

CHAMBER TO CHAMBER

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**WISCONSIN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE EXECUTIVES**
Your Professional Association

Love those Packers, but how do I tell you the rest of the story?

Paul Jadin, President, Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce

Well, we lost. And, slowly but surely, life has gotten back to normal in Titledown. I'm speaking, of course, about the NFC Championship game and, while our beloved Packers did lose, Green Bay and this whole region (if not the entire state) enjoyed some quality time in the spotlight again. However, when you consider the postcard moment that the Seahawks' game represented followed by the very real "frozen tundra" images generated by the Giants' game, we have to, once again, deal with the national assumption that Green Bay is just a dog-sled ride from the North Pole.

Consequently, we are struggling anew with brand issues. Not that we're complaining; the Packers give us quality attention and name recognition that no other city our size could afford to buy. We just need to leverage that asset toward telling a more complete story about our area. It's a story that will enable us to recruit and retain talent, educate local and national businesses about the benefits of the area, and elevate local pride in all facets of the community beyond just the football season. In those respects we are no different than anywhere else in Wisconsin and, because most of Northeast Wisconsin can boast the same natural and human resources, it behooves us to think regionally (at least) when fashioning that brand.

Here in the New North we use the tagline "North of what you expect" to unite and "harness the collective power" of the region. Green Bay's community or metro brand should not stray too far from that concept; if anything it should reinforce it and give it greater exposure while honing in on assets that are unique to Titledown.

Likewise, communities throughout Wisconsin which are a part of the "Milwaukee 7", "Thrive", "Centergy", "7 Rivers", "Momentum" or any other region of the state, must be comfortable making their images fit the regional brand and must ensure the regional brand does indeed "harness the collective power" of the region. Additionally, it makes a great deal of sense for everyone to engage in the same effort at the same time. Green Bay will not realize the full value of a regional campaign, or vice versa, if other communities aren't contemporaneously touting that brand. In other words, a dozen different communities in the New North telling their "unique" local story at different times cannot possibly benefit any of them as much as all of them telling a regional story at the same time, albeit with some local flavor.

The same is true for the rest of the state and, indeed, begs for a similar effort to coordinate all of the regional brands while presenting a more positive business image of the entire state. After all, the community-to-community parochialism that we are trying to eliminate should not be replaced by region-to-region parochialism. This will require leadership at the state and regional levels and a willingness to collaborate at the local level.

We can capitalize on our greatest assets (like the Packers) to tell a better story about all of the wonderful business, education and recreation opportunities in Wisconsin, but we have to get it coordinated and guarantee that it yields the proper economic outcomes. Then I no longer have to fret over whether Fox Sports is focusing on the beer-bellied, shirtless drunk, the Packalope, or even the increasingly over-exposed (pun intended) "Bikini Babes".



News From The President

*Dick Granchalek,
La Crosse Area
Chamber of Commerce*

Email Overload

What did we all do before email? Remember the fax machine? You almost have to stop and think about how to use that antique!

We all get more emails than we probably care to read each day and, if you don't respond immediately, the sender wants to know why. As we develop the WCCE email list service, we create an extensive network of valuable give-and-take information for all of our use.

With this service come a few reminders on the etiquette of such a great and powerful tool:

- Reply to the individual sender when your response is not relevant to the entire list. Hitting "Reply" or "Reply to All" will email the entire list of subscribers. A suggestion would be to copy and paste the sender's email address into your "To" box and send directly to that person.
- Use informative subject headers. Be specific. Be precise. Vague subject lines (or no subject lines) are likely to be ignored or deleted.
- Keep messages brief, to the point and meaningful.
- Avoid using all capital letters. This is the equivalent of shouting and considered impolite. To emphasize a word or phrase, place asterisks around a word. (For example, * word *.)

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What's the worst thing that could possibly happen?

Gene Dalhoff, Executive Director, Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce

It is always interesting to look at the many ways in which people respond to taking risks in both their professional and personal lives. History shows us the people who are most successful in their chosen professions are those that take risks and “go-out-on-a-limb” by trying innovative processes or offering innovative products or services. At the same time, it is important to realize many of those who are considered failures in their profession were also risk-takers.

What separates the two groups of risk-takers? Some would say luck, and perhaps that is true to an extent. However, I would argue the difference is planning. Those who are successful generally take well-planned, calculated risks. Those that fail generally take blind risks.

