



2019 Around the Table Summary



Contents

What is your company’s big, hairy audacious goal (BHAG) for 2019?.....2

What does your company do to adapt to a rapidly changing world?4

What have you done, or should you do to improve the perception of your company’s brand as ethical and honest?8

How can your company become more high-tech while remaining high touch?.... 13

What will be on the pictures you take this summer? 18

What are some of the things you do (or can do) to engage the lowest paid employees in your company?..... 22

Do you ever ask your vendors to participate in events at your company? In what ways? 26

How often have members of your leadership team spoken to a customer in the last 90 days? For what reason? 30

What are your customers forcing you to do that makes your company better? 33

The time is ripe for?..... 37

What are you doing in your company that will improve people and the planet tomorrow?..... 39

What will you congratulate yourself for a year from now? 45

What is your company's big, hairy audacious goal (BHAG) for 2019?

- \$1.5 in gross margin
- \$2.5 million dollars in sales!
 - We have 2 inside sales people now and we've never had so much activity!
- 50 Gold packages, which would double our revenue
- We recently purchased another company, it's been a rocky integration: We need to refine our processes, standardize and merge cultures and become one company and one brand.
- I have 3 because I opened the door and asked others for input;
 - Sales - We need to have a \$2.5 million in repeatable accounts
 - Operations - Implement LEAN manufacturing by 2019
 - Owners - We need to replace ourselves by the end of this year
- Golf - increase sales by 15%
 - Events - Hire a new sales & marketing director and increase sales by 15%
- Find a #2 that I can train to take over the company one day
- Achieve a cost of goods for fresh product of 20% for 2019
- Increase revenue by 40%

- I've been forbidden from having BHAGS.
 - We could handle 15% sales growth

- Prepare operations for 25% growth

- We are getting ready to move into the new building we have purchased. Our goal is May 31st and includes two additions. It's an ambitious target.

- Reduce our scrap by 60%, which would add \$85,000 to our bottom line.

- 12% growth in revenue which would result in slightly less than \$1MM.
 - Double sales in the sign industry

- Double the amount of money I have in my business savings account
 - Build up my business savings account to \$100,000
 - Work toward making the company self-sufficient and able to run without me

- Getting back on track. I took an extended leave after the death of my Mother in 2018.

What does your company do to adapt to a rapidly changing world?

- We make sure we're very plugged into our industry. We don't try to do everything. We figure out what we're good at and focus on that. I form partnerships instead of "vendor-ships" with my clients. Once you start acting that way, customers start sharing very different things. Then you can educate yourself on hot buttons and not be just a "flash in the pan".
- We're not very good at adapting quickly. My business is very customer driven. At times, we've been asked to do things for which we get nothing in return. It's difficult to adapt to a changing world and deal with picky customers.
- Because I am small, I can pivot easily. I work directly with my customers and see what they're doing. I hear their pain points to determine if I should move in that area.
- I'm so new right now, I'm trying to find time to do everything. I'm doing it all myself and learning how to prioritize.
- I have a mother ship that directs much like a franchisor. When I started, I tried to do everything they said by the letter. A lot of stuff worked, but some didn't. I've been intentional about asking: *"How can I take all the truth that comes at me and interpret it and adapt it to how I operate?"*.
 - The way that people buy has changed. I'm listening to my gut more and trusting myself. When I think something smells weird or if something doesn't work, I try something else.
- The world is rapidly changing in what we produce but also in employment. We invest more in technology for the new employees. We're doing more commercial and less residential work. The products are getting smarter and we are adapting as quickly as we can, but it's hard and expensive.

- We keep our online presence up to date. We've invested in a new POS system to give us the information we need to run our business smarter. Our phones are rapidly becoming dated, we're reviewing that. Change is happening fast, and it's expensive to keep up. By the time we figure out what we're doing, it's time to replace.
 - We've also learned that what is hot and what actually works are not the same. A few years ago, we were leaders in the golf course industry when we installed GPS on all our carts. Today everyone has a GPS on their phone and having it on the cart didn't matter at all!

- Change! We change with it. Technology is constantly changing! If we're not moving to change with it, we 'll have to go home.
 - We continually learn and educate ourselves. We're a technology company. We do a brown bag lunch every month focusing on pertinent topics, we educate through our blogs too.

- We're flexible and we diversify. Consumer tastes in the rapidly changing world have all but destroyed our company. No one is buying the products that once made our company strong. Today, we're looking at new products and new industries.

- We do the traction program which keeps those conversations on the forefront for the entire organization. It's tricky to adapt to rapid change, not everyone sees the big picture. It's really important to have good information in order to stay on top of technology.

- We listen to our customers and try to understand what they need from us. Whenever a customer comes in to do an audit, we ask a lot of questions. We take their reviews to heart and receive a lot of good insight.

- The school bus industry is very slow to adapt to technology. Back-up cameras are just coming to the school bus world. I came to this industry from a high-tech world where everything was measured.

- We listen to our employees. The older we get the more set we get in our ways. It's interesting to hear the ideas from the 20-somethings. We host quarterly internal town halls. We're always listening and trying to hear what's being said.

- We're dealing with generational changes in the workforce. Millennials and those coming after them are looking for a sense of purpose. They don't want to be drones.
 - We've started to use an app called TINYpulse. We send questions out to people and they give feedback anonymously. We recognize people for good ideas and at the same time we're trying to leverage technology.
 - I'm also aware that if I'm listening to feedback, I have to do something about it. If an idea is not going to work because of fit or cost, I must deliver the message and the reason.

- Hang on tight! We're an old product line in an old industry. We invest conservatively in our processes, procedures, product development and people.

- We try to keep up with the rapidly changing world of technology. My phone now has our shop operating system on it. I can look at it and tell how many cars are on the schedule and how many are being worked on.
 - The technology built into cars is changing and we're constantly updating our equipment. There's so much information online too. A Collision Repair University offers online classes. All the manufacturers have websites that explain repairs on their vehicles. We're always looking at trade magazines for the latest information.

- I have a new website and once I get that figured out, I want to do face-to-face coaching. I am also exploring “anytime coaching” through Zoom.
- We are continually changing our website. We’re explaining our products and how to use them utilizing more social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram). We’re integrating with partners’ websites as well, including all the farmers’ markets we participate in.

What have you done, or should you do to improve the perception of your company's brand as ethical and honest?

