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ForwardFocus

www.mtmanufacturingcenter.com

Montana Manufacturing Center

University Technical Assistance Program

OPPORTUNITY

Change the Game

Wood's Powr-Grip elevated its ideation process to re-fill capacity, re-ignite the innovative spirit and reach markets they haven't before using a systematic method they first heard about during the 2008 Compete Smart Manufacturing Conference. With coaching from MMEC, they have a Jump Start on getting innovations more quickly into today's hyper-competitive marketplace.



Bob and Jack handling a large piece of glass for one of the test tables.

Sometimes Innovating is About Knowing When to Make a Change

Wood's Powr-Grip Co., Inc., has had a firm hold on innovation for three generations. In fact, it was good old Montana ingenuity from company founder Howard Wood that revolutionized the American glass industry when he developed and refined pump-action vacuum cups to hold and handle smooth surfaces back in the 1960s.



Bryan Wood

The device featured a proprietary red-line indicator to warn of any vacuum loss, allowing the user to restore vacuum without losing a grip.

The engineering behind it was born out of Mr. Wood's frustration with a traditional tool for holding small engine valves during the lapping process in his automotive, electric and small engine

repair shop in Wolf Point, Mont. His innovation would redefine and grow the business into a leading edge U.S. manufacturer. The family moved the business to a 55,000 sq. ft. facility in Laurel in 1990, where it is still headquartered today. Howard was the grandfather of Bryan, Barry and Brad Wood, brothers who manage Wood's Powr-Grip today.

Product Development the Purview of Engineering

New product development at Powr-Grip has typically rolled out from the engineering department with a "blind handoff" to marketing and production. The rethinking and redesign would occur after other departments had time to work with the product and ask for changes. Managing the innovation process to get the right product or service out quickly and at an attractive price in today's hyper-competitive marketplace became an imperative two years ago. The

economic downturn turned the tables to needing ways to generate more business.

Powr-Grip designs, manufactures and distributes a full line of hand-held vacuum cups, below-the-hook vacuum lifters and vacuum mounting cups that make materials handling and equipment mounting easier and safer. Its products are used to lift, hold and position smooth, nonporous materials such as glass, plastics, engine valves, sheet metal, solid surfacing, laminates, stone slabs and appliances, primarily in the commercial construction industry. Always innovating, it has also developed tools for lifting non-porous materials. The company enjoyed solid growth during the commercial construction boom worldwide. The sector was extra strong and growing from 2000 to 2006, with growth at Powr-Grip averaging 10-15 percent each year, according to company President Bryan Wood.

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Spread Your Wings, Be Visible, Be Vocal

Have you ever noticed how certain birds react to adverse winds? We don't find them hunkered down waiting for the winds to calm. Instead we see them soar — wheeling around, catching opportune currents. From the sleekest swallows to mighty hawks and eagles, they're seizing the moment. Celebrating with extreme, deliberate maneuvers.

Such adverse winds are not unlike the current situation where you are pummeled daily with negative economic news and experiencing seismic marketplace shifts that impact sales. With these conditions, it might be tempting to hunker down. But it's important not to lose sight of emerging opportunities and the forward momentum needed to soar and grow. Now is the time to reflect and see what you can do differently. Perhaps it's also a time to be extreme and celebrate what you do and how you in the manufacturing community contribute so vitally to the local, state and national economy.

I invite you to celebrate Manufacturing Week Oct. 2-9 by seeking new opportunities. Be visible and vocal about your important role as the bedrock of our economy...as the creators of jobs in every one of our 56 counties, as community leaders and as drivers of our economy.

What's to celebrate?

- The United States is still the world's largest manufacturing economy, producing 21 percent of global manufactured products. Japan is second at 13 percent; China third at 12 percent. [Facts About Manufacturing, NAM, 2009]
- U.S. manufacturers are the most productive workers in the world—twice as productive as workers in the next 10 leading manufacturing economies.
- U.S. manufacturers perform half of all R&D in the nation, driving more innovation than any other sector. [some sources cite as many as two-thirds of all R&D.]

Closer to home, salute your economic output and impacts (2009 figures below from the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Economic Outlook):

- \$7 billion in output value (sales) from production in 2009 created by your firms here in Montana, improving the standard of living for a great many people;
- More than \$1 billion you pay out in Montana labor income, employing 4.1 percent of the workforce and making up more than 20 percent of Montana's economic base. Manufacturing wages are higher than the average general wage, too. Much of that income circulates locally making communities strong.
- Jobs you create for 21,400 workers, giving them a sense of pride and accomplishment. And the 2.72 related jobs that each manufacturing job creates.
- Amazing strides in exporting. From 2003 to 2007, Montana manufacturing exports grew more than nine times faster than the state's overall economy. In 2009 those exports accounted for 85 percent of Montana's total exports. Small firms were a big part of that.

