

THE RECORD

Published by the National Tooling and Machining Association



FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE SAFETY

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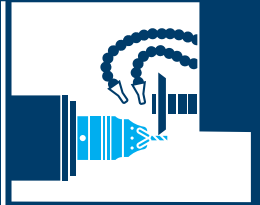
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THE RECORD

OPERATIONS & EDITORIAL

Roger Atkins, President
Doug DeRose, Editor

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Upcoming NTMA National Events



MFG Career Summit

NTMA Connect - All Virtual Conference
Wednesday, May 12 - Friday, May 14, 2021



NTMA Summer Conference

NTMA Connect - All Virtual Conference
Monday, June 14 - Tuesday, June 15, 2021



Emerging Leaders Conference

Wednesday, September 8 - Friday, September 10, 2021
Phoenix, AZ



Manufacturing Engage™ 2021

Tuesday, October 26 – Friday, October 29, 2021
Old Alexandria, VA

DATES AND LOCATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

What's Your Story?

Send Us Your Story

Each issue of The Record will feature stories from members – and we want to hear from you. Send us stories of success, or those that fit the theme of the month's issue. The submission deadline is the first of the month prior to publication.

Contact Kelly LaMarca at klamarca@ntma.org.

Upcoming Record Themes

May

Reshoring: Continuing the Momentum

June

Midyear Analysis

July

Emerging Leaders Rising



PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

As we start the second quarter of the year, we turn our focus to “Safety” – the theme for this month’s Record. I Googled the word safety, and one version said, “A safe and healthy workplace not only protects workers from injury and illness, it can also lower injury/illness costs, reduce absenteeism and turnover, increase productivity and quality, and raise employee morale. In other words, safety is good for business.” This definition is obviously directed at the workplace and I really like the last sentence:

“In other words, safety is good for business.”

I believe that to be so true. Bottom line: safety covers a wide range of issues from the front door of our businesses to the back door and everywhere in between.

Just one short year ago, we looked at safety and keeping our workplaces safe from accidents. And yet today, due to the pandemic, safety covers so much more. If you have been in the business for a long time like some of us, you have unfortunately seen and experienced multiple accidents that could have and

should have been avoided. Today, we are challenged by new and increased requirements of safety - such as social distancing, cleaning, disinfecting, temperature checks, masks, and controlling the size of gatherings - just to address the pandemic.

In saying that, our employees are our most important assets, and, in keeping them safe in today’s environment, the scope of our responsibilities has increased. Those responsibilities no longer just include the protection from physical harm side of safety that you, as a company owner or manager are challenged by, but also the harms of Cyber Ransomware, Social and Political Discourse, Environmental issues, and of plenty others.

While I may be preaching to the choir, it never hurts for us to be reminded about the important parts of our businesses that we can easily overlook when things are working smoothly. Safety is one of those things that, if policies are in place and followed, can make you an employer of choice. Keeping our eye on the ball always is the best way to protect our employees, our companies, and our customers.

We have great industry partners that specialize in safety related products that can help protect you – while potentially streamlining the safety process.

Let us not let safety or the lack of, ever be a surprise to us. These are the type surprises we eliminate - so we can have celebrations of accomplishments, because of our safety records. My advice from years of experience is to keep safety at the forefront of all actions within your company. Like most things in business, you can improve on what you measure. MEASURE YOUR SAFETY RECORD. It is a factor in pricing, delivery, and profits - none of which can afford to be negatively affected. As stated above, “safety is good for business.”

Stay the course and remember, **WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER.**

Roger Atkins, President - NTMA



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Do you know a driven, resourceful, and innovative student in the United States looking to explore a post-secondary educational pathway to a successful career in manufacturing?

If yes, the National Tooling & Machining Foundation Scholarship awards scholarships up to \$2500 to graduating high school seniors, undergraduates and graduate students pursuing two-year, four-year or advanced degrees in manufacturing or engineering.

Manufacture their future and encourage them apply for an NTMF scholarship by April 1, 2021. Information about the scholarship program, along with the link to the online application form, is available at www.ntma.org/initiative/foundation. A recommendation by an NTMA Member in good standing is required for each student applicant.

For more information or questions, contact Bill Padnos at bpadnos@ntma.org.



How NTMA Members Stay Connected During Unprecedented Times



The manufacturing industry continues to grow and thrive in the face of uncertain times – but staying connected with your peers and fellow NTMA members has never been more important. While we continue to navigate the nation's reopening, as well as new concerns and issues, we can still come together virtually.

NTMA continues hosting bi-weekly "Member Drop-Ins" – unique opportunities for our members to meet and discuss complex problems, and to brainstorm ideas and solutions alongside fellow NTMA Members.

These Drop-Ins have been fantastic ways to keep our members connected – and we have brought

in proven industry experts to join the discussions, bringing important knowledge, key information, and perspectives that are important for our member shops to learn about.

Upcoming Member Drop-Ins are scheduled on the following dates: May 11, 2pm EDT; May 25, 2pm EDT;

Please check your email and our social feeds for future invites, or contact NTMA's Member & Chapter Relations Manager, Kelly LaMarca at klamarca@ntma.org or (216) 264-2837.

