low as possible — are spurring a new wave of creativity and innovation.

One such innovation is affecting the way foundations are designed and built for heavy industrial facilities and installations over large geographical areas. Instead of constructing foundations and pilings with millions of tons of concrete, steel helical and conventional piles are emerging as a faster alternative for installing structural supports. This method offers a new pathway for faster installation of critical foundation elements that provides strength and stability comparable to concrete, but with greater precision, speed and cost efficiency.

Helical piles advance tried-and-true method

First developed about two centuries ago to stabilize lighthouses along shorelines, helical piles are gaining traction as a resilient and cost-effective choice for heavy industrial and commercial construction. Fabricated from heavy-gauge carbon steel pipe, helical piles are configured with a series of welded helix-shaped bearing plates that allow the piles to be corkscrewed into the ground with a heavy hydraulic drive capable of exerting enormous torque. The installation is a mostly spoils-free process that requires less excavation and concrete and minimizes the need for off-site trucking.



Helical piles are designed to transfer weight from the shaft to the ground. They deliver extremely high load-bearing capacity and can be installed in any weather and within most environments. Because they can be custom-built to precise specifications in a controlled prefabrication shop, such as that at AZCO, helical piles are becoming an attractive option for project owners seeking to build large facilities in poor soil conditions, challenging landscapes or low-clearance scenarios in which multiple piles must be installed each day.

Beyond tape measures and plumb lines

Conventional piles driven into the ground with high-pressure hydraulic equipment also are gaining new attention as a cost-effective method to construct stable supports for large solar and battery storage installations.

Pile drivers controlled by one or two operators within the project site are increasingly becoming the preferred technology for these installations. The units allow operators to quickly align a pile on the precise spot specified and then drive it to the exact depth needed to support large solar tracker consoles spanning several hundred feet. With a process guided by a single operator, the unit utilizes GPS data to locate the spot for each pile, along with data transmitted from engineering plans to tell the operator the precise depth to which each pile must be driven.



Computer-controlled digital feedback instantly tells the operator if the pile is installed at the correct depth and if it is even a fraction of an inch out of true vertical alignment. The process is a vast improvement over manual installations, where crews depend on survey stakes and other coordinates to visually confirm whether the pipe is vertical on all sides.

Collaborative innovation

With all the technological innovation that can be brought to bear on construction sites, one of the biggest benefits is closer collaboration and communication between engineering and construction teams.

The three elements of EPC project delivery — engineering, procurement and construction — are an ideal way to meet ever-increasing demands for faster projects, higher quality and cost control. Technology innovations that build on common-sense, proven ideas work best when leveraged with the skill and experience of craft working in the field or in prefabrication shops. **I**



Company: AZCO INC.

Innovation: Steel helical piles

www.azco-inc.com



The future of marketing is integrated

Businesses today find themselves in a complex environment. With digital advancements, customer diversity, evolving markets and omnichannel needs, companies are searching for new ways to reach their audiences and achieve their goals.

The answer? Integration. An integrated marketing approach ensures your marketing efforts are driven by a single strategy and defined business goals, creating seamless connections at every touchpoint.

At Element, integrated marketing is what we do. Why do you think we named our agency Element — singular — rather than plural? Because our specialized campaigns have many components or seemingly disparate “elements.” But with integrated marketing, the result is a unified, all-encompassing vision, distilled into a singular strategy. It’s total brand chemistry — and it’s powerful! Especially when it comes to execution.

Element’s integrated marketing approach brings together all the services our clients need under one roof.

“In an integrated marketing campaign, the formula starts with a great strategy,” says Lance Peroutka, agency director/principal of Element. “But the execution is the hardest part. And that’s what separates the good from the great.”

Element’s fully integrated marketing approach is purpose-built to align strategy with consistently strong execution. From digital to public relations, creative and interactive, we continuously grow, adapt and strengthen our approach to achieve

better results for our clients.

If the concept of integration has you all perked up, here’s how it works.

Brewing success

Based in Wisconsin, Berres Brothers Coffee Roasters produces flavored coffee for those who enjoy a unique flavor with their caffeine kick. Looking for a jolt of their own, Berres Brothers came to Element — a perfect match, as both of our teams have a just-right blend of flavor and performance.

Berres Brothers sought to energize their brand, reach a younger audience, create resonant impressions and grow e-commerce sales. Our approach evolved their previous efforts into a fully integrated plan using earned, owned, shared and paid media in concert to build awareness and drive purchase intent to meet their goals.

Our Flavor Your Day buzz box caught the attention of POPSUGAR, leading to 21 million-plus unique visitors per month and an 800%

increase in sales for Berres’ Banana Nut Bread flavored coffee.

The best of the earned “buzz” came from POPSUGAR, where enthusiasm for one flavor inspired the article, “Banana Bread Coffee Is a Thing, and It’s the Best Thing Since Sliced (Banana) Bread.”

Within two hours of the POPSUGAR article, we leveraged our all-in-house team to publish an SEO-driven blog and social media posts to drive additional traffic. By keeping the buzz going, the article was picked up by numerous aggregators, including MSN Lifestyle and Yahoo! News.

Daily sales of the product nearly quadrupled in the following days, peaking on the third day, up 800% from average. Sales for the month more than doubled that of previous months. Owner Pete Berres raved, “Not only have we seen several repeat purchases, but we have an entirely new group of customers to market to in the future.”