Over the years, I've looked at the subject of risk from a variety of viewpoints, but have settled on one approach I have found to be both simple and beneficial. For the most part, it revolves around one simple question: “What's the worst thing that could possibly happen?” When people talk about taking a risk, they generally already have an idea in mind. In business, that idea generally has to do with trying to improve current production or service, or trying to expand into a new production or service area. The element of risk entails that they are suggesting trying something out-of-the-ordinary, at least for their business.

Here's where the question comes in. If they take the risk and try out the new idea, what's the worst thing that could possibly happen? Those who take calculated risks have the information necessary to answer this question. They have done the research to justify taking a risk, have the information necessary to determine what the worst-case scenario is likely to be and how it would affect the entire organization, and know how they could respond. Those who take blind risks are not adequately prepared to answer the question, and focus more specifically on the anticipated benefits of taking the risk. As a result, they are less likely to be aware of negative scenarios, are not prepared to respond to a worst-case scenario, and are setting themselves up for failure.

Another important aspect of the question is that it generally puts things into perspective very quickly. The vast majority of proposed risks are not at a level that, by themselves, would solely determine whether or not an organization survives. If the idea fails, things can often be returned to the way they were. In spite of this, I've seen far too many managers who have been paralyzed with the fear that if they take a risk, it might fail. Rather than realizing that short-term failure is often a part of long-term success, they refuse to take the risk in the first place and squelch good ideas that could have improved their organization.

For an organization to remain competitive in a changing society, it must create an atmosphere where taking a calculated risk is encouraged. Yes, some ideas will fail, but others will succeed. While it cannot be guaranteed that any one calculated risk will succeed, it can be guaranteed that a business or organization which doesn't take any risks will die a slow death in a changing world, and that any entity which takes blind risks will eventually suffer as well.

What's the worst thing that could possibly happen? Being able to answer that question will lead you to taking more of a well-planned, calculated risk. Answering that question will also help put things into perspective, making it easier for you to take a risk. Take the risk, but be prepared. In the long-run, you'll be preparing yourself for success.

Chamber Tip of the Month

Don't complain to anyone about anything – ever. This is the most violated rule of relationships. We all do it, and the damage it causes is far reaching and often irrevocable. It's easy to find fault with someone or something. If you are willing to complain about someone, people will assume that you may complain about them.

Wisconsin Supreme Court Unbound: What Does it Mean to Your Business?

Leading up to the spring election for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, WMC is hosting a series of briefings about the activist direction of the court and what it means to businesses. Six breakfast meetings will be held across the state, with analysis by WMC President Jim Haney and WMC Vice President James Buchen. Professor Rick Esenberg of Marquette Law School will describe "A Court Unbound" in a candid WMC-exclusive pre-recorded video presentation.

February 13: Madison February 22: Green Bay March 5: La Crosse
February 15: Wausau February 29: Milwaukee March 7: Eau Claire

Contact Susan Nyffenegger to register, (608) 258-3400 or snyffenegger@wmc.org. This invitation may be extended to colleagues in the business community so they too can get the inside scoop.



Exceeding Your Expectations

*WCCE Annual Conference & Retreat
September 24-26, 2008*

Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells is not only the top meeting destination in the Midwest ... it is the site for this year's WCCE Annual Conference and Retreat for chamber professionals. With its unique atmosphere – located in central Wisconsin along the scenic Wisconsin River and surrounded by 100-foot Norway Pine trees – we hope you will escape to the Dells this September for a chance to reconnect with peers and gain valuable information to take home with you. Stay tuned for more program information to be available soon.

Seeking Nominations for Wisconsin Family Business of the Year Award

The fifth annual Wisconsin Family Business of the Year Award is accepting nominations from businesses throughout the state. The award celebrates companies that exemplify the family spirit of doing business together for everyone's success. Self-nominations are encouraged, or nominations can be made on behalf of the company by consultants, vendors, clients, or friends. An independent panel of judges will select the award recipients. The deadline for nominations is March 21, 2008. Awards will be presented in May.

In the United States, there are more than 10 million family businesses, from "mom and pop" stores to Fortune 500 companies. Their economic influence is enormous, producing an estimated 50 percent of the nation's gross domestic product and paying 65 percent of all wages. The success of family businesses is also demonstrated in the stock market. A stock analysis of publicly held, family-owned businesses reveals that they significantly outperform the rest of the stock market. Economic growth in Wisconsin clearly is influenced by the health of family-run businesses.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from www.familybusinessaward.com, or by calling (608) 836-7500.

New Names, New Faces, New Places

The Manitowoc-Two Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce has changed its name to *The Chamber of Manitowoc County*.

Bob Berglin is the new executive director of the Dodgeville Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Oostburg Business Association has a new director, *Laurie Werner*.