We hope to see you on the next call!

"This virtual roundtable has been very beneficial to the members who have attended and we encourage you to take advantage of this quick, easy, and free networking opportunity. The Drop-Ins have been very informational for me and have helped me keep in touch with membership...I think it has really helped me get to know and interact with different members across the country. I see many old friends there as well as making some new ones. The NTMA remains a very important organization for Blaser and we will remain committed to participation in events."

Drew Borders
Business Development Manager, Global Markets
Blaser Swisslube Inc.

Essential Resilience: How Small-and Medium-Sized Manufacturers Survived and Served Americans During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Caitlin Sickles, Principal at Policy Resolution Group at Bracewell LLP

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the American manufacturing sector. Three manufacturing CEOs and members of the National Tooling and Machining Association: Kristin Carlson, President of Massachusetts-based Peerless Precision, Inc.; Justin Quinn, President of Colorado-based Focused On Machining; and Kevin Beach, General Manager of Arizona-based R&D Manco, sat down to share their experiences. Their answers have been edited for length and clarity.



1. How did the COVID-19 pandemic change your work?

Kristin Carlson (KC): Many of our company's clients are in the defense industry, so we did not experience the business slowdown that some manufacturers did. As a result, the biggest changes for us were in safety. For example, we require face masks on the shop floor and in other congregate settings. We enforce physical

distancing, including ensuring space between workspaces and, in some cases, installing barriers for an added layer of protection. We have hand sanitizer stations throughout the facility; disinfect surfaces frequently, including machines at the beginning and end of shifts; and bring in professionals for a weekly deep cleaning.

We also deployed our technology to improve safety for others. From April – June of 2020, we used our Markforged Onyx 3D Printer to produce “ear savers” and mask extenders, which we donated to first responders, front line healthcare workers, and anyone working with the public.

2. One thing the pandemic showed us all is the importance of manufacturing to producing the products that keep Americans safe and comfortable. What does it mean to you to be an essential business?

Kevin Beach (KB): We take great pride in being an essential business. When everyone was closing down, we stayed open to keep our country safe.

Justin Quinn (JQ): We realized that many of our customers are more essential than we even thought. We have many customers in the food and beverage processing industry that had business increases as more Americans stayed home to stay safe.

KC: We were able to stay open as an essential business because we manufacture some components for products considered vital to stopping the spread of COVID-19. For example, we manufacture a component for thermal imaging cameras which were repurposed for elevated body temperature detection. We also make parts used in centrifuges for the deployment of vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine. These items are vital in both helping to minimize the spread of the virus and helping to protect all of us from it.

JQ: All of our employees are extremely grateful to be working in manufacturing. We've worked hard to meet

customers' demands and, as a result, we've been able to implement a 401K program and increase health benefits for the shop.

KC: This past year has really shown how important it is to have a diverse, robust, US manufacturing sector. When the global supply chain came to a halt, we couldn't just sit around waiting to see when things would go back to “normal” and items from overseas would start shipping again. American manufacturing flexibility and ingenuity stepped up and found ways to retool in order to produce those essential items that were so hard to find.

3. It is in challenging times that people lean on each other and find strength in their networks and communities. How have you found support in your industry trade association, NTMA, during the pandemic?

JQ: Early during the pandemic, when there weren't many guidelines, the manufacturing community developed many best practices about how to be creative and make safe workplaces. All of those ideas were openly shared with each other.

KB: Being able to reach out to other NTMA members to ask for advice was extremely helpful. We're all in this together and need to help when we can.

JQ: I witnessed numerous occasions where shops that were very busy turned to shops that weren't so busy to help get work done.

KC: The NTMA really stepped up in helping its members during these trying times, particularly providing updates on new policies like the CARES Act and answering questions about PPP loans. That information made members feel supported. The NTMA made it easier for all of us to be “together.”

NTMA MEMBERS

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New Member Highlights



Cleveland Chapter Member

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Connecticut Chapter Member

Integrity Mfg., LLC was founded in March of 1998 by Jim Gadoury. Jim started out by himself, in an industry that he knew like the back of his hand. He began with one customer, making progressive bottle cap tooling. Jim's natural talent led into specializing in High Precision ID/OD and Flat Surface Grinding. Double Disc Grinding and Lapping were added to meet the needs of Integrity's growing customer base. Best quality, price, and delivery are the core values that facilitated that growth.

Today, Integrity Mfg., LLC continues growth and development under Scott Beaulieu. Scott began his manufacturing career under Jim's tutelage. He continued gaining experience, both as a machinist and as a process engineer, with another local manufacturer. He returned to Integrity in 2018, perfectly aligned to take the reins when Jim was ready to retire. Scott's commitment to the future of manufacturing is inspiring new talent, while his respect for the history of manufacturing makes him also value the experienced workers.



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Emerging Leaders Rising - 2021 Class Nominations

We are now taking nominations from managers and supervisors of talented manufacturing professionals who show leadership promise for the future of the manufacturing industry to be selected for the EL Rising 2021 class. Up to 15 individuals will be selected to join the EL Rising 2021 class, offering them an opportunity to connect with one another, gain valuable recognition, and develop their skills and knowledge throughout the year.