Integrated marketing is the strategy of the future, but these success stories are already being co-written by Element and our clients. Contact us at **920.983.9700** or **info@goelement.com** and learn how we can leverage our integrated, in-house marketing services to execute your strategy. Let’s brew up the buzz of accelerated growth for your company. **!**



Our Flavor Your Day buzz box caught the attention of POPSUGAR, leading to 21 million-plus unique visitors per month and an 800% increase in sales for Berres’ Banana Nut Bread flavored coffee.



Company: Element

Innovation: Integrated marketing

goelement.com

Arrow AV Group provides latest audiovisual technology



Arrow AV Group champions innovation by providing businesses and venues with better operational experiences. Arrow provides easy-to-use automation and AV systems for rooms based on the latest audiovisual technology: AV-over-IP.

This innovative technology brings many benefits to customers when compared to traditional audiovisual distribution.

The first benefit of AV-over-IP is the use of standard IT infrastructure. Audiovisual devices can in many cases be integrated into a system using existing network infrastructure.

With a single standard network cable, a camera for conferencing or a display for digital signage can be added into a room. Need another display you didn't plan for? All you need is another network port and a decoder. This allows a workspace to shift layout and function much faster and easier.

Another benefit to using AV-over-IP is cloud monitoring and management. With the proper hardware and setup, IT staff can get notifications if a device goes down and provide proactive tech support before the CEO discovers an issue in the next meeting. With the right peripheral devices, leadership can see live data of room use to help measure ROI. This leads to marketplace agility, smarter investments, and therefore happier management.

A prime example of Arrow AV Group's implementation in action is the recently completed Resch Expo next to Lambeau Field. Arrow was responsible for installation and for coordinating with the IT contractor to execute the

project. With more than 300 network ports dedicated to AV throughout the space, there are endless options for configuring the show floor and meeting rooms to meet almost any need. Huge concert? Check. Press conference? Absolutely. Boat show with live video? Yes. Event technicians save endless hours and headaches compared to traditional methods.

By learning how to speak IT and utilizing AV-over-IP, Arrow AV Group has positioned itself as an innovative leader in the audiovisual industry. ①

ArrowAVGroup
Technology Simplified

Company: Arrow AV Group

Innovation: AV-over-IP

arrowavgroup.com



Company:
Millennium Construction

Innovation: Adapting to changing construction needs

millenniumconstructionwi.com

Change brings innovation in construction

Innovation is the process of making positive change in something already established. For Millennium Construction, Inc., a residential and commercial builder based in the Fox Cities, it's "thinking outside the box" and applying new ideas, methods, products and equipment.

The world is always changing, especially in the past two years. Millennium believes that what matters most is how well we adapt to change.

With recent labor shortages, Millennium adapted by creating its own excavation company and hiring in-house operators. It also purchased excavation equipment to ensure it didn't lose a step in the construction process, which has had a major impact on the success of the projects.

Advances in technology also provide great opportunities. COVID times brought on a need for more virtual communication, and Millennium again adapted. This included upgrading computers, holding virtual meetings, and overhauling the website to share information that normally would be communicated on-site.

Lastly, on the technology side — and

perhaps the most exciting new improvement Millennium has invested in — is the purchase and implementation of drones. This innovative technology makes it easy for Millennium's customers to see the stages of building from all perspectives throughout the process. Customers can follow the building process and get answers to questions they wouldn't otherwise know to ask. This helps the build phase progress more smoothly and leads to overall success.

Throughout these changing times, Millennium has had to adapt to the customer and subcontractor needs at every level: from how to communicate with each other, to providing information to visualize and understand the process, to the use of new technology and equipment, and even adding a new business segment. Millennium's mission statement strongly reinforces its belief that every employee at Millennium Construction, Inc. is committed to giving every customer the best personal building experience possible.

Contact Hunter Plamann, marketing manager, or Jesse Van Boxtel, owner, with any questions or building interests. ①



PayMedix addresses the cost of avoiding care



Today, it's not only the fear about one's health that keeps people out of the doctor's office. It's the real anxiety about medical debt that is keeping people up at night.

For tens of millions of Americans, whose share of the out-of-pocket costs of care continues to rise, medical debt has become an unexpected, unwanted, and financially devastating expense, with 18 to 35% of all Americans having medical debt that is in some form of collections, and accounting for a full two-thirds of personal bankruptcies.¹

Unrelenting medical costs have driven consumers to become increasingly creative, and sometimes risky, in the methods they choose to cover their costs, including dipping into retirement savings, financing medical debt on credit cards and even crowdfunding their medical expenses.

Rather than risk the negative impact medical debt can have on their lives, many Americans avoid seeking care when they need it; cut back on medications to treat chronic conditions like diabetes; or put off important, life-saving screenings like colonoscopies, mammograms, or dermatology exams. According to the NHIS (National Health Interview Survey), one in 11 adults

reported delaying or going without medical care due to cost reasons. Unfortunately, those who are in worse health are most likely to delay or go without care due to cost reasons, compounding the burden once their care becomes emergent.²

The irony of avoiding care because of cost is that care avoidance generates more cost. Without preventive care, the risk of disease increases.

PayMedix is the complete solution for all, not a partial solution for some.

