

CONNECTION

Majestic Kitchen and Bath: Reflections of *old and new*

Also:

- A first of its kind meeting
- New way to measure success
- Tips for good hiring

**POLYCON
HIGHLIGHTS**

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ON THE COVER: Majestic's Kitchen and Bath has selection centers designed to showcase the company's products and allow consumers, designers, builders and other customers a space to envision their choices. This kitchen is featured in the Raleigh Selection Center. Photo by Genilee Parente

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A grand year of change



I HAD THE DISTINCT HONOR OF PRESENTING OUR FIRST STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION ADDRESS DURING POLYCON 2016 IN RALEIGH, and I can't tell you how pleased I was to tell our members that ICPA is once again a stand-alone organization. It's certainly been a year of challenges, but also one filled with excitement as we transition from our old structure to one that holds much promise for the cast polymer industry.

Before I get into details, I want to point out how much effort went into this movement—we're an organization of volunteers, and the changeover required a good deal of effort on the part of people who were trying to run their own companies. I want to thank my predecessor Royce Newsom,* who I believe is the biggest cheerleader our association has ever had; our board members, who made the tough decisions with much fortitude; and our new executive director Jennifer Towner, who put in endless hours. All of you met the challenges with determination and optimism.

I also want to point out that the effort was possible because ACMA's leadership, in particular the current chairman of the board Jeff Craney, Crane Composites, recognized this was in the best interest of our members. We worked with ACMA to develop a way to make it happen based on three milestones. The first milestone was reached as we were approaching POLYCON 2016: we legally became an entity with our own tax identification, a budget that's realistic, a mission statement and most important, a strategic plan that carries us forward.

We're approaching milestone two right now: to have 50 manufacturing companies signed into our membership ranks by July 1. With 400 possibilities across the country and

38 grandfathered members, we don't think that goal will be hard to reach. Still, we need everyone's help in identifying and approaching the many companies that would benefit from membership. Milestone three is two years down the road, which is to operate in the black for that period, also a goal easily within reach. With each milestone we pass, we bring more of our strategic reserves under our control.

It's been an adventure getting to this point, but we have so many fine people working for this purpose that I have complete confidence we'll get there. Our successful POLYCONS 2015 and 2016 were giant steps forward, important indicators of how much other members want the new structure. We are once again becoming an organization with our own identity and specific plans for servicing our membership, educating the public about the benefits of cast polymer, bringing us together to share and learn from each other and helping our industry and its companies grow and prosper.

I hope you'll join us in this effort. ■

— Todd Wertsler

**Editor's note: As this issue went to print, MasterCast™ Connection and ICPA were deeply saddened to learn that our industry "cheerleader" Royce Newsom passed away after a hard-fought battle with cancer. The ICPA Insider newsletter has details. The magazine, the association and its members will miss his leadership and his spirit.*

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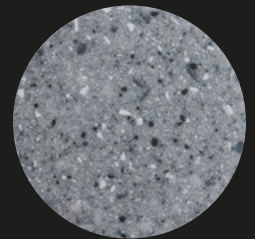
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The growth of a “majestic” business

Majestic Kitchen and Bath, Raleigh, NC, reflects both the traditional and the modern in the cultured marble/cast polymer industry.

BY GENILEE PARENTE

MAJESTIC IS VERY MUCH A FAMILY BUSINESS with several key management positions coming from the original founders' blood lines. The company is also a manufacturer of surface products. However, it has evolved into something much more: It makes or fabricates surfaces beyond cast polymer, including natural stone and quartz, and offers an entire line of kitchen and bath products that go along with surfaces. It also has several elegant (one might even call them: majestic!) selection centers. The centers are places where customers can see and feel the hundreds of choices available today in surfaces, sinks, glass enclosures and more.

“Majestic is literally a retail/commercial and wholesale company,” says Bobby Medlin, division manager, “and our selection centers are used for all three of those arms.”

That’s because they have been designed to serve a purpose beyond the traditional showroom. They are intended as a tool to help customers make educated choices; and, in the case of builder or designer customers, allow them to show their own customers what can be done to make a home’s kitchen and bath beautiful.