The selected individuals will be recognized in the July issue of *The Record*, with their photo, professional information, and their accomplishments.

The EL Rising 2021 class will be invited to attend **Engage 2021** at a special rate and will be recognized on stage during the awards ceremony. They will also be invited to attend the 2021 Emerging Leaders Conference, where they can continue to grow and learn in this great profession.

Nominations for the EL Rising 2021 class are open to all regular members, including our National Associates. **The process to nominate is simple:** Email Kristen Hrusch (khrusch@ntma.org) with the following information by **Friday, May 14, 2021:**

- *Name of nominee*
- *Company name*
- *Contact information for nominee*
- *Achievements and contributions*
- *Any additional information that is pertinent*

The group will be notified by the first week in June, in order to obtain more details for the July issue of *The Record*.

Please do not delay - nominate your outstanding Emerging Leaders today!

NTMA Business Conditions Report Now Available

The latest NTMA Business Conditions Report, dated December 31, 2020, is now available! This report covers the second half of 2020, including projections for the first half of 2021 and a geographical snapshot of business trends and conditions in the special tooling and machining industry.

We offer the Business Conditions Report twice each year to help you understand where your best opportunities may be, and what you may expect to face in your business. The report contains survey

results gathered from contract manufacturing companies—your peers—broken down by industry segment and geographic region, with comments and insight into current and expected business conditions. Information was gathered from 122 NTMA member companies – up from 111 from the prior report in June 2020.

Results indicate that overall business conditions during the 6-month period ending December 31, 2020 were “Good to Excellent” for 55% of respondents, up

from the previous report of 39% ending June 2020. Looking ahead, 58% are projecting that the next six months will bring a “Moderate-to-Substantial Increase” in business conditions, up from 46% ending in June 2020. Of all the companies participating, 83% are actively soliciting new customers.

We appreciate our members' support of this benchmarking survey. **You can access the December 2020 Business Conditions Report at: <https://ntma.org/resources/reports/business-conditions/>**



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NTMA Member Spotlight: Denver Precision Products

Each month, NTMA will be highlighting our members – and taking a look at their perspectives and what their businesses are doing in the industry today.

Member: Amy Primrose

Company Name: Denver Precision Products –
Broomfield, CO

What NTMA Chapter do you belong to?
Rocky Mountain Chapter

What does your company specialize in?
Swiss CNC turning

How long have you been a member of NTMA?
Approximately 3 years

What do you enjoy most about being a member of the NTMA?
Chapter Meetings and Events, and Networking

How have you pivoted through COVID to ensure continued success?

Just kept working and following new guidelines established by our state.

What's one thing – either industry related or not – you learned in the last month?

I learned how to discuss the benefits of landing a prospective customer and weighing the complexity of making the job with key personnel in the shop.

What does the future of manufacturing look like to you over the next 5 years?

We'll continue services for long term customers as we transition ownership down to the next generation.

Interested in being featured?

Have a member you want to spotlight?

Contact Kelly LaMarca: klamarca@ntma.org

One Voice: Federal Government Advocacy Program

The manufacturing industry continues to navigate the unique challenges and changes brought on by the last year – and it remains important to have a partner in advocacy. NTMA continues to work closely with the team at One Voice: the combined federal government advocacy program representing small and medium-sized business manufacturing in America.

In addition to providing guidance on COVID-19 regulations and uncertainties, One Voice has a wealth of fantastic resources, developed to help keep your shop informed and prepared for whatever comes next. This has included virtual bi-weekly webinars, news releases, educational materials, and the Talking with One Voice Podcast.



**Two
Minutes
WITH
One Voice**



Now, you can also receive a concise explanation of everything going on in Washington, D.C. with “Two Minutes with Voice,” a bite-size weekly video hosted by various members of The Franklin Partnership and the Policy Resolution Group at Bracewell LLP. Each episode is uploaded to the NTMA YouTube channel – and shared through our social channels.

We hope you continue to utilize this key partner in One Voice—one that ensures that millions of manufacturers across the country have their voices heard.

Please Visit www.metalworkingadvocate.org for more information.



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COVID-19:

NEW REALITIES, NEW REGULATIONS NEW COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

BY CAITLIN SICKLES, PRINCIPAL AT POLICY RESOLUTION GROUP AT BRACEWELL LLP

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many new realities and, with them, new government regulations. Among the challenges caused by a once-in-a-century global pandemic is the fact that no one really knows what to expect or how a virus will evolve. This has led government regulators, at federal, state, and local levels, to continuously issue ever-evolving workplace rules and restrictions.

Manufacturing is among the most heavily regulated sectors and manufacturers are no strangers to the government getting involved in their businesses. In fact, at One Voice for Manufacturing, we often refer to the federal government as “your not-so-silent business partner.”

Today, what manufacturers need above all else is stability and predictability, valuable but elusive commodities as the country copes with COVID-19. NTMA is dedicated to providing some clarity amid the chaos for our members. For example, over a few weeks around this time last year, NTMA sent more than forty state government closing orders to members to keep them informed.