91%

OF USERS WOULD RECOMMEND PAYMEDIX TO A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND TO HELP THEM MANAGE THEIR HEALTHCARE EXPENSES

93%

OF USERS SAY PAYMEDIX IS A BETTER TOOL FOR PAYING FOR THEIR HEALTHCARE EXPENSES

92%

OF USERS SAY PAYMEDIX IS A BETTER TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING THEIR HEALTHCARE EXPENSES

Without diagnostic care, diseases and conditions worsen, which can eliminate treatment options and push patients toward more significant and costlier care needs.³ The most direct impact of this negative cycle is on patients and their health, but there are downstream costs to the entire system.

The ongoing inability to understand the cost of care or manage the financial burden also becomes more than patients can process or afford, compounding issues across the health care system. Providers are spending more on debt collection, only to collect less from patients who struggle to pay. Employers are faced with increasingly unhealthy and absent employee populations, adding cost to their benefits plans when employees end up in the emergency room and leading to increased premiums and higher out-of-pocket costs for everyone.

From the employer perspective, an employee's physical health, emotional health, and financial wellness are all becoming more important to the total wellness equation. Four out of five employers say their employees' personal financial issues are impacting job performance, according to a survey by the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans. Financially stressed employees lose nearly one month of productive workdays per year. They also are two times more likely to seek a new job opportunity.

Rather than avoid care, which costs every part of the health care system, people need financial solutions that make paying for the cost of care more manageable and enabling them to access the health care they need when they need it.

A new category of health care innovators is emerging to shift the financial relationship away from providers and debt collection services to "health care payment companies." They pay the cost of the patient invoice to the provider upfront and then assume the payment relationship with the patient. As a financial company, they can provide credit for out-of-pocket costs at low to no interest and construct a payment



schedule over time that fits the patient's needs.

PayMedix is one of the companies reinventing and simplifying the way health care payments are made, enhancing patients' financial wellness so they can prioritize their own physical and emotional health. PayMedix goes beyond just extending credit up to patients' out-of-pocket maximum with reasonable repayment terms. It guarantees payment to providers and gives patients the peace of mind to go and get the care they need. It also gives consumers the information they need to gain control of their medical expenses.

It's proven that, with planning and budgeting, most Americans are resourceful and can find effective strategies to manage and pay for what is most important in their lives. Getting necessary medical care should top the list, along with housing and food. PayMedix takes the guess work out of sorting through the blizzard of paperwork patients receive by consolidating their portion and paying their contribution upfront. It provides a single, simple statement, so patients have clarity and know exactly what they owe. This allows them to plan and budget for medical expenses the



same way they do for other important living expenses.

The bottom line is that patients and health care providers need a better solution to understand and pay for care so they can access prevention,

diagnostic and treatment options sooner. More employers are stepping in to help employees manage the burden of higher out-of-pocket costs by turning to solutions like PayMedix. Every employee can participate in the program regardless of individual credit histories, so there is no fear of being rejected because of credit issues. By paying providers upfront, PayMedix eliminates bad debt, collection costs and ultimately helps alleviate financial stress for patients when it comes to paying for health care. 



Company: PayMedix

Innovation: Reinventing and simplifying the way health care payments are made

paymedix.com

¹ Source: www.yourbind.com/blog/problem-care-avoidance

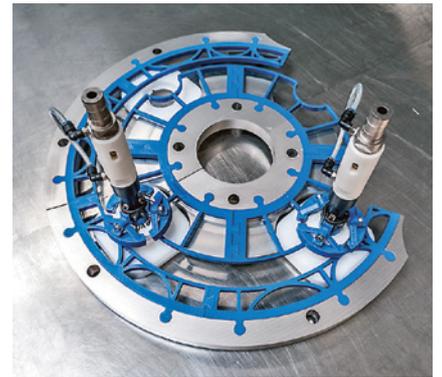
² Source: www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/cost-affect-access-care

³ Source: www.yourbind.com/blog/problem-care-avoidance

New approach to tried and tested technology



One of the world's largest cosmetics groups is looking for quick and agile solutions. New cosmetics are expected to be launched within days. "Due to a market that is strongly driven by influencers, we need quick response times," according to the headquarters in France. The average delivery time for format parts is, however, actually eight to 12 weeks. Optima is supposed to manage that in just a few days. We are taking on the challenge.



The newly developed format parts are constructed within a few hours and immediately available in a 3D printing process for the customer. They can be produced worldwide.

Weber says. The order for the first format set came in right away after the presentation of the concept. A field test should now bring insight in terms of wear, resistance and accuracy under production conditions.

