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MORGAN COUNTY

August 2023

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Residential Designs by Brad Roe brings a personalized approach to crafting home designs



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Embrace talent with gratitude and recognition

Employee retention remains high on the list of problems businesses face nationwide. That may not simply be because workers are following dollar signs. “Appreciation for my work” was the number one attribute that job seekers across the globe said was most important in their new job, according to “The Workforce Crisis of 2030” by the Boston Consulting Group.

On the flip side, Glassdoor, a website where current and former employees anonymously review companies, reported that more than half of employees would stay longer at their company if bosses showed more appreciation.

What are some ways that businesses can accomplish this? Sometimes giving a “thank you” is enough. Verbally recognize an employee for a job well done when they’ve done something above and beyond or reached a milestone. Meaningful and purposeful appreciation can be a powerful motivator. And being recognized by peers can have just as significant an impact.

Provide new learning experiences and opportunities for growth: Maybe it’s continuing education for the job they’re currently doing, or maybe it’s seeing the employee have an interest in an area other than what their job role currently entails and allowing them to explore that. An investment in your employees shows them that their efforts are valued.

Embrace talent where you see it: Both businesses featured in this month’s publication have demonstrated this well. With our cover story, albeit this was with a new hire. When Caitlyn Teeters came to Brad Roe with a pitch as to why he should hire her in his previously one-man business, Roe saw the potential. Residential Designs by



JIM HESS
From the Publisher

Brad Roe has not only added more product offerings in the past three years since adding her to its staff but both Roe and Teeters are able to utilize their talents in areas in which their interests lie.

Rodney and Stephanie Parks have not only grown their business but added two additional businesses that have grown successful as well and they’ve done this by utilizing the talents of their staff and their family. They have multiple employees who have worked for them for more than 10 years and a couple for more than 20, which is a long time for a small business.

Listen. Nothing hurts an employee’s confidence and satisfaction more than expressing an opinion and getting dismissed. Some businesses conduct stay interviews, an interview to help understand why some employees stay longer and what could cause them to leave. Whether that’s a method you’d like to utilize or not, this type of communication is helpful.

It is worth noting that fostering a culture of appreciation not only enhances employee retention but also leads to a more productive and happier workplace overall. Even for businesses not experiencing significant turnover, implementing these practices can lead to continuous improvement and a more positive work environment.

BUSINESS LEADER
MORGAN COUNTY

“Declaring the good works being done”

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works
Ephesians 2:10

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Don't mourn the passing of summer

It is August, and if your home includes children like mine, then summer is over, in practicality if not in temperature. This is partly unwelcome, as summer affords us a greater margin for the camping trips, day trips, baseball games, or other summer activities our household enjoys so much. Those are sweet times, made easier by the more pliable summer schedule.

But the end of summer and return to school is not negative; quite the contrary, especially in Morgan County, where we are blessed with abundant educational opportunities, led by great public school systems and rounded out by private school choices and a bustling home-schooling community, all complimented with a supporting cast of exceptional public libraries. And for the adult learner, Ivy Tech's long physical presence in Morgan County means the intrepid adult learner has a brick-and-mortar learning option, too.

We are blessed with minds capable of learning and desiring to learn. Few things are as rewarding to watch as an inquisitive young mind grasping a new concept or idea for the first time – making that unseen but still visible connection between learning and understanding.

Education and knowledge are a great equalizer, opening the world to anyone with desire, regardless of race, power, money, or any other external measurement or standing. Dr. Suess wisely said, "The more that you read, the more things you will know, the more that you learn, the more places you'll go." And Mortimer Adler, an American educator and author, said, "The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live." Learning is a gift and privilege offered to us all – young and old(er) alike.

And sadly, for some – a reality I accept but cannot understand – the return to school brings a welcome structure and relief from a home life that has not lived up to expectations and basic



**RYAN
GOODWIN**

standards of love, support, and security.

For all these reasons and more, the end of summer need not be unwelcome but welcomed with thankfulness and optimism toward the growth ahead.

And to all the teachers out there in Morgan County and beyond, I say a hearty and sincere 'thank you' to each of you. For yours is a challenging job, especially in an ever-deteriorating society that seems to have lost its desire to pursue knowledge and truth. A good teacher's role cannot be overstated. Few hold more power to ignite and excite a mind toward life-long learning. Thank you for your tireless efforts!

While I'll miss the greater time flexibility for our family activities and will always wonder what else we could have "fit in" with more planning or a few extra summer days, I'm excited for my boys and the thousands of Morgan County children (and adults!) as they start a new school year.

So, this August, I'm reminding myself not to mourn the passing of summer; rather, I'll celebrate the great gift of learning, knowledge, and truth, being grateful it is open to us all.

Ryan Goodwin is a former Morgan County Commissioner and current board member of the Indianapolis Airport Authority. He holds an MBA from Purdue University and writes on business and government.