“We invite builders and designers to use the selection centers to bring in their customers, sit down with coffee, and talk about what’s available for the kitchen and bath. They don’t even have to be showing granite, quartz or cultured stone. As long as you’re one of our customers or potential customers, our door is open for hanging out and talking options,” Medlin explains.

“We know that the more people who come in and the more time they spend in our selection centers, the more likely we are to make sales and build our reputation,” he adds.

A quarter of a century

Majestic was started in 1990 by Danny Cox, who moved his family to the Raleigh area to take a job with a marble company. That company decided to close its doors, and Cox took over

the business and became a distributor of cultured marble vanity tops, shower surrounds and custom glass shower enclosures.

Within a year and a half, Cox was manufacturing cultured marble himself and using the second story of his own home as a showroom.

Meanwhile, the glass division of the company began to grow under the leadership of Carl Manfredi, who is still with the company.



By 1994, the company had 20 employees and was looking into how it could make its first major step toward expansion. Bruce Battle, who had the same vision as Cox that this business had great potential, became a major investor, and the partnership of Cox and Battle was formed. The company was incorporated later that year.

In 1997, Majestic expanded its fabrication capabilities from cultured marble vanity tops and shower surrounds to natural stone and solid surfaces. By 2005, the company had more than 200 employees and \$20 million in sales. The products were sold under the brands of Marquee (cultured marble), Envision (glass and glass installation) and Constrata Surface Innovations (granite, solid surface, etc.).

“And then, like with the rest of the world, 2008 hit us hard and fast. We saw a sharp decline in sales and struggled with receivables. We had to reorganize and redo everything,” Medlin explains.

The company cut its staff by half, an extremely painful process for a company that had many experienced people on board considered part of the Majestic family.

“As with many of the companies that made it through this period, we did what we had to: We downsized as much



ABOVE: Majestic employee Amanda Nichols shows homeowner Jennifer Smith samples at Majestic's Raleigh Selection Center. Smith is renovating an older home.

LEFT: Majestic's selection centers are designed to make people comfortable the moment they walk in the door. Employee Georgia Butts (background) is set to greet visitors from behind the front desk.



as we could while making sure we took care of our customers 100%,” Medlin says.

“Unfortunately we had to let some really important people go. Surprisingly, many of those employees understood and kept in touch. Some of them went on to other successes and we were able to bring some back on board,” he explains.

The company focused its efforts on quality control, areas such as commercial that were doing better and producing products that were already proven successes.

“In a period like this, you can't have any mistakes in what you do with your business because there's no fall back anymore,” Medlin explains.

Still, Majestic made it through in good shape and has been growing ever since. Most recently, the company began a consolidation of its three brands under the Majestic Kitchen and Bath umbrella. Its business expanded from Raleigh and surrounding areas to other parts of the state, including Wilmington, NC, where a new selection center opened in 2015.

The staff is now back up to about 300 people and Medlin says the last two years have seen much growth—both geographically and in what it makes and offers.

“Last year was a good year, but we are expecting a really great year this year,” Medlin says.



Majestic's Bobby Medlin (right) visits with fellow ICPA member Hugh Williams, Carolina Marble Products, during a POLYCON 2016 tour of the marble shop.

The current business

Medlin says one of the reasons Majestic is forecasting an exceptional year is because building in the company's market location is rebounding.

"Our market never dropped as badly as most places in the U.S., and now we're seeing a real resurgence. Builders are buying more land and there are not enough houses on the market right now to match demand," he says.

Also, Majestic's success will be based on the fact it can now focus on new areas of business.

"We don't turn away anything that we feel we can do—we even do some installations for other companies. We look at our margins because our goal is to make money. We are always looking for creative new products we can offer and ways to improve our operations," Medlin says.

Most recently, Medlin says Majestic has seen an uptick in the granite business, which he says is a direct result of the general economic situation in his area.

"People have money they've been holding onto to get through the bad times, and now they are looking to spend it on luxuries: It's not a need as much as a want," he says.

A recent trip to the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS) revealed, however, that a change in overall market trends is about to hit the east coast: A major switch from granite to quartz is occurring.