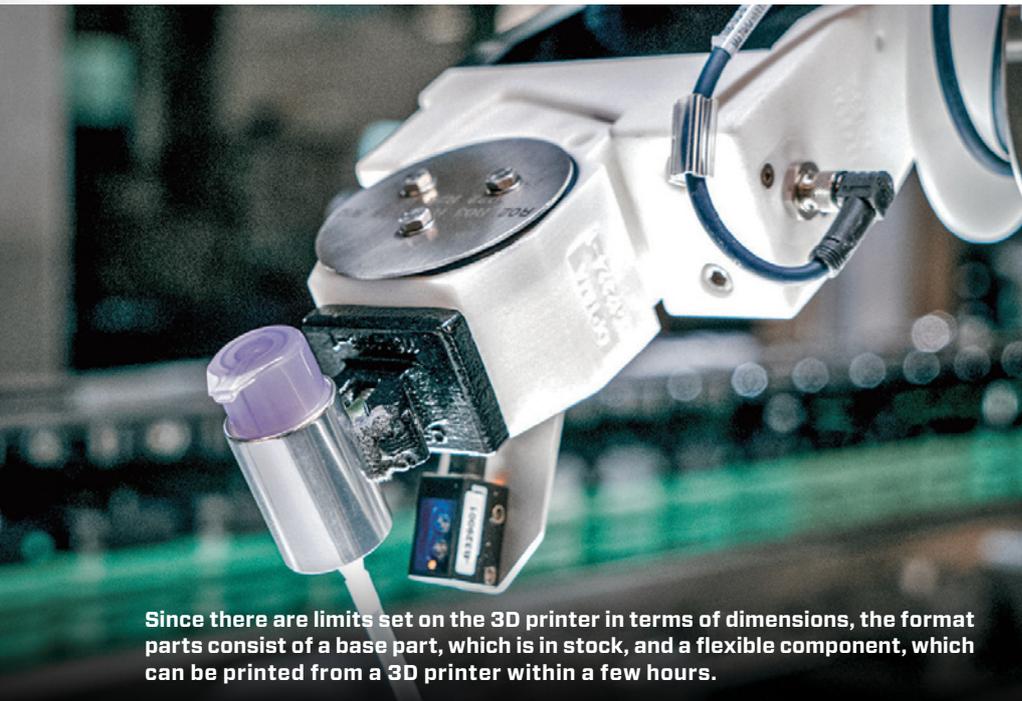
Tried and tested technology, new approach

The final result is a format set from base parts held in stock, into which the 3D printed puzzle segments (blue), which are object-dependent, are clipped and then bonded together. Another ultra-modern technology is the chemical bonding of the 3D printed parts. Optima also is developing this technology. "We are excited to see which application areas will emerge in the future," Weber says. The success story of 3D printing in mechanical engineering has just begun. 

OPTIMA

Company: Optima Machinery Corp.

Innovations:
3D printing in mechanical engineering
optima-packaging.com



Since there are limits set on the 3D printer in terms of dimensions, the format parts consist of a base part, which is in stock, and a flexible component, which can be printed from a 3D printer within a few hours.

"In a joint pilot project with the customer, we were looking for a suitable new format," says Michael Weber, director of service at Optima Consumer. In an innovative workshop, a fresh look has been given to the topic of formats. Conventional parts were split into a "carrier range" and a "flexible format range." The customer could already order the carrier parts for its systems in large quantities. If that leads to new format requirements later, only the flexible format part will be adapted to the new container or constructed in CAD. The 3D printer produces the parts within a few hours, and then the entire format conversion kit is on its way to the customer.

Use of the latest 3D printing technologies

Optima uses the latest 3D printing technologies from the in-house Additive Innovation Center, a facility that uses and further perfects all the standard 3D printing technologies. It features a 3D printing lab and a training and design area. The customer can even print the parts on its own printers onsite. In a virtual meeting with the customer's global management team, Optima presented the idea of a puzzle system with 3D printed format parts and fixed carrier parts. "The customer was impressed and gave the go-ahead for immediate project implementation,"

Family businesses benefit from innovative collaboration



Collaboration and knowledge sharing are fostering innovative ideas and work between Strategic Solutions Consulting and the Wisconsin Family Business Center (affiliated with the Wisconsin School of Business at UW-Madison) with the goal of supporting family-owned businesses throughout the state.

Strategic Solutions Consulting, a family business located in Appleton, has provided management consulting and business psychology services to businesses throughout Wisconsin, the Midwest and the United States since 2001.

The Wisconsin Family Business Center focuses on the unique challenges and opportunities of owning and operating a family business. For 25 years, the center has been bringing family business leaders together to learn and grow through educational programs, peer groups and a trusting community.

Over the past year, the two organizations began discussing how they might collaborate to leverage their knowledge, networks and resources to better serve family businesses in Wisconsin and beyond. "Working with the Wisconsin Family Business Center has created phenomenal opportunities for clients and advisers as our two organizations are aligned regarding our goals in helping family businesses create business success and family harmony," says Shipra Seefeldt, founder of Strategic Solutions Consulting.

As part of this collaboration, Strategic Solutions Consulting's Shipra and Anjali Seefeldt facilitate the Wisconsin Family

Business Center's CEO and Future Leader peer groups. "Every family business is unique; however, the challenges and issues they face are often quite similar. The peer groups offer a safe space for family business leaders to learn, collaborate, explore new ideas and problem solve. Having facilitators who also operate a family business brings another level of expertise and understanding to the groups," says Wisconsin Family Business Center Director Sherry Herwig.

Through this collaborative partnership, the two organizations aspire to positively impact family businesses throughout Wisconsin. **I**

For more information contact:

Shipra Seefeldt shipra@strategicsolutionsconsulting.com or www.strategicsolutionsconsulting.com

Sherry Herwig sherry.herwig@uwfbc.org or www.uwfbc.org



Companies: Strategic Solutions Consulting, LLC and Wisconsin Family Business Center

Innovation: Collaboration adds value to family businesses
strategicsolutionsconsulting.com | uwfbc.org

JOIN OUR TEAM
BEST PLACE TO WORK
IMMEL CONSTRUCTION
IMMELCONSTRUCTION.COM/CAREERS

IMMEL CONSTRUCTION

Company:
Immel Construction

Innovation: Bridge gaps between generations

immelconstruction.com



Becoming the next generation's best place to work

Today's workforce consists of multiple generations that have arguably more differences than ever before. While managing these differing expectations, communication styles and perspectives isn't black and white, discovering ways to tailor to each employee effectively will allow your company to grow alongside existing and upcoming generations.