These updates are reflective of what NTMA knows to be true: communication was and is key in a time of crisis. But what happens when the government – federal, state, and local – keeps changing the rules? How do you accurately and effectively communicate to your employees, your family, and community? These are the questions manufacturers still face one year later and likely will for the foreseeable future.

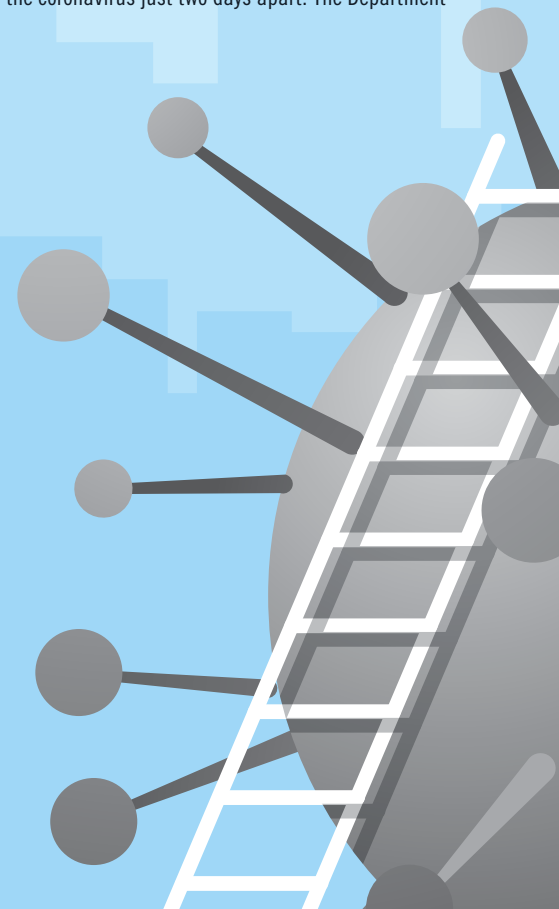
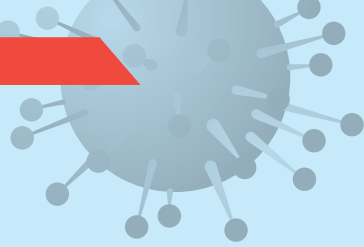
One place to start is looking at recently enacted policies. One of President Biden’s first actions upon taking office included requiring OSHA to issue tighter workplace safety guidance, followed by an Emergency Temporary Standard. The ETS is binding, across all states and most workplaces. It has the power of enforcement as President Biden also stated his intention to double the number of OSHA inspectors. The NTMA had worked with the previous administration on maintaining industry specific guidelines as we firmly believe the same rules for a 5,000 square foot restaurant should not apply to a 100,000 square foot manufacturing plant. One size fits all regulations rarely work as intended, especially for small businesses who lack the HR resources of their much larger competitors.

However, we do not expect the regulators to lessen the load anytime soon and anticipate that the rules and guidelines at all levels of government will continue to evolve with the virus.

Part of this change can be linked to media and public pressure. For example, on March 4, the *Wall Street Journal* reported a 4,000-word story titled, “OSHA’s Job Is Workplace Safety. In the Covid-19 Pandemic, It Often Struggled.” The WSJ identified more than 1,000 worker deaths from COVID-19 linked to workplace transmission but not investigated by OSHA. Among the critiques leveled at OSHA and other regulators included, “Federal and state agencies conducted fewer inspections than in the past and often handled coronavirus complaints through no more than an exchange of letters.”

Here in Washington, we fully expect the current administration to increase their enforcement activities over those of their predecessors. They will also look to make examples of certain businesses that do not comply with the letter or the spirit of workplace safety laws.

For example, in late February, OSHA cited a Missouri auto parts manufacturer for two machine operators who jointly operated a press, and tested positive for the coronavirus just two days apart. The Department





of Labor said the business failed to maintain a safe workspace under OSHA's general duty clause and found that, "the company failed to implement use of face masks and social distancing properly throughout the workplace until after the death of an employee." Beyond federal changes, manufacturers also need to contend with state and local guidance. More than twenty states now have their own coronavirus-related workplace safety guidelines.

For example, California recently issued an update to its own Emergency Temporary Standard. States like California and Virginia are sometimes held up as models for broader action, along with states like Michigan and others which have enforceable standards under their state OSHA. (Note that regulations in some states including Michigan and

Oregon differentiate not only by industry but also by exposure risk level, which can help those subject to regulation to not face as broad of restrictions as in states like California). Factor in local regulations and manufacturers must navigate a pretty tangled web.

This brings us back to communications. When companies are grappling with confusing, and even conflicting, information, NTMA steps into the void with real, trustworthy information.

To date, NTMA's Washington, DC-based advocacy team has held more than twenty-five COVID-19 webinars bringing the latest information to members. Find all previous webinars, as well as a wide-range of reference materials, on the One Voice dedicated COVID-19 response website: www.onevoiceinfo.org. On the site, users can even find information from OSHA, the CDC, and other government agencies that may prove useful for sharing with employees and others.

Additionally, NTMA's advocacy team offers a weekly brief video series and bi-weekly longer podcast episodes to help businesses keep up with the evolving regulations and how to best comply with them. Find the videos – Two Minutes with One Voice – on the NTMA YouTube channel and the podcast – Talking with One Voice – on Apple, Google, Spotify, Stitcher, or anywhere else you get your podcasts.