The *Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce* has moved its office to the following location: 733 North Main Street, Lower Level, Oregon WI 53575.

Legislative Matters

The next WMC legislative teleconferences for chamber professionals looking for information on what's going on at the Capitol are scheduled as follows:

- February 8
- February 22
- March 7

The meetings are a great opportunity for you, or your government relations team, to know what issues are currently on the table. Plus, WMC wants to hear input from you and your business community. Contact Karen Mahlkuch, WMC, at (608) 258-3400 for more information.

President's Message (cont'd)

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- Keep in mind information is not confidential, and that flaming is not permitted. It is fine to discuss controversial subjects, but do not personalize the debate.
- Sign your messages with your full name and email address.

I'll ask once again, please be thoughtful of all of the users in the system. I'm sure we've already seen people drop off because they just don't want to see another "thank you" or "me too" on their screen. And that impacts the value of the knowledge exchanged because of those who have now chosen to disengage.

Here's to a great start in 2008!

To receive the *Chamber to Chamber* newsletter electronically via email, please contact Susan Nyffenegger at (608) 258-3400 or snyffenegger@wmc.org.

MEETINGS, EVENTS, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

March 6, 2008

WCCE Board Meeting
Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce

April 10, 2008

Invested Leaders Institute, Memphis, TN

May 7-9, 2008

MACE Conference, La Crosse

June 8 - July 31, 2008

Institute Programs (four locations)

September 24-26, 2008

WCCE Annual Conference & Retreat
Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

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US Chamber of Commerce
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www.uschamber.com

Trivia: Claim to Fame

1. Small town home to big corporate international companies, such as S. C. Johnson & Son, Inc., Modine Manufacturing Company, InSinkErator, and Putzmeister, Inc.
2. Known as the City of Sculpture.
3. Hometown of the Ringling Brothers and the birthplace of Circus.
4. In 1830, this town was bigger than Chicago and Milwaukee combined with 200 people.
5. Cheese Curd Capital of Wisconsin.

Answers: 1. Racine, 2. Wausau, 3. Baraboo, 4. Dodgeville, 5. Elkhartsville

CHAMBER TO CHAMBER

Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce Economic Outlook

Chambers Weigh-in on State's Economy

Wisconsin chamber executives were recently asked to weigh-in on their opinion about the state of their local economy and the state as a whole. Sixty-eight chambers participated, representing small to large communities.

"Looking at the results of the survey, chambers were optimistic about the outlook for their local community's business climate in 2008," said Jim Morgan, vice president of WMC (State Chamber of Commerce) and secretary-treasurer of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce Executives (WCCE). "In the next year, 69 percent of chamber respondents are anticipating an increase in growth of their local community employment, and 76 percent said they anticipate good to moderate improvement of their local community's business climate in the next 6-12 months," said Morgan.

The responses were more cautious when the survey turned to questions about the Wisconsin state economy. When asked if the state was headed in the right direction or on the wrong track, 53 percent said the right track while 47 percent said the wrong direction. "The local chambers have a positive outlook on the economic future of their community, but are less optimistic about the overarching Wisconsin economy," said Morgan.

When asked to identify the top business concerns facing their community, the top three concerns listed were: 1) health care costs, 2) taxes, and 3) labor shortage.

"What was apparent in this survey is the chambers are concerned about limiting taxes and controlling spending," said Morgan. "The written comments reflected concerns they are hearing from their members — this is an expensive state in which to do business and that comes into play when companies make location decisions."

For more information about the survey or its results, contact Jim Morgan, (608) 258-3400 or jmorgan@wmc.org.

Business Day in Madison Features Dynamic Speaker Lineup

Business Day in Madison will be held Tuesday, February 26 at the Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center in Madison. National political experts will give their insights into the upcoming Presidential race and dissect the campaign strategies of the candidates. The program will also feature a panel discussion with Wisconsin's Legislative Leadership.



FEATURED SPEAKERS:

- **Dr. Frank Luntz**, widely-recognized National Pollster, author and founder of The Luntz Research Companies
- **Terry McAuliffe**, former chairman of National Democratic Committee, chairman of the Hillary Clinton for President Committee
- **Ken Mehlman**, former chairman of Republican National Committee, campaign manager for Bush/Cheney '04

For sponsorship opportunities, contact Janie Ritter or Jane Algiers at (608) 258-3400. Register online at www.businessdayinmadison.com.

WCCE Mission: The Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce Executives' mission is to advance the management skills and experience of its members in order to help them work with the challenges facing chamber professionals in the 21st century.

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Your opinions and contributions are welcome.
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