North Central Manufacturers with 2020 Vision
by Bob Zaruta, President/CEO, NWIRC

We're into the new year and many manufacturing companies across the region are re-igniting their visions for 2020. For a couple of companies that I visited in North Central PA before the holidays, they are steadying the course with their focus on customers and employees.

Sintergy is a manufacturer of compacted powder metal products in Reynoldsville and they shine in their ability to take a fabricated design – and redevelop as an assembled part made with pressed metal for increased durability and reduced waste. They pride themselves on supporting regional businesses and consider one of their differentiators to be their “employee experience and make it happen attitude”. Founders, President Rick Young, CFO Steve Miller, and Vice President Jason Emery, reminisced about the company starting in a Punxsutawney barn in 2002 with 15 people. They moved to their existing 42,500 square foot location ten years ago and explained how everything was carefully planned out for optimal workflow. Consideration for future expansions is a clear sign of their forward thinking. They’ve expanded twice since then and you could see excitement and passion for the company’s progress as Steve and Facilities Director Roger Jones showed me around. During the tour, three themes stood out the most regarding the company’s focus: employees, technology, and sustainability (being green).

Their 68 employees are engaged and benefit from incentives that help the company reduce attendance issues and focus on the bottom line. This includes offering vouchers to employees for zero call-offs during a pay period which apply towards a monthly attendance bonus, as well as profit sharing based on a percentage of profit and allocated based on employee’s earnings. A calendar in the facility break room displays dates for bonus and profit- sharing distributions to keep employees excited and on the right track.

They buy local whenever they can, from capital equipment to raw materials, including custom presses and sintering furnaces from Gasbarre Products in DuBois (my next stop later that day). Sintergy spent over $8M locally last year. The plant is full of automation, including a row of custom presses by Gasbarre, each with its own crane for loading raw material for both efficiency and employee safety. Regarding some of their newest technology, machine vision, Steve said, “this is amazing technology that allows us to save time and improve accuracy for quality inspections”.

Sintergy is very conscientious about a sustainable environment. Their green scrap is all re-used, so it’s actually not considered scrap. They repurpose hexagon boxes produced by a local recycling company for holding raw material, but then a local lumbering company will turn the box into a square for shipping finished products to customers. They recycle their water and also allow hot water from the furnaces to cool naturally in a holding area that helps keep the loading dock area warm. Most recently, they estimate saving approximately $3K per month since replacing their facility lighting with LEDs.

As mentioned, Sintergy is a customer of Gasbarre Products in DuBois. Gasbarre started in 1973 as a manufacturer of mechanical presses. Throughout the years, they have diversified by purchasing a furnace company and augmenting with tooling- all to align with their powder metal clients in the region and around the world. This diversification

Continued on page 2
Continued from page 1

continues as they work with clients on other automation solutions that are connected to working with their products.

Going into 2020, Gasbarre continues their focus on community, their employees, and continuous improvement. They recently completed a ‘design sprint’, the first phase of an operational excellence project with NWIRC and the expertise of Max Krug of Future State Engineering. Leadership felt it was imperative to engage key employees in the project early on to help with the direction. Heath Jenkins, President of Press and Automation, said they are always looking to become better in operations, do things more efficiently, and become more profitable. He said the recent design sprint project was important for them to create a roadmap for future improvements and as a result they “identified 30 key processes to focus on that, when optimized, will have an outsized and positive ripple effect throughout the organization”. He acknowledged his appreciation for organizations in the region, such as NWIRC, to point companies in the right direction for available resources.

Gasbarre continues to work on new ideas to keep powder metal competitive in North Central PA. Heath said, “we see what powered metal (PM) markets are doing across the US and world-wide, so we see ourselves in bridging the gap between traditional PM and what PM will be in the future.”

Sintergy and Gasbarre, just two of the companies in our region with a clear vision for 2020.

Leveraging the Power of LinkedIn to Grow Sales

by Patty Cisco, MBA, CEO, Marketing Essentials

In today’s business world, relationships matter more than ever. People tune out irrelevant and promotional messages, but they will engage with people and companies who are providing helpful and relevant information. These are the people they are building relationships with and they are leveraging LinkedIn. Did you know that LinkedIn:

- Operates the world’s largest professional network on the Internet.
- Has 660+ million members in over 200 countries and territories.
- Has more than 30 million companies represented.
- Has more than 20 million open jobs listed.

How to Use LinkedIn Most Effectively

LinkedIn is an extensive social platform that has several capabilities and tools that can be used for establishing personal and company pages, advertising, sponsored content, messaging and more. Here are two non-negotiable tips you must put in place if you want to gain more from LinkedIn.

Non-Negotiable Tip #1: Optimize Your Profile

One of the first steps most LinkedIn members take when seeing an article, advertisement or new connection is to click through to the profile to learn more about the sender. This is why it’s critical for you and your sales team to complete and optimize your profiles. Optimized profiles also boost the visibility of your company in search results — both on and off the network. If you want a chance to show up when prospects are searching LinkedIn for resources, vendors, industry groups, etc., your profiles must be optimized. Also, search engines like Google scour pages and URLs for keywords, and LinkedIn profiles offer many opportunities to embed keywords. Here’s how to optimize your LinkedIn Profile:

- Include a cover photo that makes a good first impression.
- Choose a high-quality profile picture.
- Write a compelling headline.
- Customize your URL.
- Fill out your summary - tell your story!
- Introduce yourself and your work with a video.
- Keep your Experience section updated.
- Get endorsements and recommendations.
- Post regularly to help naturally incorporate keywords.