As the nation copes with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting government regulations, NTMA continues to stand with members, helping them track and translate the language of government into the real work of business.

Doubling Your Bottom Line

By Michael Watkins, MBA/JD, EBITDA Growth Systems

What would you do with the extra money if you were able to double the bottom-line profits of your company? You should take a minute to visualize what that might look like. Would you put more into savings for retirement? Would you put more into a college savings account? Would you purchase a vacation home? What would you do with the extra money?

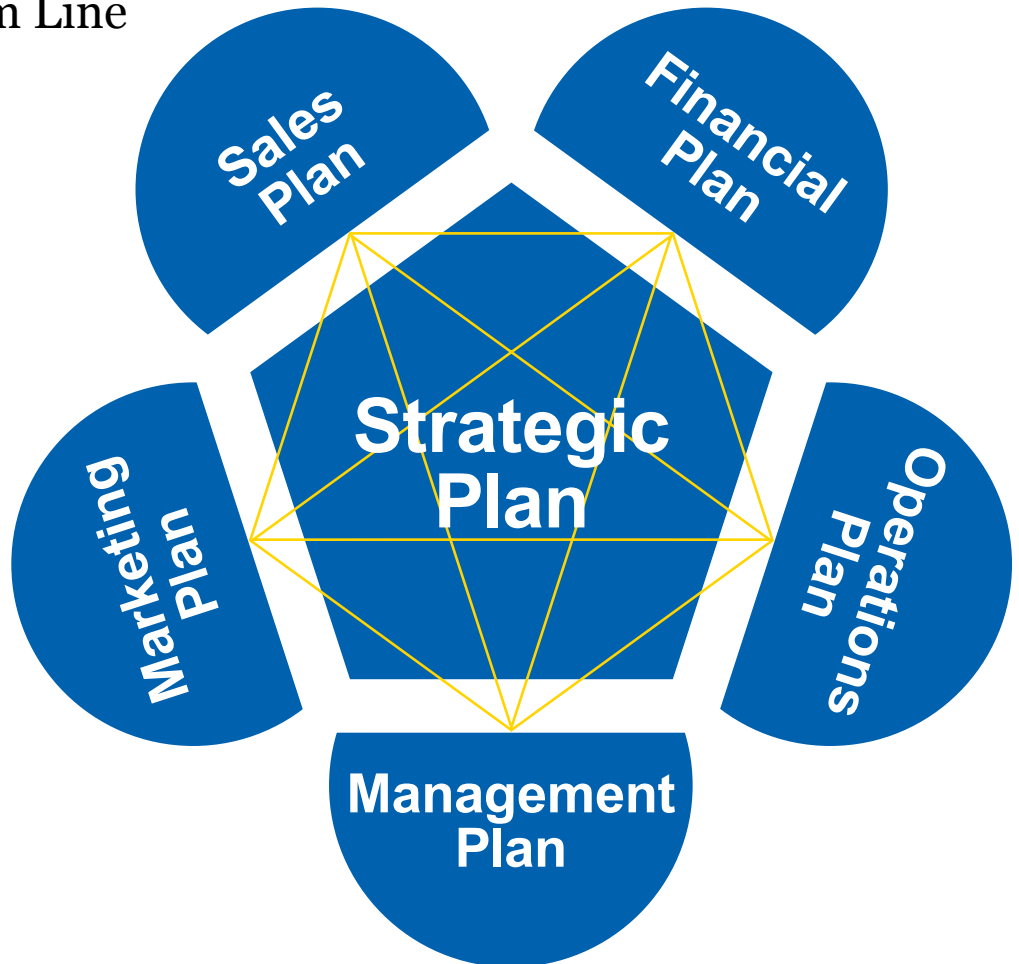
Let me be clear, the doubling of your bottom-line profits is well within your reach.

Most small-to-medium sized (SMB) manufacturers believe that they must double their top-line revenue in order to double their bottom-line profits. The fact of the matter is the doubling of profits is rarely associated with the doubling of revenues. The doubling of profits should come with a modest increase in revenues when coupled with an even sharper increase in gross margins. And while there may be any number of possible approaches to accomplish this, the approach that we employ at EBITDA Growth Systems (EGS) has yielded a doubling of profits for virtually every client that we have encountered.

The approach leverages a really powerful equation – Technical Skills X Business Acumen = Success. On a scale of 1-10, it has been our experience that SMB manufacturers rate an 8-9 in terms of Technical Skills. In other words, they typically know how to machine parts. It has also been our experience that SMB manufacturers rate a 2-4 in terms of Business Acumen. Because this is an equation, as Business Acumen approaches zero, so does the likelihood of success (profits).

Business Acumen means different things to different people. For the purposes of the equation, Business Acumen may be defined as an in-depth understanding of how your business works, how it makes money, and how strategies and decisions impact financial results.

Developing Business Acumen begins with a 1-3 year Strategic Plan for the business. The Strategic Plan provides the business with direction and becomes its “true north.”