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By Nicole Davis

Morgan County Business Leader

What started more than 30 years ago as a side business mowing grass has evolved into three businesses in which the entire Parks family plays a part in making it successful.

Parks Outdoor Maintenance, Parks Construction, and Spider Graphix are owned and operated by Rodney and Stephanie Parks. Over the years, the couple has observed the strengths and interests of their children and added them to leadership roles in the corresponding business.

"My family members, besides my husband, have the jobs that they do not because they're family but because they're capable," Stephanie said. "They're good at what they do. And I'm extremely proud of them."

PARKS OUTDOOR MAINTENANCE

Parks Outdoor Maintenance was incorporated in 2002, although the business started long before that date. Rodney previously worked in robotics at Eli Lilly. After he and Stephanie had their first child, Rodney started mowing lawns for extra income in 1991. When the time came, he decided he wanted to work for himself full-time and left Lilly. This business now offers outdoor maintenance to commercial and residential customers, which includes mowing, lawn treatments, landscaping, irrigation, snowplowing and salting, hardscapes, and decks, and even holiday lighting design and installation.

They purchased their current building in 2007. That year, they opened a motorsports shop.

"We saw that the customers needed graphics and they were not getting them for a year, they were paying too much and the product would come off after one race," Stephanie said. "My husband says how about we open up a graphics business?"

SPIDER GRAPHIX

While the motorsports business is no longer in operation, Spider Graphics has grown and evolved tremendously since its



Pictured from left, Austin Parks, Darlene Heald, Rodney Parks, Stephanie Parks, Ashley Geswein and Braden Geswein.

(Photo by Nicole Davis)

inception. Managed and co-owned by their son, Austin Parks, the business now offers vehicle and trailer wraps or decals, signage, windows and wall decals, tents, flags and banners, business cards and logo design. They also provide graphic kids for ATVs, dirt bikes, side-by-sides, go-carts, spring and drift cars in the racing industry, custom awards, and decals for just about anything you can put a sticker on.

"We've set the industry standard on material to use for racing, quads, dirt bikes," Stephanie said. "The material being used when we first started in the graphics business was very thin and wouldn't last. The people that were working for us at the time found a mix of products that would stay. Last year we had a customer from eight years ago see us in Georgia and he showed us the set of graphics he had on his quad from eight years ago. It stuck. Sure, if you did something that would come off quickly you would get return customers. It was more important to us to do quality."

When Spider Graphix opened, Austin was still in high school. He went on to study graphic design and play football at the University of Indianapolis left after his first year to get into the family business.

"We get to tap into our minds, work our creativity here," Austin said. "As a designer, that's exactly what I want to be doing. In the end, I wanted to end up here anyway."

He has helped grow Spider Graphix into an international business, serving customers from all across the globe. They opened up an Australian branch in 2020, allowing for quicker shipping times for their customers in that region.

PARKS CONSTRUCTION

Parks Construction is the newest business. The Parks' daughter, Ashley, helped with the family business while she was in high school, but she eventually went away to college, graduated and married Braden Geswein. Geswein worked for himself in the construction industry. The couple lived two hours away from Ashley's hometown and on one visit back home, Rodney and Stephanie threw out the idea of returning and them opening Parks Construction. Ashley works in HR for commercial and construction customers. Geswein manages the construction business, building

homes, room additions, remodels, pole barns and more.

"For Outdoor Maintenance, we saw there were a lot of creative employees, people who could do more than mow," Stephanie said. "We had been thinking for years to start a construction site, renovation, remodel type business on the side. When our son-in-law came into the picture, we watched. He does a great job. He built his own home and designed it perfectly. He impresses me."

FAMILY IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE

Rounding out the family business, Stephanie's mother, Darlene Heald, works with the company, primarily in the graphics business.

"She loves being here with us and we love her being here with us," Stephanie said. "She wants to see the graphics business succeed because she wants to see her grandson succeed."

Blood or not, Stephanie and Rodney say they treat all of their employees like family and desire nothing more than to see them succeed and grow.

"I help do the hiring and sometimes releasing employees," Ashley said. "Through that, I see how much my parents care for people. I've had many different jobs outside of here and I've never had an employer care for their employees as much as they do. Even if I weren't their daughter, it would still matter. Why else would they have two employees here for more than 20 years each?"

In addition to Bill Miller having worked for the company for 25 years and Jack Hughes for more than 20, multiple employees have reached more than 10 years.

Having a greater diversity in businesses, Rodney said he's able to keep his employees busy and with work year-round. If the outdoor maintenance business slows, they can assist with construction. For Rodney, he couldn't sit still if he tried.

"I have to wake up every morning with a purpose," he said. "I've got to accomplish something every day. I can't sit in a chair and read a book. My mind doesn't stop thinking."