Manufacturing

— Worth celebrating!

How to celebrate?

- Create greater visibility for manufacturing by inviting the local media or area legislators into your plant;
- Get involved with those who impact manufacturing education to improve the image of manufacturing as a career;
- Speak about what you do in classrooms to attract more highly qualified young people into the field;
- Take advantage of several programs being offered for incumbent worker training;

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OPPORTUNITY

Change the Game

OPPORTUNITY & INSIGHTS AT 2010 COMPETE SMART CONFERENCE

Opportunity, challenges and insights into how you can change the game

will be the focus of the 2010 Compete Smart Manufacturing Conference in Billings on October 7 and 8. Come hear company leaders in person, tour thriving operations and explore new possibilities with your manufacturing peers and allies.

Celebrate the close of Manufacturing Week with us and hear Keynote Speaker Jeff Metts, who will inspire you to seek opportunity in unexpected places when he presents "A Time To Be Bold." He will reaffirm that America's small manufacturers are innovative and agile as he shows why America's entrepreneurial spirit creates treasure beyond dreams and what drives him to continue the hunt, staying focused on one goal—a vision for meeting the needs of our country's energy demands and in doing so reviving U.S. manufacturing strength in America.

Metts is an innovative leader recognized for pioneering Michigan's renewable energy frontier in 2007. His dedication earned him a Business Leadership Award by the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association. He is a member of Michigan Governor's Green Energy Task Force. Seeing a growth opportunity in wind turbines at a time when many other mid-west companies were struggling, Dowding Industries, Michigan-based manufacturer of progressive die stampings, metal fabrications and welded assemblies, began to manufacture parts for the wind turbine industry four years ago. Its foray into making parts for the wind turbine industry continues to evolve, and the wager on diversification doesn't end there... Come, hear his story and get a

glimpse of what's on the horizon.

A multi-faceted conference, Compete Smart offers a variety of plant tours; an eye-opening Montana Product Showcase of diverse products – from the Fence-Master for ATVs and plastic-injection molded parts to packaged cereals and lefse – all made in our great state; an expansive Exhibit Hall where you can meet allies; and compelling speakers to enjoy at every meal.

This year's evening reception in the Exhibitor Hall will have plenty of food, a cash bar, and a special Dessert Talk, "China: What's Up with That," presented by Mark Shyne, MMEC Field Engineer, and Mike Groff, President & founder of PDM, a plastics manufacturer in Manhattan, Mont. The evening event has sponsor support from Bresnan Communications, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Montana Department of Commerce.

Everyone's favorite is the Montana Company Leader Talks after breakfast on Day Two. Come hear about challenges and opportunity right here from Tim Robertson, CEO at Century Companies in Lewistown; Susan and Steve Moore, co-owners with Alicia & Richard Moe, at Cream of the West in Harlowton; and Bill Lundberg, CEO at Roscoe Steel & Culvert in Billings. Robertson will share what it's like to be entrusted as CEO with the sterling reputation, quality customer service and family values of a company built by owner Jack Morgenstern more than 20 years earlier. The Moores will take you on a virtual road tour into the future of Cream of the West on board company's Yellow Truck. Lundberg will

Everybody's Favorite: Montana Company Leaders

Come celebrate Manufacturing Week! with real stories from Montana company leaders.

*Where do they look for Opportunity?
How do they Change the Game?
Where are the Triumphs!*

Tim Robertson

CEO

Century Companies, Inc.
Lewistown



Susan & Steve Moore

Co-owners

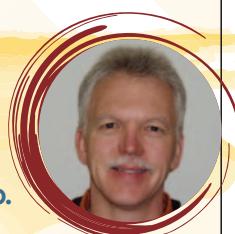
Cream of the West
Harlowton



Bill Lundberg

President & CEO

Roscoe Steel & Culvert Co.
Billings



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COMPETE
S M A R T
Montana Manufacturing Conference

Effective Communication - Back to the Basics



Bryan Peterson

Whether we look at our personal lives or work lives, how effectively we communicate dictates how a majority of our interactions will start and end. Does our major business deal fall through, because we failed in the communication channels with the client? Did we have to re-work a project three or four times, because we could not take the time initially to make sure the instructions were understood the first time around? Did a personal relationship go south because of ineffective communication?

At least fifty-five percent of our time spent communicating is spent listening. With over half of our time communicating spent listening, why would we not want to listen well? You can become a more effective communicator by practicing some simple listening tools on a consistent basis. This all starts with three questions.

What can I do to let the person across from me know they have my undivided attention? Eye contact is a powerful tool to let the person across from you know you are engaged. Smiling when someone is speaking, head nods, and verbal “uh-hums” are signs that you are listening. If you are in a noisy environment, try leaning towards the speaker.