"On the west coast, I'd say business has swung to 80% quartz, 20% granite. We are not yet to that point, but we see it coming, and companies in this area that are not doing quartz need to be," he says. The reason is consumer taste: They love the veining found in quartz countertops.

"Customers are beginning to understand that the random fissures you get in granite and stone are actually weaknesses in the material and that natural stone materials have to be sealed periodically," Medlin says.

On the glass side, clear glass in showers is taking over the market right now because of consumer tastes, Medlin says. The reason it's so popular is because of all the beautiful choices in surfaces, from natural stone to cultured stone,

Employees give sinks the final touch on the marble finishing line.



and in treatments such as subway tiles or textured tiles. "People don't want to obscure the beauty. They want to show it off," he says.

Meanwhile, the company looks for innovations in the products it already has as well as ways to fabricate the materials and to present those products to the public. The key here is to be looking ahead, Medlin says, while also recognizing what's classic and will stay.

"We work with a lot of designers that often advise staying classic: Don't do vertical lines in tiles because it's a short-lived trend; stay with horizontal and keep with classics colors such as white and grays. They will never go away," Medlin says.

"At the same time, our vendors are helping us to come up with entire new ways of creating beauty such as spray granite, new finishes and ingredients that create new effects, new techniques," Medlin says.

The company wants to be a leader, not a follower, Medlin explains.

"IT'S TIME FOR ALL OF US TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO MOVE FORWARD AND CONSIDER HOW WE CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ADVANCES SUCH AS HOW WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE 3D PRINTING."



"Majestic is trying to make the turns needed for this business to pull ahead. The industry went without change for many years, but it's time for all of us to figure out how to move forward and consider how we can take advantage of advances such as how we might be able to use 3D printing in making our mold models," he adds.

A family affair

Although the company is moving forward, the basic roots remain and are based on family connections. For example, both Danny Cox and Bruce Battle are still active in the business.

"Neither has plans to retire, and they both still work full time. Danny is at the marble division and Bruce has taken over daily operation of the granite division," Medlin says.

Meanwhile, during the 25 years of its existence, those two founders have been joined by other family members, including Medlin, who is Danny's son-in-law, the hus-

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band of Cox's oldest daughter Amber. He took over running the cultured marble business from her so that she could be a stay-at-home mom. Danny's nephew Jimmy worked for the company until just recently. Cox's son Daniel also worked for the company before starting his own landscaping/trash business.

Currently, Danny's daughters Amber and Ashley, Bruce's daughter Jeanie Van de Guchte, and his wife Sue Ellen all work in administrative or ordering positions. Jackson, who is Battle's son, works within the granite division, and Cox's other son-in-law Josh Smyth is one of the company's sales people.

Beyond the blood line is the family of Majestic employees and many of them have worked with Majestic for decades. Also, beyond the company family is the industry itself.

Majestic's Kim Speight shows off the company's large selection of quartz samples.



The floor of the granite shop is always a busy place.

Majestic has made it a goal to raise up not only its business, but also others in the industry.

"Organizations such as ICPA and shows such as KBIS and POLYCON are critical," Medlin explains. "Consumers and buyers are becoming more and more knowledgeable about what their options are, and we have to be able to show them our strengths."

For example, with cultured marble and quartz, that means how durable, clean and beautiful the products are and how many choices are now available.

"In many ways, we are not competing as much against each other in this business as against other consumer choices," he says.

"We have to share with each other what we're doing and how it is being done better than before so that we can take advantage of this recovering building market and shine as an industry," he concludes. ■

GENILEE PARENTE is managing editor of **MasterCast™ Connection**. She'd like to create profiles and other stories on what ICPA members are doing. Please contact her with your ideas at gsparente@verizon.net.



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POLYCON Raleigh 2016 was a first of its kind meeting

BY GENILEE PARENTE

THE HISTORIC POLYCON 2016 IN RALEIGH, NC had two major strengths behind it: 1) It was the first meeting under the newly reborn International Cast Polymer Association, and 2) Optimism that hasn't been felt as deeply in years has sprung from a renewed construction market.