As the company continues to grow and evolve, Rodney and Stephanie said they just want to see it stable, for their kids working there and their employees.

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The enormous weight of negative self talk

Many times when we are talking to ourselves it's around something we did or should have done which causes guilt. Guilt is the feeling that results when you tell yourself that you have done something wrong or not good enough.

Unhealthy guilt results from telling yourself that you have done something wrong when you haven't actually done something wrong. For example, if you decide to do something for yourself with no intent to harm anyone, and someone gets upset with you for doing what you wanted instead of doing what he or she wants, what do you tell yourself? Here are some of the inner statements that can lead to unhealthy guilt:

- "It's my fault that he is feeling angry."
- "I should have done what she wanted instead of what I wanted. I have caused her to feel hurt."
- "I'm being selfish in doing what I want to do."
- "It's my duty to put myself aside and do what others want me to do."
- "If he gets angry with me, then I must have done something wrong."
- "If she is hurt, then I must have done something wrong."

Many of us have been trained to believe that we are responsible for others' feelings, so that when others are angry or hurt, it is our fault. Remember unless you deliberately intended to harm someone, his or her feelings are not your responsibility. Others get hurt when they take your behavior personally, and they get angry when they make you responsible for their feelings. But this does not mean that you are responsible for their feelings.

You are responsible for your own intent. Only when you intend to harm someone, are you then responsible for the results of that action. It's different when you aim is to take care of yourself with



JACK KLEMEYER
Business Coach

no intent to harm anyone – let's say you want some time alone when your partner wants to spend time with you – then you are not responsible for your partner's upset feelings.

Unhealthy guilt comes from telling yourself a lie. When the wounded, programmed critical part of you takes over and tells you that doing what you want with no intent to harm anyone is wrong, that is when you will feel unhealthy guilt. Sadly this critical part of you wants to control how others feel about you, and so tells you the lie that you are responsible for others' feelings.

For me this is where the Four Agreements (a great little book by Don Miguel Ruiz) come in to play.

- Be impeccable with your word
- Don't make assumptions
- Don't take things personally
- Always do your best (*more about these Four Agreements in another article*)

There is actually a healthy, sort of, form of guilt. Healthy guilt is the feeling that occurs when you have actually done something wrong – such as deliberately harming someone. This is an important feeling, which results from having developed a conscience – a loving adult self who is concerned with your highest good and the highest good of all. People who never developed a conscience and

feel no guilt or remorse over harming others are called sociopaths. These people have no loving adult self and can wreck havoc – stealing, raping, killing – without ever feeling badly about it.

Here's the good part of healthy guilt. It results in us taking responsibility for our choices and being accountable for our actions. When we have not behaved in a way that is in our highest good and the highest good of all, our loving adult self will feel remorse and take over, doing whatever we have to do to remedy the situation.

Healthy guilt is an important feeling and leads to positive action, but unhealthy guilt is a waste of energy and adds an enormous weight on our conscience.

Grow Your Business™ Coaching founder Jack Klemeyer is recognized as a preeminent resource for business professionals. Jack can be reached at Jack@GYBCoaching.com or at 317-755-6963. Learn more at GYBCoaching.com.



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BRINGING VIS

Residential Designs by Brad Roe brings a personalized approach to crafting home designs

By Nicole Davis

Morgan County Business Leader

Whether you're designing a newly built home or renovating a kitchen, bathroom or laundry room, there's a substantial amount of detail that goes into the process. Most people have an idea of what they want going into a project, but they can have trouble visualizing it, said Brad Roe. That's where his business, Residential Designs by Brad Roe, comes in.

By working one-on-one with clients, creating a custom design and even being present on-site during the installation of a renovation project, the Residential Designs team can assist in the decision-making process and make that vision come to life.

"Our customers see their vision on a piece of paper," said Caitlin Teeters, kitchen and bath designer who also specializes in windows and doors at Residential Designs. "They see it on a computer screen. We talk about it. But when you walk into their house and it's done, to see the joy that it brings is indescribable."

EXPANDING A STARTUP

Roe began his career in high school, selling doors, windows, cabinets, and countertops for Black Lumber Company in Martinsville, where he stayed for six years. He then worked for Wholesale Home Products before going to Newcomer Lumber in Mooresville, selling the same products at each company.

In 1999, he decided it was time to venture out on his own. He discussed the idea with his wife, Mikie and with her support, he jumped right in. He created Residential Designs by Brad Roe with the idea of designing homes and living spaces for his clients. He drafts everything from homes, barns, garages, and room additions. He was only three months into the startup when former customers began calling to ask for him to get into the window, door, countertop, and cabinet business.

"Here I am, a little guy just trying to design homes, and my customers are the ones who wanted me to expand," he said. "It fell into my lap."

He called Sun Windows which granted him permission to start selling their products and other companies followed.

