



News Briefs

November 2009

Growing Generations of Family Business Success

Family Business Expo—

December 1, 2009, 3:00—6:00 pm
Butte des Morts Country Club, Appleton

Another Forum First! Have you met all the Forum members and sponsors? Do you know what they do and how they might work with your business as a customer, supplier, or resource? Have you introduced your key people to the Forum and its members/sponsors? Is your network as robust as it could be?

Well, here's your opportunity! Each member and sponsor is being asked to set up a display that provides information about the business, its products, services and people. Each is also encouraged to bring family and other key associates to talk about the business and to take advantage of excellent networking opportunities.

Consistent with our guidelines, this will not be a sales opportunity, but an educational opportunity for people to get better acquainted in a friendly, comfortable environment. As with any business expo, the exchange of business cards and awarding of prizes are encouraged.

Furthermore, to provide more exposure for each business and for the Forum, we will invite prospective family business members to attend as non-exhibitors.

Every expo should have some excitement and food. And this one will not be an exception. We will hold a 50/50 raffle to benefit the Forum's scholarship fund and a lucky member/sponsor. We will also have a networking activity to help you get better acquainted with everyone.

Furthermore, thanks to the support and generosity of the Forum's sponsors, delicious hors d'oeuvres will be available to complete the expo's appeal.

Our goal is to have 100% participation by members and sponsors. We have set the display cost extremely low to make it feasible for every business to participate. Whether you have a formal display or just bring products and/or brochures, you will have a place.

Reserve an exhibit space by contacting Donna or visiting the registration link on our website.



Family Business Education (FBE) Certificate Program

With the planning and guidance of an excellent committee, the Forum launched this program on October 28 at Wipfli in Appleton. Over the course of the next 7 months, this first cohort of 16 individuals will study the essentials of family business, explore their own family businesses, and develop a professional network that promises to benefit them throughout their careers.

Forum sponsors are hosting the classes and providing much of the expertise for the program. Members and staff will also contribute to the learning experience through panel presentations, case studies, and anecdotal experiences.

We hope to have updates from the class in future issues of the *News Briefs*.

Governance and Continuity Check Up

For those who participated in this comprehensive workshop led by Katherine Grady of Lansberg, Gersick & Associates, the check-up tool helped focus attention on the family, business, and ownership issues that most need addressing to ensure business continuity.

Katherine began by focusing on the developmental stages of a family business, of ownership, and of the family. Participants mapped their own family business timelines observing transitions and identifying key issues. By noting how these stages overlap for each business, an understanding of the key reasons transitions are often challenging was recognized.

In discussions with peers, those key issues — communication, leadership development, strategic planning, and family council — were explored and possible approaches to each were generated.

The workshop check-up tool is available from Donna for members who would like to use it in their businesses.

"Succession should never be an event. It should be a process. If it becomes an event, you have a problem." Ivan Lansberg

Forum Fervor

Undoubtedly, you have noticed the enthusiasm with which founders and other owners talk about their businesses. This passion for one's business is particularly evident in a small group discussion during a Forum program. There is something special that happens when owners get together at a Forum event and start talking about their experiences, insights, challenges, joys, planning, etc. It's not Packers Fever; it's **Forum Fervor**, enthusiasm for being a part of the Forum's learning community of family businesses.

Each member and sponsor needs to share this *Forum Fervor*, don't keep it as a "best kept secret." Get other family businesses involved.

What characterizes a good member? — a multi-generational family business with multiple family members working in the business, a passion for keeping the business in the family, and a proactive, learning culture.

Is this the only member profile? No, but it is the most common.

Why add more members? Experience indicates that sharing knowledge, experiences, and issues with others who can relate to the family business experience is invaluable. By increasing the membership, the wealth of knowledge and experience grows, too. Not everyone has all the answers. Everyone's experience is slightly different. It is when we work and share together that the richness of the Forum community becomes even more valuable.

