

June, 2004



The Detailer

AWI Chicago Chapter

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A Network of Value

Imagine that yours is a mid-size company going through a growth spurt, getting more large-scale projects and, as a result, is considering adding some CNC equipment. Or let's say that you have been working mostly in the residential market dealing with designers and architects, and now you are considering starting to bid commercial jobs and work with general contractors. Or maybe your small cabinet shop is doing well and you are thinking about buying a facility to double your shop size and add a showroom area.

In any of these scenarios, picture yourself being able to talk to other owners whose shops are exactly your size and who were in exactly the same position one year ago, and that they either a) bought a new CNC machine; b) put out bids and began doing commercial work, or c) added 5,000 square feet with 1,500 dedicated to a showroom. Now picture those shop owners sitting down with you and telling you all about what worked, what didn't or what they might have done differently. That would make your business decision much easier and make you feel more informed, wouldn't it? But it sounds too good to be true, right?

Actually, wrong. Because this helpful exchange of information actually happens quite often and is as invaluable a business management tool as it sounds. It's called "networking" and it is what happens every time a shop owner steps away from his day-to-day business operations to attend any of the numerous venues available to meet with other woodworkers. If I sound like I am painting a very rosy picture, it is because I have just come back from three separate industry events in which such networking took place. Witnessing the information-sharing conversations and comments about how helpful it was made me want to remind readers of the opportunities that are a side-effect of attending almost any industry program.

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For my part, during the past month I attended CWB's Management Conference and Expo, the Architectural Woodwork Institute's annual Leadership Conference and the National Closet Group's annual meeting. At the NCG and AWI events, I heard participants testify to the valuable information they received from fellow members. In fact, in an informal survey AWI conducted among its chapters, members ranked "networking" as the second most valuable benefit of belonging to the association out of a total of 53 listed. It was valued almost twice as highly as the number three choice.

At the CWB Conference, there was no formal survey taken. But at each luncheon and during each program break, you could see attendees talking to others who either were from the same geographic area or did similar types of work, seeking each other out to share "war stories" or ask questions.

The value to be gained from exchanging information is not limited just to business owners, but also pertains to other employees as well. I could just as easily have opened this column with the scene of a project manager discussing how to handle change orders with another project manager, or with one estimator asking another how he figures man-hour requirements for his bids, or a shop foreman asking another foreman how he handles chronically tardy employees or safety training or integrating a new

employee on the shop floor, and so on. The possibilities are endless.

While industry-specific seminars or meetings are educational in themselves, the chance to network and gather information informally usually doubles the value of attending. Such opportunities are not limited to specific association meetings. There are local, regional and national tradeshow that often offer classes, as well as industry groups, educational organizations or suppliers that host educational activities. At any event that brings woodworkers together, the "break times" can be just as informative as the program itself.

Our "Industry Dates" calendar is one way to find an event that might be of interest for you or your employees. Each month we have a brief listing in the magazine, supplemented by a comprehensive list on our Web site,

<http://www.iswonline.com/events.shtml>.

For woodworking business owners or managers who tend to spend 60 hours a week or more in the shop, concentrating solely on the business at hand, there is a lot to be gained from occasionally leaving the office and spending time with your peers.

Helen Kuhl, Editor-in-Chief

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We are now selling company advertisement space for publication in future issues of The Detailer.

Prices are being set at \$25.00 for a business card size, \$50.00 for ¼ page, \$100.00 for ½ page, and \$200.00 for a full page.

Classified advertisements (i.e. want ads, machinery ads, etc) will remain free of charge and will be printed, providing space is available.

The Director's Corner

Dear Fellow Members:

Having been a board member for two terms, first as a director and now as secretary, I know first hand that your Board has worked very hard to offer better programs and opportunities for you to learn and to network. Tom Gleason became president while also starting up a new business, in itself never an easy task. Ken Kamien became a vice-president at Inter-Ocean while training to be our next president at AWI Chicago Chapter. Gary Taeger has contributed greatly as our treasurer and Joe Binder has increased our membership. Ken Kruss became a new member with Chicago Chapter and in a short time agreed to join the Board. Ed Schavitz has stepped in and helped with financial and website issues.

As this Board's current term winds down, we need to give them each a thank you for the time donated to direct our chapter through a couple of very busy years. The Board would like to put out another challenge to our membership, just like Randy Smith did with the Double Down Challenge.

We need new people with new ideas and veteran members renewing established ideas. The next two-year term for the new Board will be as challenging as the last one. Manufacturer and supplier members are needed on our Board to make our Chicago Chapter bigger and better than ever. Please contact any board member, if you are interested in meeting this challenge.

Al "Chick" Cikowski
Secretary
Chicago Chapter

Thank You to Chicago Volunteers

AWI National and the AWI Chicago Chapter both wish to thank the following local members who helped at the April CSI Expo-Constuct America 2004 AWI booth. Our local volunteers were **Ken Kamien**, Inter-Ocean Cabinet, **Laura Yermack**, Siebert Construction and Millwork and **Eric Lindroth**, Pierce Laminated Products.

Members can still help AWI National in helping to staff the AWI booth at the AIA Exposition and Convention to be held at McCormick Place on June 10th to 12th.

Members interested in assisting AWI in these events, please contact Kimberly Kennedy at AWI National (kkenn@awinet.org).

NEXT DETAILER

Deadline for the next Detailer is July 16, 2004.

Looking for classified ads, want ads, machinery ads, member news, and miscellaneous info.

Contact Debby 630-325-3634 (fax 630-325-5305) or E-mail at dheidlerawi@comcast.net

Safety Tip #4 **Fire and Explosion Hazards**

Workplace fires and explosions kill 200 and injure more than 5,000 workers each year. In 1995, more than 75,000 workplace fires cost businesses more than \$2.3 billion. Woodworking facilities are inherently prone to fires and explosions, for the following reasons:

They contain large quantities of fuel in the form of wood and wood products, sawdust, and flammable materials such as paints and stains. Operations produce large amounts of fine dust, which can be especially hazardous. It can accumulate on rafters and in unexpected spots all around your facility, far from the point of generation.

They contain ignition sources, such as potentially faulty electrical wiring, potential for the buildup of static charge when dispensing or spraying flammable liquids and employee smoking.

Possible Solutions:

Preventing the buildup of dust is one of the key means for controlling fire and explosion hazards. The principal engineering control technology for control of dust is exhaust ventilation. The primary solution is good housekeeping.

You must also:

Ensure the proper use, grounding, bonding and storage of flammable materials, such as paints, finishes, adhesives, and solvents.

Segregate tasks particularly prone to fire and explosion hazards, such as spray painting and welding.

Train employees to recognize, avoid, and correct potentially hazardous conditions and behaviors.

Never permit blow-down of accumulated dust with compressed air. Blowing dust with compressed air will create the very type of dust cloud that presents the greatest explosion hazard.

Segregate combustible and flammable materials such as lumber stock and chemical solvents from each other and from ignition sources.

If you have any questions regarding any Safety and Environmental issues that affect your company, please let us know. All questions and inquiries can be directed to Ken Kreiser at kkreiser@uscompliance.com or 952.252.3000 ext. 108. These questions will then be addressed in the following issues of The Detailer

*** AUGUST 11, 2004 ***

Tour of completed woodworking project(s) involving some of the Chicago Chapter's Manufacturing members and Supplier members that made it possible

If you have a potential project available in August--

Please contact Ken Kamien at Inter Ocean (708-343-9770)

*** OCTOBER 13, 2004 ***

Supplier Table Top Product Display Night at the Diplomat West
with the "Wood Doctor" Dr. Eugene Wengert