Artistry runs in the Roe family. Roe's father was a sign painter. Roe enjoys the art of drawing and designing. He hand draws his blueprints, a process which takes longer but he feels offers

RESIDENTIAL DESIGNS BY BRAD ROE

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him more control over the finished product and reduces errors that can sometimes get overlooked when a computer program fills in the blanks. He ensures each product not only meets codes and regulations but has a realistic design that will stand the test of time.

"Customers come to me with their ideas and dreams," he said. "I take notes and put together a preliminary plan for them. To see their reaction when they come in here, it's pretty neat. They have it visualized in their head, but they don't know how to put it all together. When I put it together for them in that preliminary stage, it gets exciting."

A NEW HIRE

Twenty years after starting his business, Roe brought in Teeters. Teeters graduated from Indiana State with a bachelor's in interior design in 2009. She found a job in Bloomington designing kitchens and baths in 2010. After four-and-a-half years, she thought she'd enjoy working for a corporate company in Carmel better. She immediately realized that wasn't her calling. She returned to Bloomington where she worked at a couple of companies before feeling the need to make a change. A Martinsville resident, she was tiring of the commute to Bloomington, coupled with long work hours. She felt as though she was missing out on too much time with her children. She has two sons, ages 7 and 11. She desired to find a job closer to home and called up Roe.

"I said, 'I think you should hire me,'" Teeters said. "He laughed. He said 'I've been doing this by myself for a long time, so why? Pitch me your vision.' I told him that I wanted to be able to be there for my kids more, but I love selling kitchens, cabinets and that I work for an Amish line that I'd like to bring to his business and do more custom things there. I had all kinds of ideas."

The pitch worked and Teeters began working for Residential Designs in 2020. Working together, Roe primarily focuses on home design plans while Teeters does the interior design of



Brad Roe and Caitlin Teeters

kitchens, bathrooms, and more. Teeters said the builders and contractors who worked with Roe accepted her right from the start, making her feel confident this was the right move.

"Martinsville is its own unique place," she said. "Everyone wants to buy local and really support their small businesses here."

OFFERING PERSONALIZED EXPERIENCE

Residential Designs serves customers in Morgan and all of its surrounding counties.

In addition to adding the Amish line, the business recently expanded its quartz and granite countertop options and hardware selections.

Teeters can do 3-D renderings and walk a client through a room, discussing each individual cabinet. Residential Designs has a showroom at 69 N. Colfax Street, Martinsville, but it

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(Photo by Nicole Davis)

is open by appointment only, which allows for a personalized experience and for them to be on job sites as necessary. In the showroom, the displays have many different inserts so clients can open them and see firsthand what they'll get.

"It's a small showroom but we have jam packed as much in here as we can so people can get a good feel of what they're getting," she said. "I have 13 years' experience now and I've really learned what people need to see, touch and feel."

This past year, Residential Designs acquired the space next to their existing one in the same building. They intend to use that area to add to the showroom in the future.

TALKING ABOUT TRENDS

Teeters previously sat on the board for the Indiana Chapter of National Kitchen and Bath, where she said she gained a plethora of knowledge. She continues to stay up-to-date on trends and new offerings through the organization's newsletters and its annual conferences.

Every year at the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show, the big companies release the "color of the year" and all of the new products. Teeters said she enjoys attending those shows when she's able and they keep two pieces painted with the color of the year in the showroom for customers to see firsthand. She said white is a classic for kitchen cabinets and countertops, but recently blues and now greens have become more popular, along with lighter wood tones such as Quarter Sawn Oak.

"The trends are constantly changing," she said. "The trick is not to push the trends on people. So many people say they don't want it to go out of style, so we add a little bit of what's trending to keep it updated and modern but make sure that it's being true to who you are, what your style is, what you love about your house and how you want to live. Getting to know customers is key to that and going out to their home helps."

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS KEY

Residential Designs offers free in-home consultations.

Teeters also prioritizes being on-site during installations as much as possible. This allows her to address any issues that should arise quickly and ensures the process goes smoother. She also said she learns from each installation, and it helps her with her designs. The company also guarantees all of the dimensions on the cabinets and countertops will be accurate.

Customer service is key, Roe said. He credits his success throughout the past 24 years of owning his own business to the personal touch given and doing everything possible to make sure the customer is happy. Mistakes do happen, as 1/8th of an inch off in the design and the entire thing can be ruined or an error can occur in the shipping of a product. When this does happen, he said they go above and beyond to ensure the customer is happy.

"In this business, you're guaranteed to have an issue somewhere," Roe said. "It's just a matter of addressing it, figuring it out, and getting it right."

Roe said they take pride in that all of their products are locally made. Sun Windows is based out of Owensboro, Ky. Therma-Tru Doors is based out of Fort Wayne, Ind. The Amish cabinets are from Montgomery, Ind. Aristokraft, a cabinet maker, is based out of Jasper, Ind. The quartz fabricators are in Loogootee, Ind. and while that product comes from across the world, one of the stock lines is from Georgia.