What's the Incentive? The key incentive is increasing the knowledge and experience base. The bonus is a reduction in next year's fee for the recruiting member or sponsor.

Member News

On October 29, **Carmen Fosick**, vice president of our newest member, **Elmstar Electric Corporation**, accepted the Small Business Success Story Award along with eight other individuals. The award recognized Carmen for her success in assuming control of Elmstar from her father in 1998. At that time, Carmen states, "We were definitely struggling as a company, and then, above that, I as a young kid was now in charge ... if I were an outsider looking in, I might have felt the same way: Elmstar is probably going to go out of business."

Carmen's "efforts have been recognized by the construction industry, as Elmstar was selected in 2008 as the TEGG service provider for northeast Wisconsin, a franchising opportunity that has allowed them both to better ensure customer satisfaction and reinforce sales." For



more information, visit Corporate Report Wisconsin's Business Magazine's *2009 Small Business Success Stories*.

On Nov. 12, 2009, the American Foundation of Counseling Services will present **Nsight/Cellcom** with the 2009 Ethics in Business Award in the business category. Award criteria included demonstrating both business excellence and the



Rob Riordan

highest standards of such values as civic and social responsibility, integrity, and ethical conduct. Nsight/Cellcom, led by brothers

Patrick and Robert

Riordan, is a wireless phone company that upholds hometown values and a commitment to community outreach, the environment and public service. Reasons why Nsight/Cellcom will be the 2009 recipient in the Business category:

- Cellcom has a vision statement which doubles as their ethics policy which is given to each employee.
- They are focused on being part of the community; this is evidenced by their support of the Marathon. Cellcom's site on Chambers Island is used by Door County for their 911 service.

Building and maintaining a strong Forum community benefits everyone!

- There is a large emphasis on customer service, and employees are empowered to do the right thing.

Cellcom has current projects around green cell sites, powered solely by solar panels. They also have a cell phone recycling program.

Bassett Mechanical was named 2009 Supplier of the Year by Heinz North America. Bassett has been a vendor for the condiment processor for more than 20 years, and most recently worked on the refrigeration, freezing and HVAC systems for a frozen foods facility in South Carolina.

Badger Mining Corporation's Adventure Day 2009 broke its previous attendance record with over 3,000 visitors. Held on August 29th and hosted by the Fairwater plant, the day included activities for all ages.

Forum members are making a contribution. **Tom Gross** of **Ahern-Gross Inc.**, **Ralph Evans** of **Menasha Corporation**, and **Bob & Jim Keller** of **J.J. Keller & Associates** were among the contributors who helped break ground for the new UW Oshkosh academic building on October 16. Visit the College website <http://www.business.uwosh.edu/> for more information about the new building.



Pat Riordan



Tom Gross
1972 College of Business
Graduate

Legislative Trip

The Senior Executives Peer Group is planning to go to Washington D.C. in spring to talk to legislators about the interests and needs of family business. Jim Janes has volunteered to coordinate the trip and the meetings. If you are interested in going along and want to receive planning information, please contact Sue.

Buddy System

The members of the Recruitment & Retention Committee recognize the value of the Buddy System and would like to encourage more people to participate. The system is an opportunity for more seasoned members/sponsors to network with new members/sponsors and develop strong relationships, mutually beneficial to both parties. It demonstrates commitment to the Forum by enhancing the first impression new members/sponsors have of the organization.

A Forum buddy gets acquainted with the new member and their family business interests and needs. Then the buddy introduces the new member to other Forum members and sponsors and helps identify resources that would be helpful.

A buddy communicates frequently with the new member to make sure program, peer group, and Best Practices dates and times are reserved on the new member's calendar.

As buddies get better acquainted, we hope that a good professional relationship develops that is mutually beneficial.

To register to become a buddy, complete the *Buddy Contract* form available in the Resources section of the website, <http://wfbf.uwosh.edu>, at programs and from Donna Nelson.