- Modeling and doing the right thing. Yesterday I was home sick, a team member called about a job order outside our territory; should we take it? I suggested we call the manager in that territory to see what she wanted to do.
- It's about respecting boundaries and treating others the way you want to be treated.
- My business is small. Most of my customers meet me face to face and then we decide to work together. It's totally dependent on how potential customers perceive me. A lot about my business is on the website, but people look to me: How I portray myself and how I come across. Do I live up to my customers' expectations? Not always, but I always try to do the right thing for them.
- We consciously set out to be ethical and honest: I think it's the things we do that promote that. When accounts are billed wrong, we're immediately on the phone to repair it - even when it's only a few pennies.
- Our core values drive us in the decision-making process. We promote them on our website, and we move them forward in the tone of everything we write and the way we act.
- Our key people reflect who we are. We must be ethical and honest to be in the game. It's permission to play.
- We are an end user; when our customers walk through the door, we must convince them that we are honest and ethical in everything we do. It's how we deal with our managers and staff; we're transparent and everyone sees our P&L. We've discovered that the way we work with staff is the way they handle customers.

- Being a family-owned business, we strive to project family values. When there's a problem, we reach out, accept responsibility (if it's ours) and discover how we can make it better. We take it personally. When we do it internally, the staff sees it and our customers are treated the same.
- It would be a lot harder to be unethical and dishonest. We're not bright enough to be that manipulative.
- How could you be in business for 12 years and not be ethical and honest. We must be doing something right.
- We under promise and over deliver. We do what we say we'll do, and we get it in writing. We use the "WE" strategy - when things go wrong everyone knows that there's someone on the team that has their back. Most of the time it's the whole team pulling together.
- I hadn't thought about our brand as ethical and honest. We've used different words.
- Quality is one: people know we work hard to put out a quality product and to do it sincerely and kindly. The opposite is just not who I am. I'm thinking of the sympathy customers, people who have lost loved ones. We have compassion for what they're going through. Internally we talk a lot about perceived value and design. It's a fine line.
- Our customers are not end-users. When I acquired the business, I quickly discovered that the perception people in the community had of our business wasn't what we thought it was. The previous owners had not given raises but had splurged on Jaguars. It created the wrong idea and we set out to correct their perception. We got more involved with our teammates (employees) and became more visible in the community. We also had to weed out some of the "anchors" in the company that could not or would not change.

- It's important to always do the right thing. We're a union shop, which can create dissonance. Since I've been here, we've never had a grievance that had to go to an arbitrator. We've had little or no conflict. There will always be the challenges. Mistakes happen. Had a conversation with the sales guy this week: he was bummed because a tooling error put us behind schedule. It's all in how you react.
- We think culture at our organization is the secret sauce.
- When We evaluate the person's review and have the values on one side and.
- When you're faced with a decision, do the right thing. I'm in charge of the sales team. Never apologize for margin! We believe in transparency. Never apologize for that, we are not the low-cost provider - we provide incredible value.
- I'm going to talk about core values: Integrity and relationships. Whether we deal with an employee, a customer or a vendor, we do what's right. I take it seriously even if it means sacrificing profit. That blows people away.
- A new employee just started the other day. We verbally make the offer on the phone and then have them sign when they come in. I meet with every new employee on their first day. The new employee thought his verbal offer was \$16.50 but the written offer was \$16.00. He was bummed, I made it right.
- When I was president of the company, there was a high performer who unfortunately had a temper. He kept it under wraps for the most part, but sometimes it came out. He blew up at an HR person. I'd heard that he had done that before, but I had not seen it. That afternoon I let him go. Then a couple people told me it wasn't the right decision and for good reason. The manager was the problem all the time -he was bad. I brought the guy back with the stipulation he get counseling for anger management, and let the manager go.

- It's a long, long process. You stand behind what you do. Do what you say and go beyond. Add value which builds trust with customers.
- When I first started in business, people didn't know me. It took two or three visits for people to get to know me.
- When we get done with a job, we show people the parts we replaced and show them pictures of the process. It reinforces that we do what we say we're going to do.
- I appreciate the personal touch and practice that. The personal attention helps the company shine. We do what we say we'll do. My customers come to me because they need to fulfill licensing requirements. All our classes meet those standards.
- Choice is important to customers; when we add a new class or a new instructor, they know that we're updating and keeping current with our offerings.
- I've only had one challenge in all the years I've been teaching and that's because the person hadn't read where the class was being held.
- When someone needs extra help getting their documentation up to date, I help them with that. I insure everyone gets the certificates they need to prove they've done the work.
- We answer customer questions honestly. If they get a batch of cheese that isn't right, we explain what happened. Take care of the customer every time. If there are questions, be forthright and talk to them.
- People who come to us at the farmer's markets ask a lot of questions. We must be aware of how the animals who provide the milk for our cheese are treated. Customers also ask what happens to the whey.

- We also have a solar farm, so we get into protecting the environment.
- We post pictures of ourselves and titles on our site, as well as a little bit about our personal background. We provide a history of making our products. Publishing customer testimonials is a great asset for us.

How can your company become more high-tech while remaining high touch?

- By strategically using technology to enhance our business and not replacing the human touch. In our world there is a lot of technology available. Some programs and apps replace our manual processes, but we always try to be strategic in how we use technology. It can take away from the customer relationship.
- Whenever we try something new, we monitor the results. Do the results justify what we've invested or NOT invested in technology?
- I suggest utilizing the power of your CRM. For example, technology can remind you of people's birthdays and anniversaries so you can be more high touch.
- Add a chat widget to your website - people have come to expect that. The chat features can be incredibly responsive and focused. However, there are times when people prefer to go totally low-tech and make a phone call.
- My partner has a handyman business. We built him an app and have noticed that customers use it to call him. In addition to giving them an easy way to contact the handyman, it also reminds them that there are a wide range of services available.
- We're looking at investing in capital equipment now. People think that when we invest in automated equipment, we will reduce people. In reality, it's not that way. What it does is change the type of person we hire. We need a different kind of employee, one who can use technology. It's hard to find people who have the soft skills that also fill the technology bill.
- In terms of high touch, the technology we use improves the connection with customers. We can respond instantly, no more waiting on snail mail.
- We have several buildings within our company complex; we used to have to trot across the plant to see what was happening in the different buildings. Now we text and can get answers immediately.