Roe noted that it's an important distinction that they are designers, not contractors, and don't do remodeling work. Their role is to design and sell the products, along with being on-site during the installation of the countertops and hardware.

One issue Roe said they run into is when people hear the word "custom," they think expensive.

"A lot of people see some of the pictures on our website and have this misconception that they can't afford us," Teeters said. "We have several different lines with several different price points. We're still at a competitive price point. I've done \$1,500 kitchens and \$150,000 kitchens."

Teeters said the typical project averages in the \$15,000 to \$35,000 range. This could be for a kitchen, laundry room, bathroom and/or all of the countertops in the house.

Working with their customers gives Roe and Teeters the greatest satisfaction, regardless of the price point of the project.

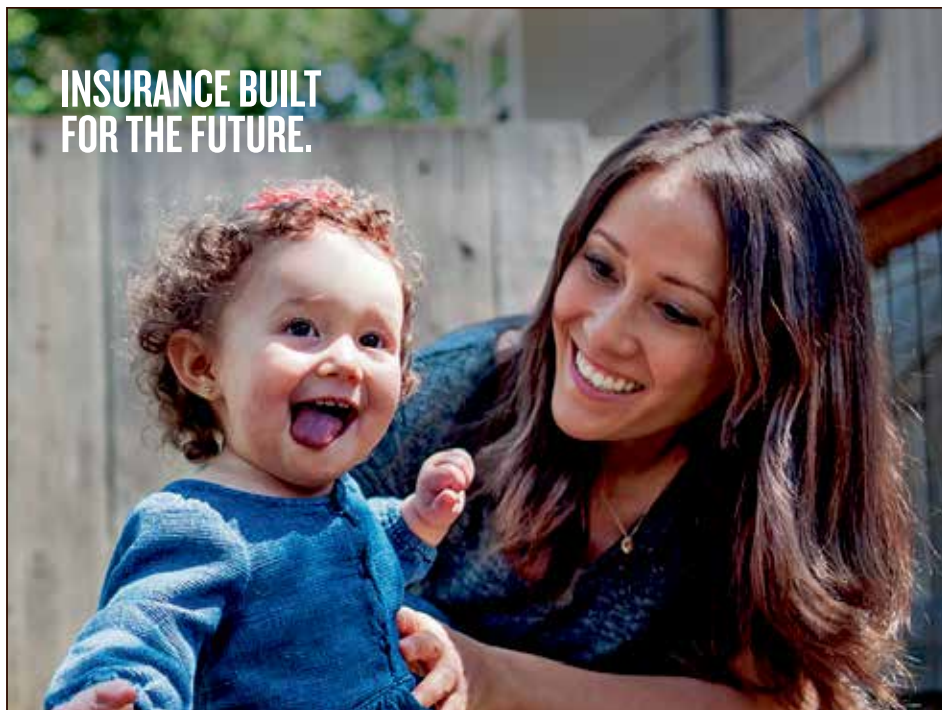
"I had a customer recently who walked in as we are installing and immediately had the biggest smile," Teeters said. "She came straight over to me and gave me the biggest hug. That was really special."

Roe agreed, "Our customers' happiness is the most important thing to us."

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3 ways to grow yourself

Coach John Wooden said, "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."

Growth is not an automatic process. We do not magically get better. We only get better when we intentionally grow ourselves. Just because you are using your strengths doesn't mean you're growing them to their fullest potential. For example, just because you get out of bed in the morning, walk around, and eat doesn't mean you are working out. There is a difference between living life by getting around and taking intentional time to grow your muscle strength. Any fitness instructor will tell you that walking during your daily activities is good, but taking time to exercise regularly is infinitely better.

If you want to grow your strengths, you can't just use them by default; you have to work them out by decision. This means you must decide to grow your skills with a growth plan. Many people use their strengths, but few are willing to develop them. Thomas J. Watson, the former Chairman and CEO of IBM, said, "Nothing so conclusively proves a man's ability to lead others as what he does from day to day to lead himself."

There are 3 ways you can grow your strengths to reach their maximum potential...

GET RESOURCES

No one will ever grow to their maximum potential without reading. Reading great books, stories, biographies, articles, and blogs pertaining to your strengths is one of the fastest ways to grow on your journey. You can apply the wisdom and insights others offer to your situation. To transform, the mind needs stimulation. One of the best ways to stimulate the mind is to read. It lets you soar on the wings of other people's great ideas and insights. If you could've spent a month with Steve Jobs for \$24.95, would you have? If you could spend a week with Bill Gates for \$14.95, would you? If you could spend six months with the top guru in your industry for just \$19.95, would you? The truth is, you can. Get their resources, study their strategies, and gain their wisdom.