Leading companies strongly support the idea that their employees, families and health are the No. 1 priority. To function at their best, employees must first maintain a healthy work-life blend that aligns with their priorities. One way to achieve this is by reducing barriers for employees, which could be as simple as offering flex time. The key to success in this approach is communication — it will vary, and how you communicate is just as important as what you communicate between generations.

"At Immel Construction, we build on our strong culture and employee-owner mindset to bridge gaps between generations and foster a trusting and approachable environment. Our employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) aligns

employee goals with company performance and becomes a differentiator in recruiting and retaining the best talent in the industry," says Paul Martzke, president of Immel Construction.

Immel encourages and assists employees in continuing their passions outside of work, being present for their families, getting involved in the community, and growing personally and professionally. We take pride in both our corporate and individual support of the community. Employees especially appreciate the opportunity to have a say in where corporate dollars are donated and to spearhead volunteer activities that they are passionate about.

At Immel Construction, our most significant resource is our people and the communities we serve. It is because of these actions and core beliefs that Immel Construction was named the Greater Green Bay Chamber's 2022 Next Generation Best Place to Work. Considering the generational differences between your employees can position your company to be the best place to work for any age in the workforce. **I**

Seaway Printing is a world-class book & publication printer and a perfect example of what happens when preparation meets opportunity



In 2021, Seaway added an HP PageWide Web Press T250 HD with HP Brilliant Ink, which has led to a significant boost in productivity.

The story begins in Green Bay, Wisconsin, in 1884, at a time when the city was becoming a key industrial center, attracting skilled craftsmen dreaming of a brighter future. It was here that Seaway Printing opened its doors as a book manufacturer, building a reputation for expert craftsmanship, service and reliability.

Over time, technology and equipment have continued to evolve, leaving many printers struggling to keep up with the rapid pace of innovation. With an unwavering commitment to customers and its craft, Seaway Printing continues to be a leader in print, building upon a legacy 138 years in the making.

“We know our role is more than simply producing a finished product but also delivering it in a way that helps publishers strengthen reputations they’ve worked so hard to earn,” says Seaway President Kevin Heslin.

Innovation comes in many forms.

For Seaway, innovation is a way of thinking. It’s how the work gets done. Principals Kevin and Lynn Heslin have built a company culture around problem-solving and efficiency. It’s their approach to the work that has enabled

Seaway to stay on top of an industry that has seen more than its share of printers come and go over the years.

It can be tempting to try to be all things to all people. Publishers have come to trust Seaway for its unique positioning in the market as a printer designed around serving their specific needs. Having a clear focus on this valuable segment of the print market enables the company to respond quickly to challenges and develop innovative solutions to support customer needs.

The importance of quality, speed and consistency is critical to publishers, whose growth depends on meeting deadlines and matching expectations of their readers. Creating the infrastructure, partners and process to exceed these expectations isn’t something mastered overnight.

From accounting and marketing to production and sales, identifying and implementing small, incremental improvements is what helps Seaway build and maintain momentum. It’s this type of thinking that has made the company an industry leader with an ever-growing demand for its services.

Seaway’s production focus is more on process flow, not just on job flow. It has

carved out a competitive advantage by looking for similarities within processes and then building on those instead of constantly addressing differences.

By focusing on being a leading low-cost print manufacturer, Seaway has been able to remain competitive, but it’s the company’s focus on bringing that to the right market that has helped it grow market share and cement a bright future.

Having the right technology and equipment partners is an essential piece of the puzzle as Seaway continues to elevate the levels of quality and service for existing customers while positioning the company to capitalize on its ambitious plans for the future.

Over the past five years, all of the company’s capital expenditure purchases have been justified by existing business to create efficiencies that enable the company to further lower the cost of production.

“They have become an innovative manufacturer,” says consultant Mike Philie of the Philie Group. “Through their investment in the latest technology, they have decreased bottlenecks and increased the velocity of the work going through their plant.”

I CHAMPIONS OF INNOVATION

At the beginning of 2021 Seaway added an HP PageWide Web Press T250 HD with HP Brilliant Ink, which has led to a significant boost in productivity. In a period of just a few weeks Seaway was able to move almost all of its work off of cut-sheet digital to the HP T250, giving it better productivity and shorter time to market.

The T250 made an immediate impact. A job that used to run on a cut-sheet in 14 or 15 hours will run on the T250 in roughly an hour, giving Seaway significantly better throughput. The installation of the inkjet enabled it to go from 8 million pages to over 20 million in just a few months. This leap in productivity was a shock to a lot of people in the industry. And with the brilliant inks, there's no quality trade-off. Seaway has the flexibility to run a job on the T250 or on the offset presses and effectively deliver the same quality customers rely on.