- Some of our technology is archaic and soon will no longer be supported. That leads to new wireless requirements and building infrastructure.
- We're always looking for ways to be more high touch. Because of the new website and point of sale, we can now check golfers in on the first tee using a tablet. Unbelievable! They don't even have to come in the clubhouse. They love it.
- As owners we focus on high touch. We're both on-site during the season interacting with customers. We know them personally and enjoy engaging with them. We thank them often for their business. As much as we do though, there's always room for improvement.
- I go to a small dress shop in Little Falls. Whenever I purchase something, I get a hand-written thank you note from the owner. She wouldn't have to do that, but it's very thoughtful. I appreciate that.
- We pride ourselves on the use of technology. We use Salesforce as our CRM. We've integrated it with Constant Contact and are planning to integrate it with our phones in the near future.
- We count how many times we touch our customers: newsletters, phone calls, event invitations and attending events.
- We're in the process of updating our logo and redoing our website. There are many new ways we can and should utilize our website, for example we're thinking of installing a personalized dashboard to show customers the progress on their projects.
- We are extremely hands-on with our customers. We know if we aren't, it's just a sale, not a relationship. We will lose them.
- We use hand-written thank you notes. It's Girl Scout cookie season. So, we bought a bunch of boxes and passed them out to our customers with thank you notes.

- I'm working with a chamber and we've started reaching out for member thoughts using a one-question survey. We've collected lots of great ideas this way.
- We don't deal with many end-users; we manufacture parts for companies who manufacture the end-product.
- Our website is high-tech and high touch and is how we do deal our customers.
- We pride ourselves on responding to every question and request within three hours. If we don't have an answer, we let customers know we are working on it and will get back to them. We've gotten positive feedback that they appreciate the immediate response. It's not always a phone call, but it's a personal touch from a live person.
- I insist that my sales reps personalize subject matter and signatures of on all emails.
- We're trying to come up with a new ERP system - the current one is ancient. We have a lot of redundancy and lost time as a result. When the new one is up and running, it should free up our people to do a better job serving our customers.
- We're not a very high-tech company, but I've been thinking our welding area needs more technology. I'm working with the University of Duluth on a project that would put a robot in that area.
- The high-touch side came in when I had to pitch the idea to the employees in that area to look at opportunities differently and to look at different opportunities.
- I look at this a huge problem in manufacturing. Manufacturing is slow to adapt. In our company, we're trying to go paperless. It would make a big difference, especially in the area of blueprints.
- We collect a lot of data; artificial intelligence, we're looking for ways to use data analytics to help us predict the future.

- Every time we purchase a new machine, we want predictive maintenance installed (sensors that alert you when maintenance is due).
- The high touch part is educating people about the benefits of technology; many are afraid of it. We have an older workforce and people are hesitant when it comes to technology. We demonstrate how to use it and explain how it will make their lives easier.
- We're moving into new offices and the spaces are much smaller than the current ones. We're getting rid of file cabinets full of old documents. We're scanning the ones we need and getting rid of the rest.
- We're building a CRM system which is about measuring our customer touches. We don't automate just to automate; we use technology to overcome some of the human aspects. We use Constant Contact to get emails out.
- I'm very cautious about technology in general. Fads come and go. People think there's a cool new technology and right away wonder "how can we apply it?". When there's a problem, we see if there's a technology that will solve it instead of the other way around - discovering a technology and then trying to find the problem.
- We collect a lot of data; we just don't use it very well. We're adding another person to our accounting team so we can drive data from operations. The operation side of labor and margins are going to have lot of focus this year.
- We have new computer programs and marketing systems; we strive to remain high touch in all we do. It's especially important when working with our brokers/salespeople and staff.
- Our factory is not high tech. We keep track of lots by dates and make sure our employees are educated.
- It's important to know what computers can do for you, but more important to deal with people in a high-touch fashion.

- We sell our cheeses at Farmer's Markets; you can't get any closer to your customers than a farmer's market. They tell us what they like, and they come back expecting that we will make changes based on their recommendations. Often, we do.
- I'm a trainer and everything I do is high touch. Recently I updated my website to make information easier for people to find.
- It's challenging, there's so much technology out there. Lots of our customers are older, they don't want to get a lot of emails from us. They don't want high tech. We always try to keep our relationships high touch by keeping our customers in the loop.
- The banking industry has changed dramatically in the past few years. Now people want to take a picture of their check on their phone and have it deposited. The challenge is to keep in touch with our customers because we don't see them as often. It's challenging to stay high touch while offering customers the technology they want.

What will be on the pictures you take this summer?

- Wedding photos! My son is getting married in June
- Dog pictures
- Camping, campfires, dogs and cats and birds
- Happy people
- Celebrations
- A trip to Boston
- Pictures of my eastern grandchildren
- What you do in Minnesota in the summer
- Concerts at Lake George
- Pictures of my Sweetie
- Pictures of my cruise up the St. Lawrence Seaway
- My Dad
- Nieces and nephews
- Pictures of Brenda Eisenschenk XXXX Award
- Weddings

- Colorado - my niece graduated from high school
- Cabin pictures
- Some new interesting projects (a big metal arc for Patagonia)
- Custom Christmas ornaments for a customer
- Pictures this summer will be of family and friends sharing time at the lake - fishing, swimming, boating, skiing, game playing (mostly 'bags' and bocce ball)...and evenings around the campfire roasting marshmallows, sing-a-longs with the kids, and sharing stories. There will also be pictures of our bike riding trip in Indiana - Kids, grand-kids, and us, of course!
- Son graduating from UMD in Duluth
- Going to the cabin up north (by Cross Lake)
- Pictures of sunsets
- Pictures of dogs
- Pictures from the Tom Beardson Foundation
- Denmark
- Germany
- Italy
- Wine

- A lot of golf tournaments
- Summer socials
- Rocs
- Photos INSIDE our house
- Planting natural lawn
- Daughter's first birthday
- Golfing in charity events
- Three days every month going to the lake
- I'm doing some camping - we have the tent set up in the basement and I got the camper set up ready to go
- Pictures of Jackson Hole and Yellowstone
- Camping pictures at state parks. The kids are already asking.
- I'm also taking a guy camping trip
- A lot of School Buses, very busy and compressed delivery season for North Central this year. No vacations planned other than a couple long weekends.
- Duluth pictures
- Cabin pictures

- Seattle and California trip with family
- Camping (tenting) the kids love that
- Pictures of Mr. Poppers, the cat
- Ontario and Ohio - we're going to see friends from the Navy
- Pigeon Forge and Dollywood in the fall
- New York
- My flooded front yard!
- We'll be going to Quebec City, Mackinaw Island
- June is always car events every weekend so cars will be on my pictures
- My grandkids!

What are some of the things you do (or can do) to engage the lowest paid employees in your company?