Continued on page 3
Non-Negotiable Tip #2: Prospect, Prospect, Prospect

LinkedIn is the largest professional network. That means your prospects are on LinkedIn. And your competitors are too. Here are a few tips to help you make the connection first.

• Take time to expand your network. Create a list of your current contacts - sales leads, current customers, peers and college associates, friends in the business, coworkers, vendors, etc. Connections spawn more connections. Send messages with your connection request. Each new connection builds your network and opens the door to even more connections.

• Target and research key prospects. LinkedIn users typically put a generous amount of information on their profiles. With a little research, you can quickly determine who you need to be talking to and connecting with for targeted accounts.

• Join Groups. Groups on LinkedIn are people with similar likes, needs, skills, etc., who share information and have conversations via their LinkedIn Group. These are a great way to hear what’s going on inside the industry and to begin building new relationships.

• Publish articles on LinkedIn to establish yourself as a credible resource/thought leader. Author your own articles and/or share and comment on articles others have written. Content is a powerful tool for establishing trust. It also helps you reach new audiences.

• Evaluate using the paid tool, LinkedIn Sales Navigator. It can provide lead recommendations, extend your network, integrate with your CRM and more. It does come at a cost so you would want to make sure your sales team is using it efficiently to capture ROI.

Whether you are just getting started or have already used LinkedIn, it’s a powerful sales tool that will continue to grow. Many companies today hire LinkedIn consultants or invest in coaching to help their teams most effectively use the platform as a sales tool. They can see that getting their foot in the door actually starts online.

*Source: The Sophisticated Marketer’s Guide to LinkedIn: 5 Year Anniversary Edition: LinkedIn Newsroom

Patty Cisco, MBA is CEO of Marketing Essentials, a full-service digital marketing and sales agency based out of New Bremen, Ohio, that has worked with industrial and manufacturing companies across the nation. Find more online at mktgessentials.com or connect on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/inboundstrategistpattycisco/.

What is Your Vision for 2020?

Is your company losing its competitive edge and missing new growth opportunities? Is it because:

• Employees don’t connect with the goals and direction of your business

• Continuous improvement is driven by only a few managers

• Scrap rates and rework are at undesirable levels

• Excess waiting, movement, processes, or production

• Not meeting customer demands and quality expectations

What if?

• All employees were engaged, making small incremental improvements as part of their everyday job

• All employees were able to see and eliminate waste

• You had a culture of continuous improvement where everyone knows their role, responsibilities, and the value of their contributions

If this is your vision…..look to Lean Together™!

Lean Together™ is a working group for operational excellence, based on concepts from the book, Second Lean.

The program includes classroom sessions, tours, and onsite assistance. The agenda provides a structured approach with practice and collaborative learning with other companies along the way. New cohorts are starting soon. Call Molly Reichard to get started at (814) 217-6067.

Lean Together 1.0
2020 Cohort Schedule

**Operational Excellence Workshops**

Dubois - March 10 from 8:30-4:30pm
Erie - April 21 from 8:30-4:30pm
www.nwirc.org/events
YOUR STRATEGIC BUSINESS ADVISORS

If you have questions, or would like to speak with someone from NWIRC about services, please contact your Strategic Business Advisor (SBA):

**Tom Weible**
814.590.5202
Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean & Potter Counties

**Susan Hileman**
814.572.2077
Forest, Mercer, Venango, Clarion Counties & Titusville

**Lisa Pustelak**
814.683.1034
Crawford, Warren Counties, Corry & Edinboro

**Andrew Idzik**
814.217.6068
Erie County & Bradford

---

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Geometric Dimensioning & Tolerancing**
**Feb 11**
Location: Erie
Emphasis on interpreting and measuring geometric tolerances, and selecting and applying the proper geometric controls to satisfy design requirements. Training includes hands-on exercises and a real-world class application with actual blueprints and mock ups.

**Leadership Challenge**
**Feb 19**
Location: St Marys
A significant contribution of a good leader isn’t always focused on the bottom line. It’s focused on people, relationships, and developing employees. Especially during the current critical shortage of workers, if your company wants to become an employer of choice, you need both strong leadership and a culture that encourages teamwork.

**Operational Excellence Workshop**
**Mar 10**
Location: DuBois
A highly interactive workshop to learn the conditions to create a high-performing organization, including roles of leadership and customer focus, establishing and measuring performance metrics, creating a stable and capable delivery system, and converting improved operational performance into growing sales.

**Measurement System Analysis**
**Mar 12**
Location: St Marys
As another tool for quality management, participants will learn the concept for assessing, measuring, and improving the reliability of their measurement system. You will review different sources of measurement variation and techniques to identify, isolate, and reduce measurement variation.

---

For more information or to register for training, visit www.nwirc.org