The meeting was held April 14 to 16 at the Hilton North Raleigh/Midtown as well as facilities belonging to Majestic



Kitchen and Bath, whose employees helped administer the program. Majestic also hosted a tour and demonstrations at its plant and held the welcome reception at its grand Raleigh Selection Center near the hotel. Raleigh-based ICPA member Reichhold, Inc., a major resin supplier to the cast polymer industry, was the platinum sponsor: The company provided tours of its headquarters and all of its labs in Raleigh and hosted the opening reception. (For a full list of sponsors, see "Thank you!")

Jennifer Towner, ICPA's executive director, described the meeting this way: "The enthusiasm of the attendees over the three days was contagious. I believe the multitude of ideas flying back and forth during the roundtable discussions and between sessions, and the networking at social events and during tabletop exhibit visits was clearly an indication of a new generation of innovative and forward thinking. POLYCON 2016 and its predecessor POLYCON 2015 have given us the foundation for an exciting and solid future."

From the program speakers and conversations between attendees, several themes emerged. They included:

It's no longer sufficient to sell customers solutions to their problems: The industry must learn ways to get them to think differently.

Dirk De Vuyst, owner, International Marble Industries, called this need "insight selling."

"In the last few decades, we moved from selling products to selling solutions. Now we have to find ways to go beyond the solution—to show what makes our product different in ways we haven't thought of before," he said. "We must challenge our customers and prospects to put value on the insights we provide in our presentations." (For more on this, see the popular book by Matthew Dixon and Brent Adamson: *The Challenger Sale*.)

Saturday's demonstrations included sessions on cladding, low production tooling, laser templating, majestic tooling and undermount bowls.



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ABOVE: The roundtable discussions were a popular feature of POLYCON 2016.

RIGHT: Attendees used time between sessions and demonstrations to share tips with each other. Pictured here are (from right) Jack Simmons and Chris Hurdleston from ACS International with attendee Ken Hill, Syn-Mar Products, and Majestic Employee Renny Johnson.

BELOW: Todd Werstler was greatly inspired by the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins.



“The challenger sale requires you to think beyond what is asked for,” De Vuyst said.

Todd Werstler, ICPA president and owner of Tower Industries, gave an example from his company’s experience.

Tower has focused much effort in the last decade on institutional solutions. When it was looking at potential customers, the company discovered that some universities have staff whose full-time responsibility is re-caulking old shower systems.

“They had employees who walked around all day with silicone guns. Yet all of us know that silicone doesn’t stick well to silicone.”

Tower focused on that unrecognized reality “by offering a silicone replacement that is both sealant and adhesive, that’s mildew resistant and that you don’t have to re-caulk,” he explained.

Customers of today are much different than those in the past; they know what they want before they ever walk in the door.

“In the 1970s, our customers didn’t know much about the solutions we provide: the clean, durable products that were designed to last generations,” De Vuyst pointed out. The Internet has changed all that. However, it’s also created a world of noise, and standing out in that noise requires a newer selling strategy based on being able to create an emotional connection with clients, he said.

“We all know that selling is all about relationships and those relationships are the underpinning of success,” he added. “We have to learn to focus not just on our product and on new sales, but on getting customers for life,” he said.

One lesson the crash of the housing and construction market has provided is the need to identify what you’re best at and put resources there so success will be long-term.

Werstler called such thinking the hedgehog concept after terminology in a book that inspired major changes at Tower (*Good to Great* by Jim Collins.)

The book is based on a study of successful companies and what they did to stand out over a 30-year period. The hedgehog idea is to “go find something that works and be great at it,” he said.

For Tower, that was offering solid surface solutions to institutions, a business that made up 0% of his company’s business before the crash and now makes up 67% of its business. Tower had just completed its first such project when Werstler read the book. The project was a huge success and led to a second project. Those two successes showed him that this line of business had the three key dimensions those 30 companies shared, which are: doing something you’re passionate about, doing something that makes economic sense and doing something at which you can shine.

At Tower, “We had the infrastructure, the people, the knowledge, and the first few projects were money-makers,” he points out. “We’d found a solid path forward.”

Tools such as digital marketing and high technology are not end-all solutions for success.

A warmly received talk during the opening reception by Kyle Held of SkyBound Marketing, who helped bring Majestic Kitchen and Bath marketing efforts into the modern age, fo-



Attendees learned about low production testing during this plant demo.