- My brothers and I work two or three sweet corn stands. It's boring work: hours of sitting in a lawn chair waiting for someone to stop and buy our corn. I'm the oldest which makes me the boss. I let them know when they do a good job and I've learned praise works a lot better than criticism.
- Get to know who they are as people. Show interest in their lives - treat them as valuable members of the team, because they are. Be less rigid. Who else would do the menial jobs they do if they weren't working for me? Probably me! When people have something going on, encourage them and show confidence in their ability.
- Over the years I've had a lot of kids come and go, usually they're high school students. They're paid the least and do the most menial work in our shop. I've had some wonderful kids that I've mentored; it's fun to see them grow and move on with their lives and be successful.
- I have fun with them, helping them be successful.
- I have no employees.
- I take time to talk to the lowest paid people because they're usually part-time and don't have access to the owners as much. Sometimes they have good ideas but are afraid to share them or don't know who they should talk to. Their jobs are not always glorious, so we try to make them feel part of the team. Talk to them! Don't just text or Facebook!
- Get them involved on a team (safety, kaizen, 6S, etc.). Also, getting them engaged watching for improvement ideas in their area.
- All our employees are long term (a blessing and a curse). Our company is diversifying into new areas and that's changing the culture.

- Our entry level isn't so much on the production floor, it's in engineering. When we hire someone, we put them in the area where we have the most problems. We've asked current employees to train them and that's been working quite well.
- We bring in STEM kids from the college. We show them an area we want to improve or refine, and they focus on it and help solve the issue. The students are in chemical, electrical and mechanical engineering.
- When you educate every employee, especially the lowest paid ones, on your goals you can get them excited. I believe in small prizes as small rewards. Educate them as much as you do all the other employees.
- Additional coaching. I focus on my employees, listen to them and share some of the skills that I have. Every employee, especially the lowest paid people, need extra support and insight. Reviews and goal setting are important for the lowest paid, because they're often forgotten
- Treat them like people. Show interest in them. Some of the jobs those people perform are called the "shit jobs"; paying attention to people who do menial tasks pays big dividends in employee appreciation. A lot of times they also know what's going on in the company and you learn a lot about what's going on.
- In manufacturing, when you lay off people most managers avoid the people being let go like the plague. Of course, it's usually the lowest paid employees too. They really appreciate the fact that they're valued.
- We do a monthly barbeque where we engage all the employees. I try to engage them socially, but some of them are druggies and meth heads and that can be hard.
- Engaging our employees begins with truly knowing them and them knowing us. We share our company values and expectations, and work to build positive relationships between management and team members. Acknowledging what they do and its importance to company's success gives them clear purpose in their work. Positive feedback given early and often as well as sit-down goal setting & evaluation every 90 days helps them grow and stay engaged. Our '90-day world' allows management one-on-one time to coach and motivate, as well

as recognize success at reaching goals. We are working on 'stay reviews' to implement end of 2019. This is actively listening to what they want, need, etc. to stay with our company and then working to meet those needs. We believe employees who believe they are heard are more engaged.

- Being a seasonal business can sometimes be a bummer. We hire lots of college kids and we're instituting new technology throughout the company. We must train new employees and occasionally have questions. Every time I call someone in, they ask, "*What did I do wrong?*" I try not to take it personally.
- We ask our part-time staff to do lots of different things such as checking in golfers, clean up and getting ready for the next event. At times I'll come in and help vacuum and clean up - this astonishes them. I am amazed by the college kids who keep coming back. They are so smart and willing to work very hard. It's a privilege to work with them.
- Most of our people are salaried, but we have a newer, less experienced person in the office. When we hire employees, we let them pick their own desk accessories and give them the opportunity to have a desk that raises and lowers.
- I empty garbage and clean bathrooms in the office; I also take out the trash. I try to do it at times when they see me doing that work. Then when I need someone to mop the front area or vacuum, I don't feel bad asking because they've seen me doing it.
- We have many different roles in the company. We've designed an incentive sheet for telephone and counter sales and give everyone an opportunity to get training and increase their wages. We passed out incentives yesterday and I heard an employee say, "*I've already beat last month's incentives and it's only the second day!*" It's become a competition for some. Some employees need development; I work with them one-on-one.
- I do what my grandma Helen did - I go around on Thursday and hand out pay checks. I greet everyone by name and visit with people to see what they're doing in their personal lives. I show a genuine interest in them and often ask about something they said the previous week.

- We do a lot of different group activities, but the team is small, and everyone is on fairly even ground. The biggest thing I do for everyone is model the work ethic I want to see.
- We do a team meeting every week and I sit down with people when they need extra training. I work hard to ensure work areas are comfortable and people have the tools they need to do their jobs.
- We do luncheons, training options, review and give feedback on what employees can do to improve their positions.
- We engage employees by asking them for suggestions. However, when you don't use their ideas you have to explain to them in terms, they understand why you're not implementing it.
- We had a job running a machine that was the most difficult and dirtiest position in the company. We increased the pay, so it wasn't the lowest paid anymore, improved the lighting in the area and improved ergonomic tools. Now that area is a feeder program into the machine operator position.
- Communication and making people feel like they are part of the team is the biggest thing to me. We also encourage our supervisors/managers to make the rounds each morning to greet all employees and take the time to get to know them, regardless of their position or pay.
- We use the lowest paid positions to gain skills. We stopped hiring people into roles with the expectation that this is the only job they will ever do in the company.
- We use youth apprentices and do a lot of training with them; the goal is to have them move up the ladder. If they don't do well or enjoy manufacturing, then we know it isn't the right job for them. They're young and can still pivot.

Do you ever ask your vendors to participate in events at your company? In what ways?

- Last year we hosted the Clydesdales, the goal was to help us do good in the community. We raised money for Pathways for Youth and invited a lot of our clients. It's not as easy as it used to be. We hear our vendors are stretched thin and must pick and choose what to support.
- We've done lunches in our offices - "lunch & learns", different subject matter with regards to hiring practices.
- With businesses running lean and mean, there's not a lot of extra resources. When we do events now, we've learned to manage our expectations.
- I don't have a lot of events. I have been asked to participate in events and realized that there were more vendors in the room than clients.
- Most of the people that I work with don't typically do a lot of those things.
- I've been on the other side with my consulting business. I've come in as a resource for my clients when they have events.
- As I grow in those areas I'm learning. We have two events every year: a wellness workshop and a customer appreciation day. So far, we have covered all the expenses ourselves.
- No, we have never asked vendor to participate.
- The managers work one-on-one with the vendors and they have been outstanding in supporting us. Beaver Island Brewery in particular, is amazing.
- One of our biggest expenses is linens; the salesperson from that company is amazing! He works with us on every problem we've had and always goes the extra mile. He helped us find special mats for our bathrooms when nothing else would work.