The latest addition to an expanding list of equipment investments is the P-Stacker by Heidelberg. Seaway is the first printer in North America to install this state-of-the-art robot technology, which increases the company's output by up to 50%. Remarkably, the P-Stacker retains the folding quality and process because there is no need to increase the machine speed. The P-Stacker can move a weight of 7 tons every shift, which is about the equivalent to a large, fully grown elephant!

Heidelberg has been synonymous with quality and future viability of the printing industry for more than 170 years. Like Seaway, it is a company with a long tradition, focused on defining the future trends in print thanks to cutting-edge technologies and innovative business ideas. Felix Mueller, president of Heidelberg USA, shared how partners like Seaway help inspire Heidelberg to find new ways to make the manufacturing process easier. "Kevin and the team at Seaway are the



Seaway is the first printer in North America to install the P-Stacker by Heidelberg's state-of-the-art robot technology.

kinds of partners who help us grow. He's always challenging us and pushing us to the limits, which is exactly the right thing to do. That helps improve what we bring to the market for all of our customers," Mueller says.

The technology is becoming so advanced that the machines are now doing most of the printing. This is creating a shift in needs and skill requirements from traditional press operators to talented machine managers.

With forward-thinking and the support of strategic partners like HP and Heidelberg, Seaway has seen a 20% compound annual growth rate over the past seven years. The company continues to look toward future investments to keep up with growing demand.

It's been said that luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. "As an entrepreneur, we rarely know when something great is going to happen or when market forces are going to open up new opportunities for growth. If that opportunity doesn't show up, we're still a better company than the day before and able to weather challenges. But when opportunity does present itself, we have to be ready to act. And we are," Heslin says.

With all of the awards, accolades and success Seaway has enjoyed, the company believes it is just beginning to see all of the hard work, investments and preparation pay off.

Seaway has always seen itself not as a printer, but a valued partner who has built a reputation on simply doing

what it says it's going to do. It focuses on helping people solve problems. It's as simple as that. This enables it to continue supporting the community, creating job opportunities and building upon the legacy it is carrying forward. And the team is clearly having a lot of fun doing it.

The story began in Green Bay, Wisconsin, in 1884, when Seaway Printing opened its doors as a book manufacturer, building a reputation for expert craftsmanship, service and reliability. It's now in the hands of principal owners Kevin and Lynn Heslin, who share a keen understanding of the responsibility that comes with that kind of legacy. "Seaway is 138 years old. When you have a company with that kind of legacy, you really don't own it — you're simply taking care of it for a period of time. It's our responsibility to build upon that legacy and leave Seaway better than we found it."

Innovation is a way of thinking.

And it's thriving at a remarkable print manufacturer in Green Bay, Wisconsin, called Seaway Printing. **1**



Company: Seaway Printing Company

Innovation: World-class printer's leap in productivity with no quality trade-off

seawayprinting.com

CR Structures' best tools are listening and planning



Construction can be difficult, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, CR Structures of Appleton has a surefire three-step mission to ensure every project goes smoothly — listen better, plan better, build better.

"It's a unique process that we take our clients through," says co-owner Kip Golden, who runs the business with Chad Reichelt. "We've molded the business ideas we liked from our years in the industry into what we want our business to be.

"We feel the construction part is really only 20%, as 80% is the upfront listening and planning before a shovel ever hits the ground," Golden adds.

"We meet with the client multiple times upfront to get all the information we need to ensure that the end product is what they want it to be."

In business since 2003, the eight-person company offers general contracting, construction management and building design services, focusing on commercial, light industrial, manufacturing, hospitality and mixed-use buildings across the state. Many of its diverse projects can be found in Northeast Wisconsin, including multiple Arby's locations, several dental offices and the Fond du Lac Dock Structures clubhouse.

From interior build-outs to new construction of multimillion-dollar facilities, CR Structures' team of building professionals manages all phases of the construction project from start to finish and project close-out. This total project integration allows Golden and his team to accurately control projects, guaranteeing quality work.

CR Structures uses a ProjectTrax tool to quickly connect project teams 24/7

via mobile connections. This state-of-the-art construction management software allows the team to instantly share information with architects, engineers, project managers, suppliers, subcontractors and building owners via user-friendly apps.

And even though Northeast Wisconsin has its share of competitors, CR Structures believes its size and focus on listening thoroughly sets the company apart.

"It doesn't matter what size competitor we may be up against, clients get to meet directly with the owners," says Tami Bloedorn, CR Structures' vice president of finance. "Chad and Kip are integral in every project."



Company: CR Structures

Innovation: Total project integration

crstructures.com



CHAMPIONS
OF
INNOVATION

Is it time for innovation in YOUR business?

"Stable supply chain." "Few manufacturing opportunities in today's stable global environment." "Plenty of qualified workers." "Business as usual."

What do these phrases have in common? **Not one of them describes the current state of the manufacturing sector in 2022!**

Is there actually a way to grow within this manufacturing industry upheaval?

We think so! In fact, 25 years ago we launched a company whose very name includes some key words we believe can guide your response to the market conditions we find ourselves in now: Technology for Automation — **Tech4!**

- Automation helps fill gaps in your labor force created by the lack of skilled, reliable employees and allows you to move your qualified workers to tasks they need to do instead of the tasks they have always done.
- Employing automation can reduce

employee injuries and the spread of illness within your facility, stabilizing your labor force.

- Automation can help you lean less on suppliers and control more of your supply chain in-house.