Leaders are readers. In fact, you'll never meet a highly successful person who is not an avid reader. Books are to the mind what nutrition is to the body. The more you dive into great books, the more growth you'll experience.

GET MENTORS

You can learn almost everything you need in life by being around the right people. Finding

mentors who will lift you to a higher level is vital for success. People become like those they surround themselves with. What kind of people are you surrounding yourself with? Successful people are drawn to other successful people. They intentionally seek out those who are better and further along than themselves. One of the greatest traits of highly successful people is the drive to find and learn from people who are good at what they do. They go the extra mile to network with experts. We cannot reach our potential alone; we need others to help draw the best out of us.

Every leader needs a guide to help bring out the best in them. Luke had Yoda, Katniss had Haymitch, Frodo had Gandolph, Dorothy had Glenda, and the list goes on. Everyone needs a trusted coach to help them unleash the hero they were created to be. In almost every profession, high-capacity individuals use a coach. Movie stars have acting coaches on set to help them in their roles. Singers have vocal coaches during recording sessions. Athletes have coaches during practices and on game day. And it's not just those starting in their occupation. Seasoned professionals continue to use coaches for the longevity of their careers. The fact is, having a coach helps bring out your very best.

GET EXPERIENCES

All experience is not created equal. Contrary to what you may have heard, experience is not the best teacher; educated experience is. There is a big difference between the two. Experience doesn't teach you anything unless you take the time to learn from it. Just because someone goes through a difficult time does not necessarily mean they automatically learn from it. We all know people who have gone through a lot but have nothing to show for it. Educating yourself about what you have acquired through your experiences will give you incredible insight into the future.

It's not what we've experienced that shapes us; it's what we've learned from our experiences that truly shape us. Unless we take the time to reflect, we will be destined to repeat the past or, worse, forget about it. Every experience brings with it a seed of success. Take time to cultivate growth lessons from your experiences. Vernon Howard said, "Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will."

What are you doing to grow yourself?

Reach out to us today if you need help growing yourself to the next level and/or help growing your organization to the next level. www.legacybusinessconsultants.net

What is "Indoor Comfort"?

We are often asked questions such as, "What effects indoor comfort?" or "Why is it not comfortable in my home or office?"



Jod Woods

There is so much more to "indoor comfort" than just the temperature that the thermostat is set to maintain. Actually, the temperature is the least important factor in addressing total indoor comfort. Total indoor comfort is achieved when humidity, air quality, and temperature are properly addressed.

During the summer, the central air conditioning system is utilized to control humidity as well as cool the air in our homes and offices. We are seeking approximately 50% indoor relative humidity. If the rate is higher than this, the space will feel "warm" or "muggy". To attempt to compensate for this, the temperature setting is forced lower. This adjustment causes the cooling system to run more and consume more energy. A higher temperature setting is comfortable when the humidity levels are at, or below, our desired levels.

"Air quality" factors humidity into the equa-



tion. Air borne particles such as pollen, pet dander, mold, mildew, smoke, odors, dust, and bacteria are being constantly circulated through our homes and offices. These particles are only controlled by a high-quality air cleaner such as the Trane "Clean Effects" air cleaning system. Regardless of marketing claims, a disposable filter cannot provide the proper level of filtration to properly clean the air in your environment. When these particles are properly addressed, the results are less dust, reduced allergy symptoms, and fresh smelling air that is easy to breathe. Please feel free to contact us to discuss your environment at 317-831-5279.

Please let me know if there are any topics that you would enjoy being discussed. I can be reached at 317-831-5279 or JodWoods@EconomyHVAC.com.

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3 things your website must do

Every great organization needs a great website. Most organizations know that they should have a web presence, but not everyone understands how important your website really is to your overall brand as you seek to attract customers. Your website says a lot about who you are, what you do, and the values that drive you.

Whether you're wanting to create a new website or rebrand and rebuild an old one, there are certain ingredients your website **MUST** have.

YOUR WEBSITE MUST BE ADAPTIVE / RESPONSIVE.

Over 50% of Internet traffic is from mobile devices. Your website needs to be able to detect the device it's being displayed on and respond accordingly so your potential customers get the best possible experience. Visitors don't want to be pinching and scrolling to navigate your website. Your website must responsively adapt to being viewed on a phone, tablet, or computer.

YOUR WEBSITE MUST BE UPDATED REGULARLY

You've probably heard the phrase "content is king" when it comes to web design. This is true to some degree, but some people take that too far and write novels all over their website pages. While the keywords for search engines abound, this content-heavy approach leaves website visitors confused and overloaded. At the same time, a static website that never changes will appear to be "dead" to search engines and will be ranked lower due to inactivity.

I like to explain it this way - imagine you drive through your neighborhood and you pass a home where the garage door is never open, the grass is never mowed, and there's never any movement or signs of life. You would assume that no one lives there. In the same way, when Google scans your site and finds the exact same content as a year ago, they assume no one lives there.