What can I do to let the person across from me know I understand what they are communicating? How information is meant to be interpreted, and how information is interpreted, can be two totally different things. The listener can ask clarifying questions to gather additional information. Paraphrasing the information back to the speaker can be very effective. After you have given direction or set expectations with someone, ask

them to repeat it back to you in their own words. This allows the speaker the opportunity to gauge if disconnect exists in the interpretation of the message being delivered.

What can I do to make sure I retain what was communicated?

For optimal retention, we must get out of the mindset of “How is this going to affect me?” as the speaker communicates. Develop the patience to just sit and listen. We are so quick to want to problem solve for people, or we believe we always have the answer. Did you ever stop to think that someone does not want you to problem solve? They may just need you to listen. You may be surprised that by just listening, the speaker may solve their own problem by talking it out, or you can help with a better solution by having all of the details.

Effective listening skills will show others that you value them. Try to remove any “roadblocks” that hinder your ability to listen. Lock out your email or move away from your monitor. Turn your cell phone off when you are getting ready to have a conversation. Try not to interrupt a face-to-face conversation with a phone call. Finally, try pulling a chair up next to the person. This allows you to get into more of a comfortable position and may put the person next to you at ease.

Most of these tips sound small, but putting them all together can have a profound impact on relationships and dynamics in both personal and work life. Becoming consistent is the key. It takes 21-28 days to change a behavior. What are you starting with?

Bryan A. Peterson is the Training & Development Staff Consultant with Associated Employers in Billings, Montana, a private Employers Association that provides Business and Human Resources expertise to its members. To learn more, please visit www.associatedemployers.org.

2010 COMPETE SMART CONFERENCE

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share thoughts on the importance of leadership behavior for continuous improvement, pioneering technologies, and a combination of growth strategies that drive opportunity for the more than 50 year old company. This segment is sponsored by First Interstate Bank and follows the breakfast sponsored by the Montana Chamber of Commerce.

A closing finale includes an outside the box approach to success by Bill Simmons, “Leading Your People to Greatness,” along with a special lunch prepared with Montana produced and raised foods with feature sponsor Montana Department of Agriculture.

Reach Beyond Your Comfort Zone

Put yourself in the HOT SEAT! A limited number of 15-minute one-on-one consulting sessions will be available with experts in government contracting, marketing, licensing and commercialization and more. HOT SEAT! brought to you by the Montana Procurement Technical Assistance Center. Time slots and sign up will be in the Registration area at the conference.

Register NOW for Compete Smart and really tap into a more profitable, satisfying future. The fast pace of change today is a call to action to become more innovative in all facets of your enterprise, and it can bring substantial rewards. How are you going to Change Your Game?

HOT SEAT! Sessions

Your opportunity for Free 15-minute one-on-ones

- B2B marketing
- PTAC gov't contracting
- MTIP licensing/commercialization
- MMEC Mfg Issues
- (sign up on arrival –first come, first served for these limited sessions)

Are You a Veteran or Veteran-Owned Company?



Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is offering a \$100 rebate per paid registration for Veterans & up to 3 people from Veteran-owned firms to attend.

Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the SBA.

Turn 'Em Off: Energy and Cost Savings through Green IT

Information and communications technology (ICT) has become a significant source of energy consumption. ICT equipment now makes up about 5.3 percent of global electricity use and more than 9 percent of total U.S. electricity demand. The International Energy Agency (a unit of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris) predicts that the energy consumed by ICT worldwide will double by 2022 and increase three fold by 2030 to 1,700 tera (trillion) watt hours. This will equal the current combined residential electricity use of the United States and Japan and will require the addition of nearly 280 giga (billion) watts of new generating capacity over the next twenty years, presenting a great challenge to electric utilities throughout the world.

On the other hand, ICT also enables greater energy efficiency. It has played and will continue to play a critical role in reducing energy waste and increasing energy efficiency throughout the economy. U.S. businesses have realized that the rising cost of energy is a pressing issue and have begun to invest in Green ICT.

The goal of Green ICT is to increase environmental sustainability throughout the entire ICT lifecycle along the following four complimentary paths:

Green use — reducing the energy consumption of computers and other information systems as well as using them in an environmentally sound manner

Green disposal — refurbishing and reusing old computers and properly recycling unwanted computers and other electronic equipment

Green design — designing energy-efficient and environmentally sound components, computers, servers, cooling equipment, and data centers

Green manufacturing — manufacturing electronic components, computers, and other associated subsystems with minimal impact on the environment

The adoption of Green ICT principles and practices in industry can help U.S. manufacturers become more cost competitive and contribute to reducing our nation's energy dependence. Energy-efficiency studies show that a combination of improved operations, best practices, and state-of-the-art technologies can bring significant energy and electricity

cost savings. For example, employing simple power management techniques, by adjusting settings to "standby or sleep" mode when personal computers or printers are inactive during business hours, can achieve at least a 20 percent reduction in electricity consumption and result in average savings of \$50 per year for each PC. This means that power management of the 108 million desktop PCs in U.S. organizations could net around \$5.4 billion.