Tech4 has decades of experience assisting manufacturers in creating innovative solutions based on advanced motion control, drive systems, robotics, assembly, and material handling. (See our anniversary article at www.insightonbusiness.com/eedition/page-25/page_b471eeba-840a-56eb-815e-df3b4ec4e469.html) With 25 years of industrial automation applications under our belt, there is a good chance we have experience with a technology that can help your business compete. From helping OEMs develop



Material handling and robotic pack-out help repurpose foundry staff.

state-of-the-art systems using high speed/high-accuracy motion, to helping end users apply robots, vision, sensors, or drive technologies to increase production speeds, we can leverage our broad range of experience to help you create innovative solutions for your business!

In our rapidly changing environment, we think you will agree: Automation is THE key to competitive manufacturing in a unique 2022 world!



Company: Tech4, LLC

Innovation: Technology for automation

tech4.com

A2Z serves as solutions partner



digital marketing campaigns that exceed expectations and generate results.

We're proud of our ability to develop unique digital advertising solutions that help our clients laser-focus on their target audience. We call it A2Z Dynamic Digital™. We've done everything from geofencing a specific location that our client's audience tends to visit to delivering a digital advertising campaign to promoting staying healthy amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

We've used marketing automation and lead generation to help our clients accomplish a variety of objectives, from running a global innovation conference and identifying future sales opportunities to promoting another client's event venue for weddings, special events and corporate events.

Looking ahead

A2Z's culture of strategy, creativity, curiosity and commitment to bringing exceptional work to our client partners has been key to our success. A2Z has big plans for smart growth and will continue to evolve in line with changes in technology, design and media and do what we do best — create beautiful print and digital campaigns that generate real results to help client partners leap ahead of their competitors. **I**

Innovation is at the core of what we do at A2Z. We're always looking for dynamic solutions to meet our clients' marketing objectives.

A2Z was established by Jeff Amstutz in 2007 and has grown to be an award-winning design and branding agency that serves local, national and global organizations. 2020 brought the opportunity to innovate the core of A2Z. After 13 years as an agency solely focused on branding and design, Jeff sought to expand the agency's footprint. In December 2020, A2Z added marketing strategy and digital services, allowing us to serve our client partners even better.

Comprehensive marketing strategies

We help businesses create marketing strategies that cut through the noise, connect beautifully with their ideal customer using messages that resonate, and create measurable tactics that get results.

Our philosophy is if you can't measure it, you shouldn't do it, so we make sure every tactic is measurable

to show ROI. Our clients appreciate having a robust marketing strategy that guides their target audience along the journey from awareness to utilization to advocacy.

We've also created a unique process called A2Z Storyology™ to help our clients better tell their stories. We make it easy for their ideal customers to understand why they can trust our clients to provide the products or services that will best solve their problem.

Our approach to digital

We believe that the best digital marketing campaigns must include strategic

thinking, creativity and stellar design. Digital design should be just as thoughtful and purposeful as print design. We pride ourselves on our ability to create impeccably designed, imaginative and tailored print and



The Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce honored A2Z with the Company Innovation Award (small co.) in 2021.



Company: A2Z

Innovations: A2Z Storyology™ and A2Z Dynamic Digital™

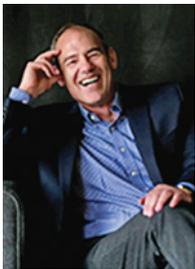
a2zdesign.com

Innovative solutions to manufacturer labor challenges

According to the October 2021 Wisconsin Manufacturing Report, 99% of Wisconsin manufacturers with 50 or more employees are having difficulty finding qualified candidates for open positions. The resulting competition for employees can be fierce.

Chris Czarnik, CEO of Career Research Group, says formerly tried-and-true recruitment efforts don't really work anymore. "For employers, it was like selling ice water in the

middle of the desert," Czarnik said. "They could recruit without much effort. Now, they are competing with scores of other companies for the same employees,



Chris Czarnik

and they are somehow shocked that they're not having success."

Albert Einstein famously said, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." The same could be said of many companies' response to this historically tight labor market. Instead of doing the same things and hoping for better results, companies must look at their situation differently and consider innovative solutions to their workforce challenges.

According to George Bureau, vice president of consulting for WMEP Manufacturing Solutions (WMEP), success lies in a multipronged approach

of recruitment, retention and redeployment of the talent needed for organizations to grow and thrive.



George Bureau



Manitowoc Tool & Manufacturing is investing in employee development at all levels of its organization. The company requested that WMEP Manufacturing Solutions provide an in-house Supervisor Skills workshop.

Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry, whose workforce has recently grown by about 20%, focuses on employee satisfaction and employee referrals to address its talent needs. It increased wages and benefits, which helped with retention, but it also tapped into existing employee networks.

Each Monday, Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry CEO Sachim Shivaram has lunch with new hires to get to know them better. Shivaram increasingly relies on his current employees to help spread the word about the favorable work environment. "Word of mouth is our biggest and best tool," he said.

As recruitment becomes increasingly expensive and difficult, successful companies also are focusing on shoring up their retention efforts. Retention is driven by employees' total experience, including work environment, compensation and benefits, perceived growth opportunities, and importantly, the capabilities of their immediate supervisor. Debra Pratt, HR manager at Manitowoc Tool & Manufacturing, said investing in supervisory skills "provided us valuable real-world skills to sustainably grow our organization and set us apart in the labor market as an employer of choice."