- When we build our new patio, our vendors will help us find the right furniture and equipment and will work with us for the grand opening ceremony.
- We ask our vendors to participate in marketing co-op dollars, especially for our events throughout the year. We ask them to come in and do trainings for our staff as well as monthly Lunch GIG's on topics our clients and the community business people may be interested in.
- I've discovered that when it's for the employees, the vendors will step up. They are a client and they want that engagement and visibility within our company. I think it's great. Engagement is what it's all about. They want to be a partner - not just a supplier.
- We used to have a vendor day at Como, take them out on a river boat and have them do training for employees.
- We get really good participation from most of our vendors. When we do the Petal-it-forward Days, some of our vendors supply bouquets at cost and even donate some.
- When we're doing a special event, like an open house, they will give us give-away products to use for drawings and handouts.
- Our vendors are very supportive on educating people.
- Being in the "sticks" (way out in Central Minnesota), we don't do events. However, our community has a Bonanza Valley Days celebration and we participate in that. We sponsor the rock-climbing wall.
- We do sponsor Lean events in-house and we engage a lot of our vendors. They help us with training. Whenever we have unique box requirements, they work with us on that as well.
- We did engage and partner with one vendor a little too much. We described a project we were working on for a company and they liked the sound of it so much that they went out and bought a five-axis machining center and started competing with us!

- We recently brought a new product to market - a new style coolant system. We hosted an industry association meeting at our facility and invited the vendor who helped us work on the system. It was educational.
- We do a lot with community schools and tours; the goal is to get more teachers through our doors and educate them about manufacturing.
- We have an employee appreciation event. We use the event to recognize employees who have embodied our core values. (Co-workers vote on their peers.) We also ask our vendors to attend and use the opportunity to give our Vendor of the Year award. Vendors usually bring logo items and the employees enjoy that.
- There's a tech school system in Wisconsin that includes welding and machining programs. We offer to go into their classrooms, and we give tours through our plant. We recently partnered with them to teach "soft skills" such as managing conflict and communication to our employees.
- We do open houses and invite customers - usually in the fall. We invite vendors to come in and demo their products. Some of the accessory vendors will introduce new products and provide giveaways. They want to get in front of as many of their customers as possible.
- We don't. A supplier recently asked if they could do a barbecue for us. It was nice, but I'd rather they ship parts on time than bribe us with barbecue.
- Anytime I've asked for something that would provide value, I've been disappointed. We asked our steel supplier to do a presentation on different kinds of steel. He did a terrible job and it soured me on it.
- We've done some Kaizen events with our vendors to understand how they schedule and deliver steel. We've gone through a couple events and have found them successful.

- Our vendors are milk producers and companies that grow cultures for our cheese. They're usually remote and we hardly ever see them. I occasionally bring in trainers from the safety company to work with employees. I participate in many of our distributors' shows to display our products.
- I put on a conference and have a Vendor Expo area; each vendor also supplies a door prize for attendees. In addition, they also have the opportunity to advertise in our newsletter.
- Rarely have events but do open up to a selective group of vendors

How often have members of your leadership team spoken to a customer in the last 90 days? For what reason?

- I consider employment specialists and outside sales to be part of leadership team. The last time they spoke to a customer was yesterday. I regularly encourage face to face conversations. But I don't want them to be disruptive to customers.
- Face to face time is the most valuable, we learn most from those interactions. What do you see now? What do you anticipate happening in the future and how can we help you?
- In my world, half my employees have talked to a customer in the last 90 days. Usually it's about fixes or updates or changes to their website. The conversations tend to be more proactive and less reactive. However, I do need to develop better systems and add more people.
- When I introduced my last product, I added a 1-800 number and it helped me tailor my listing quicker. This is through Grasshopper, the customer gets to pick from three options: voice mail, text message or being transferred to my cell phone. It's really helped on my Amazon reviews.
- My assistant (the best decision I ever made was to hire him) has automated my systems. I've built my business on personal interaction with customers. My assistant connects regularly with customers in the manner they prefer phone, texting, or notes.
- There are two of us in the office who have the primary responsibility for talking to clients. If we're working on a custom project, we connect twice a day and sometimes more. I touch base with every customer at least once a month.
- If you're not talking to your customers, they're talking to someone else! It needs to be emphasized over and over. I'm a big fan of regular communication. So many business owners find it difficult to go to customers or even pick up the phone.

- Our sales manager talks to customers at least once a week, sometimes more. He's implementing ACT to manage customer interactions and learning to track his own work weekly i.e. score card, number of calls and pending orders.
- I would be shocked if staff didn't talk to customers daily, they have the power to deal with any situation.
- If our staff went 90 days without talking to customers, we'd be out of business.
- Our leadership team is quite small, so we speak to customers on a daily basis, be it sales related, or service related. We try to proactively reach out every 6 months if we haven't heard from them, but we also keep in constant communication through monthly newsletters, social media and events.
- If our customers are not contacted daily, I'd be disappointed. Every department, operations, customer service and sales, is expected to reach out daily.
- I try to lead by example; I talk to customers frequently although not on a regular schedule. My employees see that and engage as well.
- I have a small staff. BadCat is different as I have a deep production staff. Writers interview clients. I have empowered my writers to deal with difficult clients, one being my mom.
- I don't have a very big leadership team, I have had to talk to customers frequently of late, due to horrendous delivery service times. I talk to our customer service person every day about re-establishing expectations with customers so there are no surprises.
- Out of our group of 4, business development is our focus. We prefer to personally talk to clients, but some prefer email. We talk to our key accounts frequently as does the manufacturing manager. It's important. Personal contact is important.

- I've had five folks on my leadership team, and we talk to customers all the time. Even the controller takes customer calls. At a big trade show last month, customers came to our booth and interacted with our production manager and other key staff. It was neat, because the production manager doesn't get to talk to customers as much as others.
- Along with being the owner, I'm also the sales manager, so I see customers regularly. I ran this question by two other key people in the company; one spoke to a customer five times in the last 90 days about collections and payment terms. I was hoping to hear more about relationship building and customer relations.
- Our department managers and sales support all talk to customers daily, especially during the busy season. The Operations Manager, a little less, but she deals with service contracts. I step in and help the salespeople by doing whatever it takes.
- Two of the four people on our leadership team are salespeople and they speak to customers every day. I try to join them when I can when they go on customer visits.
- Our leadership team speaks to customers regularly. We are discussing new projects, sales opportunities, and continually building relationships.
- Frequently and in person! I often ask the attendees of my classes why they chose the class they did. I'm not looking for the easy answer such as "because I needed it for certification", or "it was close". I dig because I really want to know.
- It's ongoing! Whoever wrote the estimate, follows the job all the way through the process. They keep in touch and update the customer at least every other day (if it's a small job) or at least every week if it's a larger job. People appreciate it and we get a lot of praise for our communication.