Once the 1-3 year strategy has been established, five tactical plans will need to be developed:

1. Financial Plan
2. Sales Plan
3. Marketing Plan
4. Operations Plan
5. Management Plan

These plans will be executed in the current fiscal year and should move the business forward toward its strategic goals.

The Financial Plan defines your revenue and profitability goals for the fiscal year. Your revenue goals dictate the contents of your Sales Plan. Your Marketing Plan identifies the number of leads, and the various lead generation tactics, that will be required in order for you to achieve your sales goals. The Financial Plan also defines the gross profit and operating profit goals for the fiscal year. Your

Operations Plan lays out the labor, materials, third party processes, etc.— requirements that will be necessary to yield profitable production processes. Your Management Plan addresses the frontline management development, workforce planning, and employee engagement strategies that are necessary for you to effectively attract and retain talent.

It is the interplay between these five plans that create Business Acumen!

Get Business Acumen right and your chances of success – the doubling of profits – increase dramatically. Get it wrong and you will continue to experience the single digit profitability that is so prevalent in our industry.

So, what would you do with the extra money if you were able to double the bottom-line profits of your company? Start thinking about that because it is well within your reach.

Economic Outlook: an Economy Working to Reopen

With expectations of state mandated restrictions easing, and the economy slowly starting to open back up, investors will likely want to watch the rates markets to see if higher rates continue to put pressure on stocks. We should expect to see some higher levels in yields with stronger economic growth being factored into the bond market. However, it is not just higher rates that tend to impact stocks, but also the speed in which they move higher. Inflation expectations have also begun to move higher over the past month, adding an additional headwind to equities.

With Johnson & Johnson receiving FDA emergency approval for its COVID-19 vaccine, the number of

people getting access to vaccines should increase in March, leading us closer to broader immunity. Production of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines is expected to ramp up, so we could see more states lower their age restrictions, making these vaccines more readily available to a much wider portion of the US population.

Not only will we see an increase in vaccinations, but we also expect the Biden COVID-19 relief bill to be passed by Congress, setting the stage for additional monetary support for individuals, families, small businesses and municipalities.



Personal incomes and spending have been boosted by previous stimulus checks, and the next round could be the largest one yet.

Learn more from CIBC Private Wealth Management: <https://private-wealth.us.cibc.com/>

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Contact Bill Padnos at bpadnos@ntma.org for more information.



How to Write a Great Manufacturing Case Study

By Rob Felber, Owner & Marketing Executive, Felber PR & Marketing

Case studies provide your manufacturing company with an incredible opportunity to showcase your expertise, product value, and customer service. While testimonials are great, case studies go a step above by highlighting a customer story from start to finish. Continue reading to learn some key tips to make your case studies stand out and resonate with your prospects.

1. Write About Your Most Relatable Customer Story

Do you have a clear understanding of who your ideal prospects are? Check out our blog, “Why Developing Buyer Personas,” is Invaluable for Manufacturers to get a crystal clear vision of the ideal prospects you’d like to close as customers. When your prospects read your case studies, the goal is to have them resonate with the story.

To do this, we suggest highlighting an industry-specific need the customer had and explain how your product or service was the solution. Ultimately, you want your ideal prospects to read the case study and say “I have that same problem” or “If they helped XYZ Company, they must be a trusted industry supplier.”

2. Don't Cut Out the Details

Unlike a testimonial, a case study is meant to be in a long format. An excellent case study really allows your audience to get to know your customer, understands your company's relationship with them, and fully explains in detail your work together.

Make sure in your case study that you explain the challenge your customer had and how you helped them with their unique goals and challenges. If you and the customer went back and forth with a few design iterations before landing on the final part design, don't cut that out. Allow your readers to see the full picture and understand all that went into the project. Need help writing content? Our experienced writers are available to help.

3. Legitimize the Story with Metrics and Visuals

To have an effective case study that your prospects will read and engage with your company, it is essential to include metrics to legitimize your story. Did you create a product in record time? Include in the story how much quicker you got your solution to your customer. Did switching their product manufacturing from another process to your process save them

money? Include a quote from your customer talking about cost-savings.

Include tangible results so your readers have a clear understanding of what you could do for them. When you are done writing your story (and it's been approved by your customer to go live), don't forget to add customer-approved, high-resolution visuals or videos. Photos, infographics, and videos are a phenomenal way to enhance your story and get your message across to prospects.

Are you saying to yourself, this is great but I'll never be able to get my customers to participate in case studies? Don't fret. Check out our blog, “How to Convince Your Stubborn Manufacturing Customers to Participate in Case Studies” for our tried and true tips to get them to say yes!

Concerned your staff of engineers can't write? Not to worry. Our experienced writers will help you unlock the content vault. Since 1993, we've developed blogs, case studies, white papers, press releases, literature, and e-Books for business-to-business manufacturers.

Give me a call: Rob Felber (330) 963-3664 or RobFelber@FelberPR.com



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The New Administration: What Employers Can Expect in 2021 and Beyond

By Thomas O. McCarthy, McMahon Berger, P.C.

As a result of President Biden's election, employers can expect numerous changes in the laws and regulations that affect their businesses on a daily basis. The following addresses some of the more significant areas that will be affected.