As workforces turn over, documenting processes and developing job skills has a measurable impact on job

performance and retention as well. WMEP clients such as Componex are developing improved job instructions to more effectively transfer knowledge and speed onboarding of new employees, resulting in increased productivity and improved retention, saving the company significant money.

And last but not least, companies are investing in automation to improve productivity and free up human resources that can be redeployed elsewhere. TYRI Americas turned to automation solutions to help with its workforce challenges. According to TYRI Americas President Ken Turzinski, "WMEP's Automation Assessment helped TYRI prioritize our capital investment in automation ... The first phases have helped us address our workforce challenges while significantly improving productivity." TYRI reports hundreds of thousands of dollars in labor and other savings tied to its automation solutions. 



Company: WMEP Manufacturing Solutions

Innovation: Creative workforce solutions

www.wmep.org

Davis|Kuelthau helps businesses innovate through people, products and processes



With roots tracing back 130 years, Davis|Kuelthau is proud to continue its legacy of serving as outside general counsel to the gamut of businesses, entrepreneurs and individuals who have built this great state.

Who is Davis|Kuelthau?

In 1891, the law firm of Stover and Stover was founded by James H. Stover and focused its practice on maritime law. In 1905, Carl Rix formed his own law firm and was joined by his nephews, Carl Kuelthau and Earl R. Kuelthau, in the 1920s. In 1941, Robertson, Hoebreckx, Davis & Vergeront was founded and soon gained prominence in private and public sector labor relations and general corporate matters. These three firms merged in 1967 to form Davis, Kuelthau, Vergeront & Stover. In 1980, Werner & Goodland, a real estate and financial institution law firm, merged with the firm, creating Davis|Kuelthau.

Davis|Kuelthau has embraced tremendous growth in attorneys and Wisconsin offices over the years, as well as the scope of legal services offered. Our growth was fueled by strategic mergers and acquisitions as well as the hiring of talented, well-established attorneys throughout the state including, at various points, Appleton, Green Bay, Oshkosh and Sheboygan. Today, our team spans the state with offices in Appleton, Brookfield, Green Bay, Madison and Milwaukee.

Most recently, the attorneys at Northwind IP Law and Epiphany Law joined Davis|Kuelthau in Appleton, expanding the firm's existing presence in the New North region. Drawing upon the firm's broader depth and combined

with our Green Bay office, this regional team offers the full suite of business law services including corporate, employment, intellectual property, litigation, mergers and acquisitions, succession planning, tax, and, for individuals, estate and wealth planning.

Through every expansion, Davis|Kuelthau has remained true to its vision and mission. We are known for our commitment to providing clients with high-quality, personalized service.

At Davis|Kuelthau, client needs and expectations are every employee's primary concern — a simple combination of listening and caring. A firmwide review process ensures that we continually improve staff efficiency and maintain the high standard of work that clients expect of us and that we expect of ourselves. The result? We serve not only as legal advisers but as partners in our clients' businesses.



Leaders in protecting innovation

The most valuable business assets often are intangible assets. Yet, while most business owners take steps to protect equipment, buildings and employees, they often overlook protecting their intangible assets. Failure to protect intangible assets can lead to costly losses.

Davis|Kuelthau's team has served the intellectual property needs of entrepreneurs, small- to mid-sized institutions and large corporations for several decades. Many of our IP colleagues previously served as in-house counsel to some of the nation's most renowned innovators and thus offer both the business know-how and the legal savvy to counsel you on all aspects of IP including patents, trademarks, copyrights and trade secrets.

Our technical experience covers a wide range of engineering, scientific, computer and medical principles as well as business methods. We work with manufacturers producing the latest innovations in areas such as adhesives, electronics, food and beverage, furniture, lighting, machinery, plastics, steel, tools, transportation and more. We also serve the gamut of businesses serving the manufacturing industry including construction, real estate and financial services.

We are committed to helping our clients throughout the IP process from application or protection to enforcement of rights to defense of infringement claims. We work with clients to reduce their IP risks by:

1. Helping business leaders understand what can and should be protected
2. Identifying potential and actual risks
3. Establishing controlled access to data and creating HR policies surrounding the IP
4. Creating and leveraging a proactive loss prevention program

In short, we bring real-world experience and understanding, and a results-oriented mindset, to help you innovate through your people, products and processes. When the time is right, we'd be delighted to talk to you about your needs. **I**

Meet our Appleton and Green Bay team:

Michael J. Bendel | Aaron P. Benz | Kathryn M. Blom | Robert W. Burns | Timothy A. Cisler | Sherry D. Coley | Thomas J. Connolly | Kevin L. Eismann | Timothy J. Feldhausen | Stephen C. Jensen | Jason R. Just | James M. Kalny | Ross R. Kornowske | Andrew C. MacDonald | Heather J. Macklin | Robert L. Macklin | Alexis M. Merbach | Anthony J. Steffek | Abby Tilkens | Ted A. Warpinski | Tiffany E. Woelfel



Company: Davis|Kuelthau, s.c.

Innovation:
Helping businesses protect their IP
dkattorneys.com



CHAMPIONS
OF
INNOVATION

CHAMPION SPONSORS



SUPPORTING SPONSORS