Unique Member Opportunity

At a time when the economy is challenging every leader's knowledge and skill, the Forum is able to offer its membership a unique, highly cost effective marketing opportunity.

Two Forum members, **JAG Outdoor Advertising** and **Kobussen Buses Ltd.**, have been working with the Forum's Marketing Committee to develop a marketing package unlike any other. And, the way you take advantage of the savings is very customizable.

The benefits to you are:

Exceptional visibility for your business at a *significant savings* – 50% or more,

Promotion of your family business as a valuable member of the community and region, and of your membership in the Wisconsin Family Business Forum, a *valued resource*.

Details of this opportunity should arrive on your desk in

the next few days..

You really can't afford to miss this opportunity for your business. It's not too good to be true. Please take time to look at the package to determine how to best take advantage of the offer.

A Program Bonanza

Take advantage of our program bonanza by attending programs at UW-Madison's Family Business Center (FBC) in addition to those of the Forum.

Through the reciprocity agreement between the FBC and the Forum, members are eligible to attend each others programs for a minimal \$50.00 per person fee. Forum members can register directly on FBC's website, which is accessible from the Alliances menu option on our web site. When you register, indicate you are a FBC member, and in the comments section indicate your membership with the Forum. Contact Sue or Donna for further information.

Another example of our alliance with FBC is the presentations by Katherine Grady for FBC and the Forum in October — two topics, one great speaker, all in-state.

One of our members, Phil Sperling of Printco, attended Katherine Grady's presentation to the FBC on October 20. He reported finding the presentation relevant and valuable for his needs. He also found it interesting to see how that Center works and to meet some of their people.

What did you miss?

If you missed any of the past programs, you missed a lot of excellent discussions and best practices from presenters and your peers.

Topics such as planning for the unexpected, using a board, mentoring and coaching, developing the next generation, selling the business, succession planning, and leadership are examples of those recordings waiting for you in the *Members Only* section of the Forum's web site.

The *Members Only* password was recently changed. Call the office for the updated information.

Director's Column

Susan Schierstedt



Each year it is my responsibility, with the assistance of the entire Forum team, to make an annual report to the Board and the membership. The 13th annual report for fiscal year 2009 is now complete. It highlights the events of the year, reports on the Forum's financial position, and identifies future challenges.

The Forum's 2009 Annual Report is available on our website and as a printed document upon request. We are proud of the organization that the Forum has become with the help of each of our members and sponsors. I invite you to read the report and to take pride in your Forum.

Sue

Program Calendar—2009—2010

Wisconsin Family Business Forum

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Dec 1 3:00 — 6:00 pm	<i>WFBF Business Expo & Holiday Reception</i>	Program Committee & R&R Committee
Jan 26 1:00 — 5:00 pm	<i>Growing the Family Business: stories from the trenches</i>	Emcee: Thom Cody With Family Business Owners
Mar 24 1:00 — 5:00 pm	<i>Fostering Healthy Communications</i>	Dean R. Fowler Dean Fowler Associates

Register on-line at <http://wfbf.uwosh.edu> — [Programs/Registrations link](#)

Family Business Center at UW-Madison

Dec 8 8:30 am – 11:30 am	<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
Jan 28 3:30—6:00 pm	<i>Estate Taxes and the Family Business: How to Plan for Succession When the Rules Keep Changing</i>	Bud Smith DeWitt Ross & Steven
Mar 16 8:30—11:30 am	<i>Once Upon a Family Legacy — video stories that spark a path to the future</i>	Kathy Wiseman Working Systems

Register on-line at <http://wfbf.uwosh.edu> — [Alliance link](#)

Thank you all for your commitment to the Forum, your continual feedback, and your support. It is my pleasure to work for and with you!

The Forum thanks the following sponsors for contributing significant value to keep the Forum at the forefront of family business programs, worldwide:



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