Almost immediately upon taking office, President Biden signaled a change in how administrative agencies would be addressing workplace issues. One of his first acts was to terminate the General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), an act contrary to tradition and a strong indication the NLRB will reverse course and pursue a pro-union and pro-employee agenda. Further proof of this intent lies in the withdrawal of several NLRB policies and memoranda issued by the prior administration that tended to favor employers. In response, employers would be wise to have their existing policies and employee handbooks reviewed by competent labor counsel in light of anticipated stricter scrutiny by the NLRB over the next four years.

Further, efforts will increase in Congress to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, legislation which passed the U.S. House in 2020 but did not obtain passage in the Senate. If passed, this law would make it easier for unions to organize employees by changing the definition of employer and employee, legalizing intermittent and solidarity strikes, implementing mandatory union membership fees regardless of a state's right-to-work laws, and making it unlawful to require attendance at company meetings where union organizing is being discussed. In addition, if passed, the law would assess monetary penalties against employers who commit unfair labor practices.

Also of significance is the change in leadership at the Department of Labor, where former Boston mayor Marty Walsh has been appointed as the Secretary of Labor. Mr. Walsh formerly was the leader of Boston's Building and Construction Trades' Council, which represents major unions in the construction industry. Mr. Walsh's selection evidences a clear intent to shift focus toward employee protections such as raising the federal minimum wage, eliminating employee misclassification as independent contractors, and increasing enforcement of existing and anticipated safety policies, such as by hiring more inspectors at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Employers should take the time now to conduct a thorough audit of their existing pay practices and policies to ensure compliance with federal and state wage and hour laws, such as employee/independent contractor classification, overtime, and exempt/non-exempt issues.

Additional evidence of the new administration's pro-employee agenda can be seen in the numerous executive orders the President signed within his first few days of taking office. Although generally, executive orders apply only to the federal workplace, including federal contractors, they tend to demonstrate the administration's intent with respect to policy. For example, the President signed several executive orders reversing orders signed by the previous administration, as well as numerous directives addressing the pandemic, such as requiring face coverings in federal facilities, opening schools, COVID testing, developing a Pandemic Testing Board, and travel requirements and restrictions, both domestically and internationally.

Other significant executive orders include prohibiting discrimination against individuals because of sexual orientation and gender identity, consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court's 2020 decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, advancing racial equity, workplace safety guidance, minimum wage and collective bargaining rights for federal workers, and coordination of efforts with safety agencies, unions, and industry groups to educate workers on their rights with respect to safe workplaces.

Finally, on the paid leave front, employers can expect renewed efforts to pass legislation at the federal level to implement paid medical and/or family leave. Currently, many states and municipalities across the U.S. have instituted some form of paid sick, medical, and/or family leave for employees. Members of both parties have stated they would support federal legislation requiring such paid leave.

In summary, employers should start preparing now for changes in how federal and state agencies investigate and pursue alleged violations of labor and employment laws and regulations. Reviewing company policies and procedures, training supervisors and employees, and conducting internal audits of existing practices are critical to ensuring compliance and minimizing potential liability.

Helping Fill the Skills Gap



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A powerful tool to help you identify and hire the right people for the role.

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Test Sections include Mechanical and Spatial Relations, Mechanical Reasoning, Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Reasoning

For more information, visit <https://ntma.org/programs/workforce-development/mechanical-aptitude-test>.



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**1. Safety 2. Sort 3. Set in Order
4. Shine 5. Standardize 6. Sustain**
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For more information, please contact Linda Warner at lwarner@ntma.org or 216-264-2824.

Applications and self-assessment documents can be found here: <https://ntma.org/ntma-awards>

Applications should be sent to 6Saward@ntma.org

Training: Cost or Investment?

By Tom Sothard, NTMA Executive Committee Member

This two-part series on the value of training is written by Tom Sothard. Tom Sothard is an External NTMA Executive Committee Member with 37 years of experience in the manufacturing industry – most recently as President of the Americas Region for Konecranes, Inc.

The two most important assets any company has are its employees and customers. This statement is rarely challenged and most people will say, “nothing new.” However, not all companies operate with this understanding – some may talk the talk but not walk the walk!

Early in my career, as I was developing the business I worked and grew for over 37 years, I understood the concept but I didn't have the finances or understanding on how to invest in my people. Requiring technical training was most apparent as we grew and needed people who had technical skills – such as electrical, mechanical, hydraulics, controls, and machining knowledge. As we grew, the biggest impediment to our growth was the ability to recruit and maintain employees that had these skills – and making this a human resources priority. At that time, we didn't have an internal training department so obtaining people who had these skills was vital to meet customer expectations. Finding and recruiting resources that had these skills was no easy task. It became obvious that I needed to develop an apprentice program to train the specific skills required to support our customers and meet the growing demand.

I started by working with the state to develop an apprentice program; then hired my first technical trainer. The biggest move was to make training an integral part of our budgeting process. Even with a conservative budget it was scary, to say the least, because the program's cost was almost as much as my bottom line the previous year. Fast forward to the remarkable outcome: our top and bottom line grew significantly faster the more we invested into training our technical resources. It was quite clear that training wasn't raising costs; rather it was a clear investment with a significant return.