What are your customers forcing you to do that makes your company better?

- Integrate more technology into the work we do. In order to stay competitive and supply the best candidates, we've had to develop our website and reach out to candidates. We use it as a differentiator. It's not money I thought we'd spend, but it makes sense and gives my company a competitive advantage.
- We invested in a LinkedIn recruiter instead of posting and praying. We give people hope and make money doing that.
- The word 'forcing' gives me a problem. They're forcing me (in a positive way) to diversify and refine my niche. Do I do this? Do I do that? Based on what customers are asking for, I need to decide if I want to keep doing the things I'm doing. It makes my company better because I can deliver at a higher level.
- Customers force me to look at new technology and figure out what is the highest and best use of my time. I'm using software and apps as tools to free up my time and work with people who value the services I provide. I want to give them my best.
- Problem solving is an incredible way to learn. In my career, I switched industries and niches. You have to get up to speed with their languages and terms. Problem solving helps you understand their world. Even when you have experiences in different fields, there are similarities. They just might be called something else.
- My customers have helped me improve my problem-solving skills. I sell a lot of product (batteries for golf carts and electric bicycles through Amazon), but until I had an 800 number for customers to call when they had questions or problems, I had no way of knowing what they were encountering. Now issues come through my support lines. Some issues aren't even related to my product, but to the electrical systems in their carts. I have become more proficient at working with customers who aren't mechanically inclined. I like the interaction, feedback, and learning where the directions are unclear. Now when customers bring me a problem, the challenge is not so frustrating.

- Right now, our industry is a little soft; our customers are asking for price reductions. This forces us to again look at our processes, procedures, labor use, and look for ways to improve and eliminate waste. It also requires us to buy better and hold our suppliers to best practices, as well.
- Our customers forced us to find someone talented in teaching and growing new golfers. As a result, we invested in someone who is skilled at working with young people. This year we've had the most junior golf lessons and junior golf camp attendees ever! It took dedicating a quality person to make that happen. Now parents in the first and second camp are asking to come back again.
- In the last 5 years, our customers have gotten very good at holding us accountable to making our delivery dates. We have product shipped to us from all over the world and customers count the weeks it takes for it to come in. It has forced us to get more realistic about projecting. In one instance, we had containers on a ship midway across the ocean and the steamship company declared bankruptcy. We couldn't get our product off the ship. The customer didn't care, they just want their product. We're investing in a new ERP system that will give us the accurate, up-to-date information we need to keep our customers happy.
- You must invest in people and technology almost before you can afford it or have a need for it, having faith that it will pay off in the future.
- Setting realistic expectations can be a challenge; we've had a lot of complicated projects this month and we needed to keep on top of all the details. We hired a project manager in order to keep all our jobs on track.
- We've taken a deeper dive into our customers, getting to know them better. We're always asking questions: Where are you going? How is your business changing? What other services do you need? With people being in the cloud, we need to know the plans for each department and work with the different staff in different departments to help them achieve their goals.
- In May, When Facebook and Google changed their algorithms, we had to pivot and respond immediately. The algorithms changed and the world changed. Our customers still expected results and we had to figure out how to make that happen in this "*new world*".

- I don't want to say our customers are forcing us, but I think it makes our company better to stay up on current trends. New varieties of flowers and plants are coming through all the time. I follow other flower groups online and some of them are so '80's and 90's. Those were good years when we were there. 😊
- In order to stay competitive, they're forcing us to buy new equipment that forces us to increase our capacities and capabilities. We have new lathes, a finishing booth and lasers. Customers have pushed us so that we're now able to up-sell to our current customers. They've pushed us to increase capability and I said yes!
- The first thing that came to mind is improving internal tracking processes. We're a third-tier supplier for John Deere and they have tracking requirements. When something breaks down in the field, they need to know exactly what lot the material came from. We ensure that we can trace the material lot of every single part we produce for them. (It's for recall purposes.)
- In the school bus side of our business, there's been a transition from diesel to propane-powered buses. There's increased cost involved, so we must be more analytical in our presentations. We need to demonstrate why using propane is more cost-effective over time. We have to prove why the new power plan is better.
- We also work with MN DOT and they can be difficult to deal with. The level of bureaucracy required is new to us. They're picky, but it forces us to make sure every little thing is done to their specification.
- Our architectural customers have challenging lead time requirements. Some of the times are very short because they're deadlines for grand openings. Our production window gets compressed. We've developed processes that help us produce quickly. The same processes we've put in place for that kind of work helps us be more responsive for all our customers.
- People's tastes change over time. We've started developing new flavors of cheese and it's increased our sales. We're also a natural company, an advantage that is becoming more popular with today's consumers.

- I am learning to do less work and do it better. We're narrowing our focus to be competitively cooperative. We use the skills of the other trainers in different geographic and subject areas.
- You can ask, "Who's our customer?". The insurance industry is asking us to invest in new equipment and new ways to communicate with them. We've had to improve customer service and purchase new equipment and install new technology in our shop.
- In order to give our customers, the latest status on their jobs, we've also improved communication with them.
- We must create new products every 6 to 12 months. In the smaller stores, they need 30-50% new products to entice buyers -- Better designs, better shapes.
- The bigger clients are asking us to make things we've never made before.
- Customer service. We're getting challenged because people say they're missing product in their orders. We know they received the right amount of product originally, but rather than challenge them, it's cheaper to just ship what they say they need.
- We must be sure displays and packaging are attractive. We get constant feedback from our reps on what other companies are doing. It has doubled our sales in Alaska by changing our packaging and making it look more "Alaskan".
- I'm learning to work *only* with great and awesome people. I'm learning that chasing the big jobs isn't worth it because the people you work with are difficult. Working with quality sales reps in smaller stores is worth it.

The time is ripe for?

- Implementation: Taking action on the many ideas of the 4th quarter and moving them into 2020. (It's also time to take vitamins!)
- Simplicity: That's what I see in my future. People's lives are so complicated and busy.
- Measurement by metrics: It's the time to let the numbers drive decisions.
- Leaps forward: Be clear about my vision. Stop sitting on ideas for personal and business life and get to it. 2020 is bringing a big shift in society and how people view things. There are changes coming. It's now or never.
- Growth: Our company just went through an acquisition and we are looking at another. It's moving fast!
- Leadership: The time is ripe to figure out who will lead our company into the future?
- Evaluation: Looking back to help us look forward.
- Appreciation: It's been a crazy and wild season. We must acknowledge and reward our many hardworking staff and faithful customers.
- To start a cult - L RON Hubbard did it. It's where the money is.
- New beginnings: Fresh starts all over the place, there's excitement in the air. I let a long-term employee go, much to the relief of the remaining staff.
- Education in our industry: Our new space can accommodate more educational opportunities for staff and clients. More education in understanding how new technology benefits us all.

