



# News Briefs

May 2009

Combining the *Importance* of business with the *Complexity* of family

## 13th Annual Dinner—A Family's Heritage

Bridgewood Resort Hotel, Neenah  
May 11, 2009, 5:30—9:00 pm

The Forum's annual dinner is designed to provide families time for socializing, celebrating, learning, and auction bidding with other family business members and sponsors.

The evening will begin with a social hour at 5:30 pm, with dinner following at 6:30 pm.

During dessert, a brief business meeting will include awarding two \$500 scholarships for fall 2009, recognizing members and sponsors that successfully recruited new members during the year, surprising someone, or several people, with induction into the Forum Fellows, and recognizing long-term members and sponsors for their commitment and service.

By about 7:30 pm, we plan to introduce our dinner speaker, Mark Skogen, president/CEO of Festival Foods. Mark will be speaking about his family's planning and continuing efforts for the transition of ownership and leadership of their business. We are sure you will find his presentation both interesting and relevant.



Invitations with meal choices were sent to all members, sponsors, and former members in April. We encourage everyone to make their reservations as early as possible through the website. If you need any additional information, please contact Donna Nelson at [nelsond@uwosh.edu](mailto:nelsond@uwosh.edu) or 920-424-1541.

## 2nd Annual Silent Auction

Bridgewood Resort Hotel, Neenah  
May 11, 2009, 5:30—7:30 pm

The Silent Auction will again benefit the Forum's scholarship fund. With the effect the economy has had on investment, financing, and college costs, students need financial support as much, if not more, than ever before. Your continued commitment to this fund is very important.

If you haven't already made a donation to the Silent Auction, the Silent Auction Committee, headed by Diane Roundy of Schenck Business Solutions, will be contacting you for a donation.

Donations should be items that you know members and sponsors would bid on. Creative donation ideas may include spa packages, tailgate parties, theater tickets, shopping sprees, wine baskets, etc. Whatever you decide to contribute, please be generous as it benefits the scholarship fund.

The Silent Auction will run during the early part of the evening with the closing bid before the dinner speaker begins. To some of us who enjoy a little competitive shopping, the bidding portion of the auction provides added fun.

We urge everyone to come prepared to make good competitive bids designed to generate funds for scholarships.

## Summer Fun!

Time Warner Cable Field, Appleton  
June 25, 2009, 5:30—9:00 pm  
Picnic 5:30—7:00 Game begins at 7:05

Play ball! It's time for baseball, And, what more exciting time or convenient site to enjoy a game with the family than with the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers for a home game?

This year, we have reserved the sheltered deck on the first base side with box seats. So, rain or shine, we will have a good time! And, we will invite Fang to visit with the children during dinner.

Plan to bring your entire family and enjoy a great night of baseball along with Forum friends. Reserve your seats through the Forum's website.

## Transitioning Ownership within the Family

Ninety people—members, sponsors and guests, attended this program on March 26 to discuss this transition which is so vital to the continued survival of a family owned business.

Moderated by Dale Feinauer, owner panelists—Jerry DeLeers, Mark Lasky, David Plank, Jim Simpson, and Vicky Wuest, talked about the transfer of ownership and leadership in their families. Overall the panelists provided first-hand insight into communications, agreements, successes, challenges, and lessons learned as they made a transfer and/or are planning the next one.

Following the panel, Spencer Bonnie of Pathmakers, Inc. emphasized the need to clarify vision and goals within and across generations. Accurate, clear communications are vital to a transition that supports the health of the business and the family.

The next generation attendees participated in the “Buyers Workshop.” Tim Vogelsang, Tim McCoy and Pam Schneider provided guidelines to help the next generation understand issues of concern to them.

The current leadership generation attended the “Sellers Workshop” led by Scott Yukel, Adrian Ulatowski, Chris Platten and Craig Smith.

Throughout the morning, the message was that this transition is a process, not an event. Both the buyers and sellers were encouraged to communicate expectations and concerns openly, use outside experts to gather and filter accurate information, and recognize that, to be done effectively, this transition takes years rather than days.

The audio of this program can be accessed by members and sponsors through the Forum’s “Members Only” site and via CD from Donna Nelson.

## Recruitment Incentive Program

Everyone likes a win-win situation and this is definitely one of those! This incentive program lets each member and sponsor organization earn credit toward *their* next year’s fee while enhancing the value of the Forum’s experiences, expertise, and dialogue by adding new family business members.



### What’s the Reward?

For every new member that credits your organization with their recruitment as a Forum member, your business will receive a credit toward your next year’s fee equivalent to 1/3 of the new member’s fee.

This offer applies to up to a maximum of three new members per recruiting member per year. So, with three new, paid members to your credit, your fee for the next year could be entirely, or almost entirely, covered. As membership fees vary by size of business, the amount credited will vary by new member size. Your credit will be limited to no more than your total annual fee.

### Who is eligible:

Every member and sponsor organization is eligible and encouraged to earn the rewards.

### How to earn the reward:

Invite a prospective family business member to be your guest at a Forum program and encourage them to become a member. (A prospective business is limited to attending

one program as a guest.) Tell them why you benefit from Forum participation and how it will help their family and business. If they credit you with their recruitment, you will be rewarded.