FOR MORE OPPORTUNITIES, check out breakout sessions in the "Seek Hidden Treasure in Energy" Track at the Compete Smart Manufacturing Conference on Oct. 7 and 8, at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana, Billings. Details at <http://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=13110>



MORE INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Technology and Electronic Commerce (OTEC) participated in a session on Green IT at the Manufacturing Extension Partnership's National Conference in Orlando on May 5th. OTEC's Green IT presentation focuses on the impact that IT has on energy consumption and the role of Green IT in energy-efficiency and carbon abatement. It also provides a review of best practices and examples of the energy and cost savings that can be achieved through Green IT.

More "Green IT" information under the Marketing Info topic at

[http://web.ita.doc.gov/ITI/itiHome.nsf/\(\\$All\)/BCDA5BooB1CDE97285256CDB007A4014?OpenDocument](http://web.ita.doc.gov/ITI/itiHome.nsf/($All)/BCDA5BooB1CDE97285256CDB007A4014?OpenDocument)

Wood's Powr-Grip (continued from cover)

Learn about a Proven System

When a contingent from Powr-Grip attended the October 2008 Compete Smart Manufacturing Conference, produced by the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC), they heard keynote speaker Doug Hall talking about Eureka! Winning Ways, proven action planning to accelerate profitable growth by innovating to reach new customers and/or new markets. Hall, founder of Eureka! Ranch, had been rolling the program out in partnership with Manufacturing Extension Partnership affiliates like MMEC to help manufacturers be more competitive.

Winning Ways methods build and manage a culture of innovation that combats challenges like mature products, long product development cycles, static sales and global competition. It focuses on team building, company uniqueness and leveraging market intelligence to expand the reach of products.

Shortly after hearing Hall's presentation, Powr-Grip began to see the dramatic decline of commercial construction



Celebrating nearly 50 years of product innovation that revolutionized the glass industry.

2009, the company was no longer scrambling just to keep up and began to look seriously at diversification to change the game. "We needed new market share. We were off by more than 30 percent over 2008 which had been a good year for us," he said.

In today's economy, the company found itself and its competitors wrestling for market share rather than just trying to keep up with organic growth all had been enjoying for several years. Bryan noted that now companies have pushed into new markets where they haven't been in the past. "They encroach on what we've dominated."

As is typical of manufacturers in Montana, the added pressure of retaining jobs for the health of the community has been in play. "As a family, we made a commitment that if we can breakeven, we will hang on to as many people as we can. We are down more than 20 people but mostly through attrition and reduced schedules," he said. In this economy, the number one priority has been to survive, number two to maintain jobs, and number three to retain benefit levels as much as possible.

Today, the company employs just over 100 people (around 130 before the downturn), including eight mechanical engineers, one industrial engineer, a mech-tech engineer, welders, machinists, shipping specialists & office staff. Its vacuum cups and equipment products are distributed internationally in nearly 50 countries through an extensive network of dealers and distributors. The able crew also designs and manufactures customized products or modifies an existing design to meet customer needs.



Wade processing parts on one of our CNC milling machines.

worldwide, a sector that didn't get hit as early on [as other sectors]. "In quarter four of 2008, we could see it affecting the marketplace. By quarter one 2009, we could feel it. We had over a 30 percent drop in sales which continued through 2009," Bryan said.

The Market Place Changed

The market place had changed. In

Use Constraints to Direct Continuous Improvement

In 2007, Powr-Grip was using the theory of constraints for improving its processes, identifying areas of least capacity, i.e., an area not keeping up with demand, and working to remove those constraints.

"Our focus has been on elevating production, but early in 2009 we realized the market had dropped so dramatically that we no longer had any constraints in production. We had reached a point where we could produce far more than we had demand for. We now consider the market to be our constraint and are focusing efforts on finding ways to elevate the market. While we have lots of good ideas, we can't do them all at once." That realization became the catalyst for exploring Eureka! Winning Ways. Bryan contacted the MMEC in the summer of 2009. MMEC Growth Coaches Todd Daniels and Bill Nicholson introduced the full-day Idea Engineering Session, co-facilitating the session with 18 Powr-Grip staff, circulating among the participants and coaching during exploratory exercises. The Idea Engineering Session is intended to guide a company's team in the definition of more ideas for growth, creating a bank of ideas that can be drawn on periodically to refill the pipeline. The Eureka! method has been found to be 7X more effective than classic brainstorming.