CHET CROMER
Technology

Updating the content on your site communicates that your site is alive and active. For this reason, many websites employ a blog where they can regularly add content.

YOUR WEBSITE MUST HAVE A WHOLE LOT OF YOU!

Last but not least, your website is an opportunity for you to proclaim who you are and what you do to a waiting world. You know your business, your customers, your region, your goals, and your mission and values far better than anyone else. You can communicate these things to the world around you better than anyone else. Partnering with a local firm who understands who you are and can deliver eye-catching design is an optimal way to ensure your website will have maximum impact. Many times, small businesses choose templates and out-of-the-box website designs. While these can provide inspiration, without YOU at the center, your website will never help you achieve your goals.

We love working with organizations to create amazing websites with these three ingredients at the center, and we'd love the opportunity to work with you!

Chet Cromer is the president of C2IT Consulting, Inc., a Plainfield-based technology business that provides websites, mobile apps, and IT consulting/support to businesses across central Indiana. He can be reached at chetcromer@c2itconsulting.net or (317) 721-2248.

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2024 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship applications open

The 2024 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship application is now available in Morgan County through the Community Foundation of Morgan County. The Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program (LECSP) will provide 147 scholarships statewide and two scholarships in Morgan County. LECSP scholarships may be used for otherwise unreimbursed full tuition, required fees, and a special allocation of up to \$900 per year. The special allocation may cover the costs for required books and required equipment for four years of undergraduate study on a full-time basis leading to a baccalaureate degree at any eligible Indiana public or private nonprofit college or university.

The program, administered statewide by Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI) and locally in Morgan County through the Community Foundation of Morgan County, is open to all Indiana residents who:

- graduate from an accredited Indiana high school by 2024 and receive their diploma no later than June 30, 2024;
- intend to pursue a full-time baccalaureate course of study at an eligible college or university in Indiana; and
- meet the criteria specific to their local community foundation. Visit <https://cfm-online.org/donors/scholarships/#lilly> for complete information regarding the Community Foundation of Morgan County's application criteria.

Students can learn more about the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship in Morgan County and apply for this scholarship by visiting <https://cfmconline.org/donors/scholarships/#lilly>. Applications must be completed and submitted by Friday, August 25th, 4 pm to be considered.

Applications will be evaluated on, but not limited to, the following criteria: academic performance, essay, financial need, extracurriculars, unique circumstances and an interview for finalists. Eight finalists will be nominated by the Community Foundation of Morgan County, and their names will be submitted to ICI for



BRITTANI BENTLEY

final selection of the recipients. Scholarship recipients will be notified in December.

Lilly Endowment created LECSP for the 1997-98 school year and has supported the program every year since with tuition grants totaling more than \$486 million. More than 5,000 Indiana students have received Lilly Endowment Community Scholarships since the program's inception.

The primary purposes of LECSP are: 1) to help raise the level of educational attainment in Indiana; 2) to increase awareness of the beneficial roles Indiana community foundations can play in their communities; and 3) to encourage and support the efforts of current and past Lilly Endowment Community Scholars to engage with each other and with Indiana business, governmental, educational, nonprofit and civic leaders to improve the quality of life in Indiana generally and in local communities throughout the state.

The Community Foundation of Morgan County is again pleased to offer LECSP for its 25th year in Morgan County. "This scholarship is the opportunity for some of our brightest and most talented seniors to achieve academic success without financial fear," said Brittani Bentley, President of the Community Foundation of Morgan County.

About the Community Foundation of Morgan County: CFMC connects donors and

their charitable giving with our evolving community needs in order to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations through impact grant making. They are philanthropic leaders and catalysts who maximize available resources in the county. Home to over 180 funds and 60 scholarships, the foundation strives to make Morgan County a better place.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. Although the gifts of stock remain a financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. The Endowment funds significant programs throughout the United States, especially in the field of religion. However, it maintains a special commitment to its founders' hometown, Indianapolis, and

home state, Indiana. Since 1997, Independent Colleges of Indiana has administered the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program statewide with funding provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. Founded in 1948, ICI serves as the collective voice for the state's 29 private, nonprofit colleges and universities. ICI institutions employ over 22,000 Hoosiers and generate a total local economic impact of over \$5 billion annually. Students at ICI colleges have Indiana's highest four-year, on-time graduation rates, and ICI institutions produce 30 percent of Indiana's bachelor's degrees while enrolling 20 percent of its undergraduates.