**Membership growth adds more experiences and networking opportunities for everyone’s benefit!**

## Forum Poll

Please be sure to visit our web site <http://wfbf.uwosh.edu> and take the latest poll. It takes less than a minute; is painless; and provides you insight into how others have answered the poll. The current question is “Does your family business have any non-family shareholders?”



Having a clearly communicated vision and mission statement is cited as an important component of a healthy family business culture. When this question was raised over the past 60 or so days, here are the results we received. Is this something you should work on?

## Best Practice Session

Thanks to the coordination efforts and moderation of Merry Whipple of member Xeric Web® Drying Systems, our April 2nd Best Practice provided members and sponsors the opportunity to ask questions and share significant concerns about the Employee Free Choice legislation. With the help of Donsia Strong-Hill of Godfrey & Kahn, we looked at the legislative process and the three places that we might most successfully influence the decisions regarding a bill. We also heard from the legislative aids for Representatives Kagen and Petri and Senator Kohl regarding the best ways to communicate with them.

The session brought awareness to the many rumors, concerns, and unknowns related to this legislation. We were referred to the issues section of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s website, [www.uschamber.com](http://www.uschamber.com), as a good place to keep track of this and other national issues.

## Peer Groups

During this year, 83% of all member organizations participated in one or more of the peer groups. According to peer group evaluation comments, the groups provide

- Content that is extremely timely
- Organized information
- Extremely helpful answers to questions
- Good first-hand knowledge
- Interaction within the group
- Real-life stories and examples
- Lots of great information
- Differing views of an issues/topic

Most, but not all, of the groups will take a short hiatus during the summer. If you have been thinking about getting into a group but have questions about what group to join and how the groups work, contact Sue. Most of the groups allow a one-time visit to determine fit.

## Director's Column

Susan Schierstedt



A lot is being written about the economy and its effect on business. What I have found particularly interesting is the number of articles that attribute family ownership and management as key factors to success during these times.

Yes, I have heard members lamenting layoffs. I have heard about sleepless nights spent worrying about the families that depend on the family's business. I have heard concerns about the pending changes in legislation that threatens and challenges the way we do business. All of this emphasizes the passion and commitment family owners have for their businesses and their employees.

One of the more satisfying things I have heard lately is the benefit Forum members experience from getting together to talk about the issues, to explore opportunities, and to support one another during these times.

Family businesses have a lot going for them. Taking the long-term view, having a vision for the business, desiring to leave a legacy, caring about their employees and their customers, trusting expert advisors, being passionate about the business are all characteristics of family businesses that contribute to success. I commend all of you for working hard to make your business, community and family the best they can be. Where would we be without you?

A new family business resource designed to help family businesses capitalize on these strengths has recently been added to the Web. The *Family Business Wiki* is designed to enable "sharing family business knowledge around the world." On May 12, the Family Business Wiki will host its first, free global teleconference entitled "*Family Business: In Safe Hands?*" This teleconference will be hosted

by the Institute for Family Business in London.

On May 26, 2009, Chinese University of Hong Kong will host the topic: "*Threats and Opportunities to Family Business in Hong Kong and China.*"

On June 12, the family business center directors' Alliance, of which I am a member, will host a panel discussion, "*Advice You Can Trust: Drawing Upon the Collective Wisdom of Peer Networks*" from our Alliance meeting in Chicago.

Check out the wiki for more information.

[www.familybusinesswiki.org/](http://www.familybusinesswiki.org/)

*Sue*

Program Calendar		
Wisconsin Family Business Forum		
Date	Event	Presenter(s)
<b>2009</b>		
May 11	<i>13th Annual Dinner—A Family's Heritage</i>	Mark Skogen Festival Foods
June 25	<i>Timber Rattlers Game</i>	Program Committee
Aug 12	<i>Facilitation Training</i>	Dale Feinauer
Sep 17	<i>Succession Planning: Who Decides What and How</i>	Stephanie Brun de Pontet Family Business Consulting Group
Oct 21	<i>Governance and Continuity Check Up</i>	Katherine Grady Lansberg, Gersick & Associates LLC
Dec 1	<i>WFBF Business Expo</i>	Program Committee & R&R Committee
UW-Madison Family Business Center		
May 5	<i>Acting up in the Family Business for a Successful Succession</i>	UW-Madison Theater Class
Sep 29	<i>Managing Boundaries in the Family Business: Why, When and How Successful Companies Do It—and How Yours Can Too!</i>	Jane Adams
Oct 20	<i>Developing Your Next Generation Leaders</i>	Katherine Grady Lansberg, Gersick & Associates LLC
Dec 8	<i>What Non-Family CEO's of Family Businesses Must Know to be Successful with the Family and in the Business</i>	JoAnne Norton Freedom Communications

As a Forum member, you are eligible to attend most of the UW-Madison Family Business Center's programs for a small per person fee. Contact Sue or Donna for details.

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**Schenck Business Solutions** is a full-service regional accounting and consulting firm with nearly 600 employees, serving businesses and individual clients through its 11 Wisconsin locations. As one of the largest Wisconsin-based CPA firms in the state, Schenck Business Solutions provides a full range of services including tax, business consulting, information technology, retirement planning, and human resource solutions for today's business, government and personal challenges.



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