- Education: The seminars I have been attending have made me realize the need for greater focus on customer service, continuing to make changes to our company culture and increasing our presence in our community.
- Direct Management: Dramatic changes we have experienced are forcing me to look at next 5 years instead of the last 15.
- Change: As the seasons pass, I get equipment out and serviced. There are business decisions to make. Buying behaviors are evolving. What should we do differently? For sustainability, we must always be increasing sales and seeking new customers. Exciting, challenging, nerve-wracking!
- Change: The change of season is the perfect opportunity to hit reset on goals, habits and things I want to change. For example, every fall I pull everything out of the garage, recycling or tossing as needed.
- Surviving: the last quarter every year we always have more than we can handle. A significant portion of our business is construction related and customers are wrapping up projects. At the same time, we're in the thick of planning for next year. There are many changes to consider.
- Evaluation: We've been through four recessions and it's time to look back at what makes us successful. We are changing, but it's time to go back to the basics.
- Figure things out: We need to be in a kinder place and not worry about all the stuff going on today. Too many people are trying to control too many things. It does not feel right. I also need to make some business decisions.
- Succession Planning: We need to make concrete plans for the future.
- A new adventure: It's time to let go of fears and move on!
- Utilizing the 7 Stages of growth: To develop referrals with small emerging growth partners by creating CEO Roundtables.

What are you doing in your company that will improve people and the planet tomorrow?

- The basis of how we operate is servant leadership. We coach associates on how to get better jobs and have success in their lives Internally, I try to get employees to do and be their best.
- Our corporate franchise gave out \$30,000 grants to selected franchisees. This week we got to give \$10,000 to three local non-profit organizations that improve people's lives and make our community a better place to live.
- Recently at our house, we've become better about recycling - removing labels and washing and separating. It's the smallest little grain of sand, but we're trying to make a difference.
- On the people side, I always try to add value. I try to be as honest as possible and speak in a language that is heard by the person I'm talking with. I want to be respectful of where they are in a process. If they feel as though they've been burned on a web site deal, I try to help them through it.
- One of my strengths is connectedness; I use it to put people at ease and help them connect with their inner being. It helps me in my work and whatever I do socially. Environmentally, I'm active with water and forest conservation and support several organizations financially and otherwise. We are working on a river north of here that is mostly virgin, and we want it to stay so. I lived on the Mississippi for many years and rivers are very important to me.
- I rent and live with hundreds of people and I see the waste that is mishandled and cardboard boxes that are not cut and compressed. It's like safety, you have to talk about it. People are uninformed.
- Trying to challenge people more and offer fewer solutions. I'm working on not just giving answers but working with people to help them think through options.

- My business hasn't always been my passion. However, that changed when I started getting calls from customers telling me they couldn't enjoy their lake home because they couldn't get rid of the geese that were all over. When they purchased my dog decoys that changed. The decoys changed their lives and they're now able to enjoy family time at the lake.
- Best Me 360 is a resource center to enable people to get help in the areas of life where they need help. Personal styling isn't something most people find accessible. But what you wear changes how people perceive themselves and how the world sees them. It makes more opportunities available. I encourage people to take chances in life.
- We build more effective leaders and more engaged employees and more intelligent people. That's what we do! That fires me up! We found that our venue is through personally coaching leaders and giving people life skills (we call them 'brain hacks') disguised as fun training.
- We have been working hard on education, orientation and safety programs. With labor being so short, we must develop and engage people.
- We have always tried to recycle. We don't waste much. Everything we do is focused on minimizing waste; we use the smallest pieces and the rest is ground into sawdust for bedding. Our material is a renewable resource and reforestation is a big deal for us.
- We've been exploring the idea of expanding training - we had a chance to see new things and get involved with new people. When I was in the classroom, MEA was huge piece for me; I was able to learn and be exposed to new ideas and ways of doing things. When you're teaching there's no time. We've just come off a HUGE season and people are using words like "burned out". We combat that with talking about new ideas and new possibilities. The managers encourage the training and it usually involves money. It can be a squeeze. BUT If there isn't a plan and if there isn't a dream, it doesn't happen.
- Our business is growing green space for people to pay to play on. We have over 200 acres; I want to put the least amount of product [chemical] possible for the biggest amount of output. Chemical safety is important, and we are focused on it. We don't freeze our chemicals and we try not to warehouse so we buy as needed. Grass clippings don't leave the property.

- When it comes to food waste and composting it's different. It's so complex, the separating and composting. We've been thinking about having a garden on the premises. It doesn't seem feasible right now.
- We provide training and continuing education for our staff. Whenever I go to a show or meeting, I bring back ideas and design instructions. There's lots out on YouTube and we make sure employees are getting fresh ideas. We also bring experts in to train.
- We're trying to cut down on our carbon footprint as much as possible. We separate and recycle; the next step is composting. It's a time thing and finding a place where we can compost. I try to get as much product as possible from Len Busch out of the Twin Cities because they're doing so much with sustainability.
- We have two programs -
 - An educational program focused on topics staff want to learn about. For example, we're having people come in to talk about mortgages and first aid training.
 - We also allow staff to dedicate time working on boards that are meaningful to the individual. It's fun to watch them develop and grow.
- My staff is keeping me on my toes for recycling. We replaced our Keurig with a glass coffee pot to get rid of single use plastic.
- We do a good job developing people, especially on first level (2.0 group). We did an event last week to educate them on traction, it led to some meaningful conversations. I've put a couple of my managers in a #2 Group in town.
- We use a lot of water in our process because it's granite. Silica dust is a concern and we work hard to keep it at a minimum. We recycle all the water we use. All the granite chips are sold to a mining and crushing company to be made into landscaping materials and other products.
- We're not doing much environmentally, but the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) in our state does a sustainability assessment. I'm thinking about taking it. I listened to a book called *Inconspicuous Consumption*, it covers food, energy and environmental sustainability.

- Internally we're doing a lot of things.
 - We have a scholarship for graduating seniors who go into manufacturing
 - We give time off for volunteering
 - We have a corporate chaplain for employees who need someone to talk to.

- We recycle scrap metal, cans from breakroom and cardboard.

- There's a national program called MERA The Association for Sustainable Manufacturing.