Idea Engineering

Nicholson recalls of the ideation session that one company engineer walked in with a list of more than 200 ideas that had been accumulating. "By applying the Winning Ways process they were able to see that some ideas were not burning issues anymore," the coaches noted. By the end of the day, participants still had a large list of ideas that were relevant. "Using a very democratic approach where each participant voted via email on their top 10, a resulting list came to about 60 ideas," Daniels said. Those were voted on again, tallied by Daniels, paring it to 30. A value scoring system for each concept was used to rank these. It is based on two factors: Perceived Value and Success Probability.

It also uses a multiplier and goals-focused weighting process, which can be changed to align with company priorities.

Concurrent to this process, Paul Hutter of Associated Employers was working with Powr-Grip to outline long- and short-term strategic plans. The list of ideas was associated with those goals, and in a face-to-face planning session, members of the group voted using sticky dots on the 30 ideas posted around the meeting room. The resulting eight top scorers,



Dave assembling handles to pads.

potential profit makers, were in line with the company's long term goals.

The 30-day discovery process, selecting one idea and applying a system of Plan - Do - Check - Act action planning, follows the Idea Engineering session.

A Changed Mindset

The action planning system is what Bryan and his teams have found most useful to jump start more sales, attract new customers and find new markets. As the company's assigned Scout and Discovery Team for each idea worked through the action plan, the MMEC growth coach would check in periodically, providing

suggestions and a sense of accountability to keep the effort moving forward. Daniels, Nicholson and Dale Detrick, the Billings area MMEC field engineer, each served a coaching role for select ideas.

"Winning Ways jumped right into processing of the ideas and helped us prioritize, which was largely what we needed," Bryan said of the experience. It encouraged creative thinking and idea sharing by promoting open communications and a sense of shared vision among employees. "We had a backlog of ideas but were not disciplined in our approach of how to sort those and develop that shared vision. Now everyone has a better idea of what the company priorities are. We still work on improving that."

Powr-Grip is taking proactive measures to stimulate growth; it's a changed mindset. "We're better off today than a year ago; the number of projects we're working on is manageable," Bryan said. "Now, we have a project management database built. It has 27 ideas with the highest probability of market success in it."

Reducing Risk

"To realize profitable growth through innovation there are two strategies that reduce risk," according to Doug Hall. Powr-Grip is using both of those: leading existing customers with new offerings and adapting existing offerings for new customers. "In each case - risk is reduced because we are leveraging an existing asset (current customers or current offerings) while varying the other," Hall says in his Brain Brew Café Blog <http://www.eurekaranch.com/brainbrewcafe>. "...leading established customers with new offerings [a company] restarts the product life cycle."

Active in the Powr-Grip pipeline:

- Radio remote release controls for several models of its vacuum lifters. Often in high rise construction, glass is lifted into place from the outside with a crane, then fastened to the building by workers on the inside of the building. The radio remote enables the release of lifter controls from inside the building rather than at the lifter

outside. A legacy idea, it is now moving ahead with the benefits of knowing the selling points and reduced cost to manufacture.

- A thermo plastic storage and shipping box. Benefits identified during ideation were that the plastic cases are lighter and more durable than traditional wooden and reinforced cardboard crates for equipment that is often shipped from one job site to the next and must arrive in good working order. It can be an upgrade for current customers as well as attracting new customers.
- Innovative lifters to reach another market for lifting insulated metal panels, known as "cladding," used in some metal building construction.

Powr-Grip is also working on a partnership to add a tube lifter for use in production areas in a wide variety of industries, lifting porous materials such as cardboard boxes, bags and wood. The discovery process showed that it falls into a similar product category but is used in a broader marketplace where other companies dominate the market. "So it made sense to look into partnering, something out of the ordinary for us," Bryan said. Because of its innovative nature, Powr-Grip is vertically integrated to be responsive to the changing needs of its customers.

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Sherry brazing handles together on the automated brazing machine.

OPPORTUNITY

Change the Game



COMPETE SMART TO OFFER PLANT TOURS AND 26 LEARNING SESSIONS

The Compete Smart Manufacturing Conference in Billings on Oct. 7 & 8 features a selection of tours to seven diverse and thriving area manufacturing plants during the morning of Oct. 7 and 26 learning sessions to choose from plus several bonus pre-sessions. These sessions fit six topic tracks.

One tour bus heads to nearby Laurel to visit to Wood's Powr-Grip Co. Inc., featured in this issue of Forward Focus, and another family business, Big Sky Woodcrafters, a manufacturer of highly crafted, personalized hard wood and solid surface products to or showcase achievements, awards and events.