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Networking tips that actually work

It's completely understandable why networking can make people uncomfortable or confused, as it often gets associated with insincerity and self-serving behavior. However, genuine networking is about building meaningful relationships and helping others, not just about promoting oneself. Here are some practical tips to become a better networker:

1. **Focus on Helping Others:** The primary goal of networking should be to assist other people. While it's natural to hope for reciprocity, the focus should be on providing value and support to others first.
2. **Understand Their Needs:** Before discussing your own needs or goals, take the time to understand what others require. Building relationships involves genuine interest in others and their priorities.
3. **Offer Value:** Always seek ways to provide value to others. It could be sharing relevant resources, introducing them to someone in your network, or offering your expertise to help with a particular challenge.
4. **Quality Over Quantity:** Networking isn't a numbers game. Instead of aiming to know as many people as possible, focus on connecting with the right people who are relevant to your

interests and goals.

5. **No Expectations:** Avoid approaching networking with the expectation of getting something in return. Instead, be curious, learn from others, and offer assistance without expecting immediate payback.
6. **Be Proactive:** Don't leave networking to chance. Define the kind of connections you want to make and actively seek out those individuals or groups.
7. **Diversify Your Network:** Extend your network beyond your immediate industry. Connecting with people from various fields will make you more valuable as you can bridge connections between different industries.
8. **Value Every Contact:** Don't dismiss anyone as irrelevant. Even those who may not seem directly related to your work can prove valuable in the future. Keep an open mind and consider the potential benefits of every connection.

Networking, when done genuinely and with the intent to help others, can be a powerful tool for personal and professional growth. By shifting the focus from self-promotion to building meaningful relationships and offering assistance, networking becomes a positive and enriching experience for everyone involved.



Guiding business owners
and management teams
to achieve their goals
and fulfill their
God-given purpose

*If you are not successfully running your
business or organization – but rather being run
“BY” it, we need to have a conversation.*

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How to make a good succession plan

When you're done working in the business you own, how do you plan to continue your income? Are your family members and employees set to carry on? Do you have a transition planned for someone to take over?

Unbelievably, the majority of business owners wind up shutting the business down and walking away, leaving themselves and their families with nothing to show and employees to figure out how to carry on.

If you lead a company, a succession plan is something you want to have ready now, so it's there when it's needed, instead of trying to throw one together at the last minute.

THE STEPS TO CREATE A SUCCESSION PLAN

1. Early in our working relationship, we encourage business owners to create a personal vision with their family so they know what personal outcomes they want from business ownership, including succession.
2. When the time comes to choose your successor, draw up a formal transition plan together. Include a target date for the handoff, changes in your work schedule, a description of the legacy you want to leave, and to help establish credibility and gain experience, a plan for the successor's rotation through the main functions of the business.
3. Communicate your plan to employees, customers, and family. Bad things happen when people don't know there's a plan and what it includes. Those who thought they were in line for succession may try to outshine coworkers. Others may leave for a more stable future somewhere else. The more everyone knows, the more clarity and confidence will prevail.
4. Financially, identify the value of the business, do tax planning, and work to create several years of maximum profitability. Improve your balance sheet through debt reduction and retained earnings. This enables you to hand-off a healthy company and earn a healthy pay day for all the sacrifice you've put into your business.

SUCCESSION PLANNING IN FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS CAN BE THE MOST COMPLICATED

The complex dynamics and multi-layered



**ROGER AND
SUSIE ENGELAU**
Business Coach

relationships in family business make discussions about handing over the reins exceptionally challenging. There's often a disconnect between what the owner's planning and what the incumbent's expecting, even though they're father and son, mother and daughter, uncle and nephew, brother and sister, etc.

To help, let your successor do things like choose new employees, adjust the company culture to fit their character, take risks with you as a back-stop, and make as many decisions as possible. Don't hold onto the way you've run things. If you want your successor to continue the business beyond you, they must lead it their way. Force yourself to take a back seat acting more as coach than boss. Don't let them make costly mistakes but let them make their own mistakes and help them learn from them.

ONE LAST PIECE OF ADVICE

It's hard to create a succession plan without experts. You'll want a 1) financial advisor to help plan your future money needs, 2) CPA to advise on tax issues, 3) lawyer to draw up paperwork, and 4) a business coach.

We've been at the table for discussions about how much a son will pay his father after he retires. Or the 60-year-old daughter whose mother won't let go and let her lead. These situations aren't unusual. You've given so much of your life to make your business a success that it's nearly impossible to detach enough from the emotions, fears, and challenges to handle this transition all on your own.

If you want this last chapter of your business life to end positively, enlist the help of someone who's successfully navigated the sensitive, often painful path that succession planning is.

Award-Winning Business Coach and Owner of Inspire Results Business Coaching, U.S. Military Academy at West Point graduate, Roger Engelau, his wife Susie, and their team of business coaches apply their business expertise to help business owners improve their business, income, and lifestyle. To schedule a no-strings discussion, call 317-908-5809, or email Roger@InspireResults.com.

*The courage of leadership is giving others
the chance to succeed even though you bear
the responsibility for getting things done.*

~ Simon Sinek