- The school bus industry has changed dramatically in terms of the fuel that powers the bus. Diesel fuel exhaust has the highest carbon content, gasoline is also high. Most of our customers are converting to propane and compressed natural gas. 90% of the buses we ship now operate on propane. Cost is important but the changes have a huge impact on the environment. There is also less maintenance on the buses.

- We received some grant money from DEED to improve people's skills; it's hard to find good people, so we're investing money into updating their skills.

- We do an internship program, we're on our 5th high school welding intern. Two are working full-time for us and another will be back. I'm hoping to expand to incorporate more positions and be able to provide good career opportunities.

- We recycle all our scrap metal; it helps that it has value.

- We've converted to battery-powered forklifts in the shop (with blue light on the floor to let people know they're coming). We're saving on material by eliminating the lids on our skids. We do returnable programs with skids and containers/baskets. We're working on a water-soluble rust preventative - we're not there yet though.

- We've partnered with St. Cloud State on several senior design projects. We've had some good outcomes. Three out of five of our engineers have come from that program.

- We do a lot of training (received some grants to enrich employees) in manufacturing. The training covers best practices, tool crib and set-up reduction. We will include more areas. The training classes are cutting a TON of waste in scrap and time.
- We do a lot of recycling. We have a coolant system product that regulates proper coolant concentration which results in less consumption. We try to use preventative maintenance.
- We're always turning off lights and taking notes on recycled paper. Education is my thing and when people call me, I will give them advice. I also use an app called Nextdoor (which is like a neighborhood watch) which helps people get answers to their questions and needs.
- Our church also has a stewardship committee.
- We always try to be conscious of recycling, scrap metal, cardboard and aluminum cans.
- As far as people, I try to pay them well so they can live well. We offer to pay for any kind of training and education, though it seems nobody wants to take it these days. I try to instill some of my philosophies about doing good for people. It's not all about the dollar, it's about helping and serving people.
- In terms of the planet, I recycle and write notes on the back of scrap paper (I can't seem to tear myself away from writing notes). I drive a Honda Civic.
- Regarding people, I help them learn to work *on* their business instead of *in* their business. I help them with EOS, using a practical approach to help them identify quarterly rocks and looking at a three years and five years out. I also help them develop a scorecard that they can use to manage their business.
- I've written a book called *the 4 puzzle pieces*.
- I joined the Green Team and I'm working with another person on how we can save water and energy in our buildings. We're looking at different resources.

- I've noticed that when I start at 6:00 AM, no one is in the office, but the lights are on.
- In improving people for the future, I am always willing to share my knowledge and help them improve whatever they're working on or doing.

What will you congratulate yourself for a year from now?

- Taking my business to the next level while exploring succession planning.
- Opening the second location for my new business.
- Successfully launching all 7 product lines without accruing debt.
- I will congratulate myself for huge progress in my wellness quest.
- Becoming aware of the need for balance: I want to spend more time with my wife and three children
- We're going to hire a new leader! One of the owners will be replaced. He has lost heart but is not willing to let go.
- For maintaining balance in my personal life and in my business. It shows when it's NOT working.
- I will get the golf course back to the level it needs to be at without killing anyone.
- I am going to congratulate my team and myself for getting back in the black!!
- For empowering my employees to make decisions. I've learned how to delegate, and things have leveled off after the move.
- Sticking to my personal and professional commitment to growth.
- For successfully implementing our new ERP system with a minimum of problems.

- The growing pains do not look like they'll end soon. I'll congratulate myself when we get through 2020. (The Barbara Walters interviews have already started! Get it - "*I'm Barbara Walters and this is 2020*".)
- I'm going to be happy I stuck with the new lifestyle change.
- I want to congratulate myself for having no voluntary turnover in the past year.
- I've been working on a custom ERP system and hope to have it at a state that I'm happy with.
- Identify two members of my team to provide opportunities to become strong leaders
- Going forward without waiting for the other side. We're trying new things to prepare for the winter months, which is typically a down time for our business.
- For implementing my transition from less PLA to more FOREVER.
- My business will be sold, and I will be working at a different level.
- Moving on with my life after selling my shares of the company and starting fresh.
- Working hard and sticking with my studies. I will have successfully completed a summer internship.

Acknowledgements

2019 was a year of learning from each other, engaging in conversations that mattered and growing our collective wisdom.

Thank you for your candidness, willingness to share and for being brave and asking questions.

“You Can’t know about things you have yet to discover.” Jonathan Raymond.

Name	Business
Christine Stuggen	Christine’s Sweet Confections
Casey Porkkonen	AgVenture Feed & Seed, Inc.
Corey Linn	Arete Enterprising
Tony Ross	Astro Engineering
Kittie Fenlason	Blackberry Ridge Golf Course & Event Center
Wes Fenlason	Blackberry Ridge Golf Course & Event Center
Joel Swanson	Swanson Insight
Eric Gustafson	Branch Landscaping
Alan Lawinger	Centre Pallet, Inc.
Andy Larson	Custom Automation
Eileen Eichten Carlson	Eichten Hidden Acres
Jill Magelssen	Express Employment Pros
Dan Jenniges	SMA Elevator
Kent Gustafson	Safe Shield Consulting
Mary Jo Harris	Harris Hard Woods
Jake Fisher	Venture Formations/Raven Performance Group
Brenda Eisenschenk	InteleCONNECT
Jackie Bach	M. Lavine Design & Workshop
Bob Thompson	Minpack, Inc.
Paul Gauerke	North Central Bus & Equipment
Kari Collett	A - Zinc Nutrition
Perry Lindberg	Perry’s Auto Salon
Deb Colling	Professional Learning Alternatives
Sarah Mueller	Dog Decoys/Best Me 360
Rocky Thompson	RTO (Ritters Thompson Olson)
Dave Faust	Stonehouse Resources
Brian Donahue	Safety Speed Manufacturing
Steve Schaffer	Schaffer Manufacturing
JoyGenea Schumer	Solutions by JoyGenea
Rhoda Paurus	St. Cloud Floral
Jaron Matheson	MNVesta
Dave Fischer	Monumental Sales
Michelle Henderson	BadCat Digital
Erik Fink	Whirltronics

Jim Goerges
Scott Fitch
Scott Wing
Morgan Nelson, Jr.
Paul Johnson
Mark Nelson
Cynthia Leonard
Jessica Bitz
Quinn Johnson
Lisa Mears
Tom Willett

Precision Tool Technologies
SCR, Inc.

Bishop Fixture & Millwork
LEI Packaging
East Central Energy
K-Wood Truss Rafters
Falcon National Bank
Future Entrepreneur
Family Pathways
TRW Consulting