A second bus heads to the east side of Billings to Red Oxx Manufacturing, Inc., a manufacturer of luggage built to last for a lifetime of travel adventures; Aligned Medical Solutions (formerly Windstone Medical Packaging), a world-class medical-surgical pack supplier; and Beall Trailer of Montana, a manufacturer of aluminum transport trailers, the lightest semi on the market.

A third tour bus heads to MRL Equipment, a manufacturer of performance oriented pavement-marking application and removal equipment, and Roscoe Steel & Culvert, for a glimpse into the culvert operation, the premier provider of water and soil management solutions and erosion control devices. Because of this tour's proximity to the conference site, a leg of it can be blended with several pre-sessions. More detail on pairing those selections at the conference website: www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=13110

Unlock Opportunity in Breakout Sessions

Plan to capitalize on opportunities for growth and sustainability in breakout tracks covering essentials like differentiating in new/emerging markets,

understanding the global marketplace, gaining from energy efficiencies, exploring government contracting, developing a leadership style that supports a creative, committed team and more.

The Small Business Development Center is offering a significant rebate on registrations from Veterans and Veteran-owned firms. Build Compete Smart into your workforce training plan and it may qualify for Incumbent Worker Training funds, too. Visit with an MMEC Field

Engineer, your BEAR team or your local Job Service to learn more about this.

Hidden Opportunities

Think Big. Challenge traditional thinking, maybe even your own. The benefits of Lean manufacturing – increased efficiency, cost savings and agility – are well known. Lean Track sessions at Compete Smart will bring opportunities for expanding Lean beyond production, making Lean efforts more lasting, recognizing wastes and aligning accounting to see the true impacts.

Less known but compelling are the

results and return on investment (ROI) of taking steps to minimize environmental impact, reducing energy needs and raw materials usage, and developing more sustainable products and processes that

provide a marketing edge. The Industrial Energy Track will share technical and funding resources as well as two technical sessions on efficiencies for compressed air and pumping systems and where you can get help.

A recent MMEC survey showed that Montana firms want more leadership skills training. In your

hunt for treasure, take the Leadership Track sessions that will help you engage with customers, employees, suppliers, and prospects in a more productive way. Push your limits by augmenting current marketing efforts with new methods of communicating; explore ways to diversify markets and hone dramatic difference for your products and services in the Marketing Track sessions.

Whatever your interests, mix it up and bring your key people to share more of what is learned. Register today and catch the early-bird rate – extended to Sept. 17. Hope to see you there!



Tour goers discover priceless peer perspectives and an eye for opportunity.

CLOSING LUNCHEON – Shake up traditional thinking

Friday, Oct. 8 – 1:20 to 2:45 p.m. Russell Hall, Holiday Inn Grand MT

Feature speaker Bill Simmons, CEO of MasterLube, will share his unique Montana TEAM success story, "Leading Your People to Greatness".

Montana's agricultural heritage will be showcased at this event and other conference meals, specially prepared in the Executive Chef's kitchen at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana.



AGENDA

Compete Smart Oct 7-8, 2010

Billings – Holiday Inn Grand Montana, 5500 Midland Road

Two Stimulating Days w/peers & allies for \$195 (plus team & earlybird savings!) **Veteran or Veteran-owned?** – Get a \$100 SBDC rebate.**NorthWestern**
Energy**F** First Interstate Bank**MONTANA**
Department of Commerce**THURSDAY – October 7 DAY ONE**

7:20 am – NOON

Registration in Trade Show Building Lobby

BONUS PLANT TOURS – Choose from 3 multi-site plant visits**Option A:** Bus to Wood's Powr-Grip & Big Sky Woodcrafters, Laurel**Option B:** Bus to Red Oxx Mfg, Windstone Medical & Beall Trailer of Montana**Option C:** Bus to Roscoe Steel & Culvert Plant and MRL Equipment Co.**HOT SEATS!**: 15-minute opportunities for 1-on-1 consults. Sign up on-site for specialist & timeslot**Pre-session I:** Opportunity – Government Contracting – Jason Porch, PTAC **Pre-session II:** Professionalize for Business Expansion – Rebecca Engum, SBDC **Pre-session III:** Creating Opportunity: Trade Show Strategies – Loni Stimac, DOC**Pre-session IV:** Motivating Your Sales Force To Success – Bill Bacon, Resolut**Pre-session V:** Introduction to Business: Is Your Business Idea Viable? – Chris Parson, SBDC

Exhibitor Hall w/ refreshments

Opening KEYNOTE Luncheon – *"A Time to Be Bold" with Jeff Metts*

Network/Visit Exhibitors/Break

Concurrent Breakouts**A-1** Social Media: Fad or the Standard for Business? – Rebecca Engum, SBDC**B-1** Got Waste? Explore Non-Value-Added thru a Lean Lens – Kreg Worrest, MilTech**C-1&2** Get Employees Into the Game: DiSC Profile/Communication (2-part; limit 20) – Paul Hutter, AE**D-1** Navigate the Maze of Business Financial Aid – Panel Moderator: Michelle Johnston, SBA**E-1** Energy Efficiency Improvements: Why They Matter, Resources – Panel Mod. by DEQ **F-1** Protecting Your Intellectual Property in Global Market – Antoinette M. Tease, P.L.L.C.