I could go on and on about our technical training programs, but this isn't the primary message. Though all types of training are important in creating a world class shop, let's talk about leadership development and its value to your company.

Imagine investing \$500k into a new machine, and then thousands more into tooling and training just to bring it on line. Surely, with this type of investment, you make sure that the equipment is maintained and the operators are well trained to maximize and protect your investment. However, let's say the new machine wasn't maintained and you have a very expensive repair that would have been preventable - if the correct maintenance was performed.

What is your first reaction? Smile and just accept the mistake? Fire those responsible? Call the OEM and blame them?

Now, another scenario: you've invested a lot of money on training operators but you keep losing them to competitors. What do you do? Pay them more money to keep them, or give them more time off? Or, perhaps, try to understand why they left?

Study after study show the reason people leave companies isn't money, even in cases where they are paid competitive wages, although it is easy to think so. Rather, people leave bosses not companies.

Why do I think this is?

Looking back on my career, the biggest mistake I made was placing people into leadership positions that I hadn't fully prepared. This often had a rippling effect and I had significant operational and turnover problems. The cost of turnover is difficult to measure, but it is significant. So, what did I do? After realizing that I was the problem, I went back to what I knew was most important: my people.

The shift in our business model was to “walk the walk.” In order to take care of our customers we needed to make sure our people were trained and the work environment was conducive to learning and respect. I needed leaders that shared the vision and were willing to dedicate their careers to develop this culture. It seems obvious, but our high growth and success blinded me to the real issue that was costing us money. We began an extensive training program



Tom Sothard, NTMA Executive Committee Member

utilizing both internal and external training programs focusing on leadership at every level.

One of the biggest mistakes companies make is to assume you only need one leader in a company, but the only place that works is on an organizational chart. Businesses need leaders in all aspects: on the floor, answering the phone, and in front of their customers. Another mistake is to assume a manager is a good leader. Unfortunately, good leaders are not always good managers! Yes, it's optimal if they are both, but understand it may not be the case – a leader needs to be able to motivate and support those they interact with daily.

When recruiting new employees we developed, with the help of external resources, a model of the attributes and skills by position that we needed in our culture to succeed. We found out that we were hiring and training some people who didn't believe in our culture of “people first.” These employees typically failed and were weeded out over time.

Our recruiting process changed to:

1. Finding the Right Person
2. Training the Individual to Be Successful
3. Growing the Business to Create Opportunities for More Success

In the meantime, where do you begin? Check out the NTMA Apprenticeship program – it's available to all members today. There are even more opportunities on the horizon as NTMA works to provide more training opportunities for your company, giving you even more chances to develop skills and help your company succeed.



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Connect With Your Local NTMA Chapter

NTMA's chapters are able to make an immeasurable impact at the local level for our members. By engaging with your local chapter, you can establish relationships with peers and colleagues in your industry, enhance your business development opportunities through networking, and promote the growth of your company's greatest asset – your employees.

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SUMMIT OVERVIEW

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Through varied virtual experiences, including general sessions, career-specific breakout sessions, Q&A forums, and exhibits, program participants will learn about:

- **Exciting, High-Tech & In-Demand Career Opportunities**
- **Amazing Benefits of Working in the Industry**
- **Dynamic Educational and Career Pathways**
- **Expert Guidance on How to Connect to a Bright Future**

Using the interactive NTMA Connect virtual platform, AMPED will offer insight into the breadth of manufacturing career opportunities, benefits of working in the industry, guidance on next steps, connections with post-secondary options, and more.

Register for free today at
www.mfgcareersummit.org*

*Please note that all attendees will need to download the NTMA Connect platform on their desktop in order to be able to access the Summit. The platform is not accessible by an iPad or mobile device.

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MAY 12-14, 2021

PROGRAM FORMAT

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28%

28% of metalworking firms rely on lean manufacturing processes to optimize their operations.²

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Registering an Apprentice Has Just Become Easier for NTMA Members

NTMA members interested in improving their training through an apprenticeship program have access to the resources they need to get started thanks to a partnership between NTMA and the Robert C. Byrd Institute (RCBI).

With the support of a federal grant, the Apprenticeship Works initiative at the RCBI helps manufacturers across the country implement and manage registered apprenticeship programs in 20 high-demand occupations, including tool & die, precision machining, and CNC operation and programming. Apprenticeship Works offers manufacturers a full

range of services to help them launch programs that fit their needs, including consulting services to develop a customized apprenticeship program, extensive frameworks for on-the-job training, and national sponsorship, which reduces the administrative load for the employer.

Apprenticeship Works is offering companies the opportunity to enroll newly registered apprentices free of charge for their first year, a savings of \$1,330 per apprentice. This includes RCBI program management and customization and tracking of on-the-job skills competencies.



Seats are limited and are being offered on a first-come basis until September 30, 2021.

NTMA members interested in learning more about Apprenticeship Works are encouraged to contact Becky Calwell, program manager at Apprenticeship Works, at bcalwell@rcbi.org.

More information about Apprenticeship Works is available at www.rcbi.org/online/apprenticeships.



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