Exhibitor Hall/Networking/Break

A-2 Market Diversification, Leesa Nopper, MMEC/DOC, Bryan, Barry & Joe, Wood's Powr-Grip**B-2** Taking Lean Beyond Production – Dale Detrick, MMEC, & Vikki Fosjord, EBMS**C-2** DiSC Profile *continued***D-2a** Safety: Your Bottom Line – Carl Kochman, MT State Fund & Peer Perspectives **D-2b** Native American Veteran Business Essentials – Jeff Estep, Heritage **E-2** Pumping System Energy Efficiency, Reliability – Don Casada, Diagnostic Solutions, U.S. DOE Specialist**F-2** Gain an Edge: Ins & Outs of Export Financing – Panel Mod.: Nicole Hagerman, MWTC

Break

Exhibitor Hall **Networking Reception** (plenty of food & cash bar) followed by**Dessert Talk "China: What's Up with That?"** in Ballroom

5:45 – 6:10 pm

6:10 – 8:30 pm

11:40 – 11:50

11:50 am – 1:20 pm

1:20 – 1:30

1:30 – 2:45 pm

FRIDAY – October 8 DAY TWO

7:00 – 8:00 am

8:00 – 9:45 am

9:45 – 10:10 am

10:10 – 11:40 am

Breakfast with Exhibitors and Sponsors

Re-frame Your Game with Montana Company Leaders – A General Session in Ballroom*Featuring Century Companies, Roscoe Steel & Culvert Co. and Cream of the West*

Exhibitors/Networking/Break

Concurrent Breakouts**A-3&4** Innovation Engineering; "3 C's" to Grow Profit (2-parts) – Todd Daniels, MMEC, Trained Brain **B-3** From Lean to Lasting: Enterprise Transformation – Bill Nicholson, MMEC **C-3** Be a Leader People Want To Follow – Paul Bentley, MSU **D-3** Managing your Business with Cost Models – Mark Shyne, MMEC **E-3** Why Care About Compressed Air? – Jeff Yarnall, Rogers Machinery, U.S. DOE Specialist**F-3&4** Your Export Toolbox: Positioning for Success – Panel Mod. Arnie Sherman MWTC

Networking/Break

A-4 Innovation Engineering *continued***B-4** Lean Accounting: True Picture of Gains – Kreg Worrest, MilTech (*former MMEC Field Engineer*)**C-4** More Success Dealing With Your People: Art of Feedback – Meldahl Leadership Consulting, LLC**D-4** Get ERP Right the First Time – Marc Atnipp, Global Shop Solutions**E-4** Wind Project Opportunities & Emerging Technologies – Jim Haider, MMEC, Robb Larson, MSU**F-4** Global Successes: Lessons from MT Businesses (*Part 2 of F-3*) – Panel Mod. Steve Holland, MMEC

Short Break

WRAP UP & Closing Luncheon, *Featured Speaker Bill Simmons, MasterLube (Don't Miss It!)*

Sessions with this icon are of special interest to Vets & Veteran-owned companies, but open to all.



Manufacturing News Across Montana

Quest Integration Acquires SolidWorks Sales & Support for Montana

Quest Integration <http://www.qintegration.com>, a Mountain West leading value-added reseller of SolidWorks® design and simulation software, has acquired the SolidWorks business side of Salient Technologies, a reseller and design consulting firm based in Bozeman, Mont. Quest Integration has opened a Bozeman office/training center at 2880 Technology Blvd W, Ste. 191. Salient <http://www.salient-tech.com> is continuing to focus on its product development consulting for inventors and manufacturers.

Spika FenceMaster Boosts Capability of ATV

Spika Welding and Manufacturing <http://www.spikawelding.com> is now offering FenceMaster®, a four-foot wide aluminum and poly trailer that sports tandem axles and a 3/4 ton payload capacity. Compact and maneuverable, it can be pulled behind an ATV, expanding the capability for using ATV's for a variety of tasks. It is capable of carrying fencing materials for a days work in rough country.

Check it Out on YouTube

Robin Béquet of **Béquet Confections Gourmet Caramel** www.BequetConfections.com located west of Bozeman, Mont., was featured during a demonstration of how the gourmet Celtic Sea Salt Caramel is made on Food Network's Road Tasted with the Neelys' "Montana: Big Taste in Sky Country" September 2008.

Check it out at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiTVEqC8Jf4>

Workplace Fatalities Up

Montana has overtaken Wyoming as the deadliest state per capita to work. Figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show the number of workers killed on the job in Montana increased from 40 in 2008 to 50 in 2009. Montana's increase came on the heels of reduced employment, actually making this statistic more severe, according to the Montana Chamber of Commerce. Nationally, workplace deaths last year actually dropped 17%, to their lowest level since recording began in 1992. The state Chamber started a work comp/safety program last year, Montana Safety Choices, and cooperated with other organizations to start **WorkSafeMT**, a public-private effort to reach the workforce on improving safety. For training and other information, please go to: www.MontanaSafetyChoices.com.

For the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report, go to: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>

Butte Industrial Park Adds to Manufacturing Niche

Universal Technical Resource Services, Inc. <http://www.utsr.com/index.html>, a New Jersey-based company with a research and development center in Butte, will move that center to a new 9,000-square-foot, \$750,000 building in the Industrial Park south of Butte. High quality furnaces and other materials are being flown in for a September opening. The research arm is working on a breakthrough in how titanium metal is made that could make cars lighter, stronger and more fuel-efficient; better protect military vehicles; and be used in everything from the Space Shuttle to sporting goods.

Full Story: By Tim Trainor of The Montana Standard at <http://www.mtstandard.com/business/l ... c03286.html>



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Spread Your Wings (cont. from page 2)

- Start or join a manufacturing roundtable and get together on important issues.

Of course the best opportunity coming up is the October Compete Smart conference specifically for manufacturers across Montana. Commemorate with peers and allies and gain great networking and best practices. Each of you makes it real, this vital part of America's future. Worth celebrating!"



Steve Holland, MMEC Director

Grants Available for MT Companies Impacted by Imports and Forced to Lay Off Workers

A U.S. Department of Commerce program designed to assist American companies that are impacted by imports and been forced to lay off workers offers up to \$75,000 in matching federal grants for Montana companies that qualify through the Northwest Trade Adjustment Assistance Center.

In order to qualify, a company must demonstrate that the business has been negatively impacted by foreign competition. Eligible companies can use the funding on technical assistance projects aimed at improving competitiveness including marketing, employee training, website redesign, lean manufacturing, quality control certification and product or facility design, among many others. However, funding cannot be used by an eligible company to purchase assets, such as equipment or software.

For more information about the NWTAAC program, visit <http://www.nwtaac.org> or contact Patrick Meuleman, Client Development Manager at 208-343-6855 in Boise. You may also visit with Mr. Meuleman at the Compete Smart Manufacturing Conference in Billings on Oct. 7 & 8.

Wood's Powr-Grip (cont. from page 7)

Fast Forward to Now

"The biggest benefit of adopting this process is the shared vision," he said. It was not uncommon in the past for marketing to have very little knowledge of what engineering was working on and what was going to be expected of them once engineering passed them the project. It has created better morale because it helps everyone understand what each department needs to progress and be successful.

It helps us target what to do next and to set up a diverse project team, from engineering, marketing, sales, production, accounting and/or the information technology department." The teams are built based on what's relevant to the project and stay through whole process instead of "engineering doing their thing and then handing it off."

Having a diverse team offers real benefits. "It provides a way to explain how we are going to sell; brings in data on the acceptable price range and demand. Production's contribution might be to say, 'That's neat but hard to build; why not do this...,'" Bryan explained. Having more of the picture cuts rework and waiting on various departments before project completion.

"The value of Winning Ways will be more evident as we go forward and weed out legacy projects in our pipeline," Bryan said. The use of value scoring to determine which ideas merit further examination is one they continue to use. "Project managers are

happier with the process today. Winning Ways gives us a better tool for evaluating markets we have not been in. It has definitely positioned us better for growth and helped reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed with ideas." For 2010, market conditions have stabilized. He reported that the company is having a good second quarter and expects some growth this year but won't know until after quarter three. He cautioned that it will take time for commercial construction to recover.

Editor's Note: Wood's Powr-Grip is one of the plant tours at Compete Smart this fall and will feature many centers of activity, state of the art CNC machines, a thermo plastic molding machine, a water jet cutter and several pieces of equipment that were original creations of Howard Wood, including a rotating paint machine for cup handles and a unit that inserts felt in between layers at the outer circumference of the rubber cups. A large computer-controlled vertical parts storage unit takes center stage and saved the company from building an expansion several years ago. You can read more about the innovative roots of Wood's Powr-Grip at

<http://www.powrgrip.com/cgi-bin/powrgrip/history.html>

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