Dirk De Vuyst (right), IMI, visits with Tim Price of R.J. Marshall at the opening reception

cused on a valuable lesson both companies learned during initial efforts together: This industry is not meant for digital marketing alone.

Instead, Majestic and SkyBound Marketing worked together on a system that backs up online efforts with printed pieces—not the multiple-page fancy and expensive brochures of earlier days, but one-sheet pieces with good data that is fluid: The data and the pieces can change as the products and solutions Majestic offers changes.

De Vuyst pointed out that in the noise of today's multi-channel communication, "it's easy to get lost and even easier to lose the context in which we are trying to present our products and services."

"We still need to define our brands," he added. "We still need print, advertising, even hard paper display, but we need to find ways to link everything to present a consistent message."

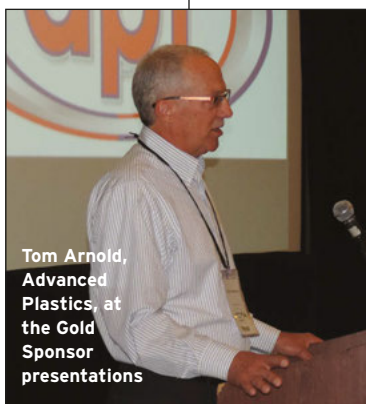
Just as digital offers much promise, so does new machining, new ways to communicate and other new technologies coming down the pike. But it, too, needs to be taken in stride.

Of the executives for the 'great' companies interviewed for Collins' book, for example, "not one of them mentioned technology as the Number 1 item that took them into the stratosphere," Werstler told attendees.

Those that were successful using the newer tools were those that took the crawl/

walk/run approach, he explained. In other words, instead of jumping right in, they learned how to do it right as they went.

"Technology is not the driving force. It can just help," Werstler explains.



Tom Arnold, Advanced Plastics, at the Gold Sponsor presentations

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If this industry and its companies are to conquer past demons and move into excellence, it has to recognize it isn't going to happen overnight and it isn't going to happen without some pain along the way.

Werstler compared this situation to a flywheel.

"Being an entrepreneur or making major changes to an established company is like starting a flywheel. It's hard to get it going at first. The next pull is a bit easier, though it still takes a little time, but eventually the momentum is built," Werstler said. He pointed out that Tower's flywheel started way back in about 2004 when it began selling those solid surface showers to institutions. This year, the company expects 60% growth.

"I can't pinpoint the moment when all of this became real for us. But we learned to focus on moving the flywheel every day—following a pattern of building upwards based on our momentum, facing the brutal facts we needed to face to continue moving forward. We learned to do the things we do well and we maintained our consistency," he said. ■

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Ed Hill leads a roundtable discussion at POLYCON 2016.

A different kind of metric

COMPANIES IN MANUFACTURING USE A NUMBER OF TOOLS to measure sales success from units sold to gross or net profit for a month to how close sales targets are met. But one speaker at POLYCON 2016 had a different metric to suggest: Throughput earned (expressed here as \$T), which is defined as the measure of value added by the company.

“This is a new way to look at metrics, and most companies are struggling with this issue every day,” said Ed Hill, Synchronous Solutions, a consulting company that helps companies set up operational systems.

“You need the right numbers in place and those numbers need to be trusted, they need to be available daily, and they need to be designed to drive action,” he added.

The basis of throughput

Put simply, \$T is the measure of the sales price of a particular job minus the variable expenses of that job, including materials, outsourcing, freight—in other words, what needs to be invested to start a job.

For example, a job for which you’re charging \$5,000 that has variable expenses of \$1,500 (or 30%) would have a \$T of 70% or \$3,500. Out of that amount would come labor and overhead costs, which hopefully will result in an overall profit. The number is effective because overhead costs remain the same, while sales price and variable expenses can be adjusted to meet \$T goals. A desired mix of products and customers then can be scheduled daily based on achieving maximum profitability and customer service.

Meanwhile, the number can be plugged into the entire operation and reported daily, giving companies a truer picture than a monthly financial statement, which usually comes after the month is gone, Hill pointed out.

“By using the basic \$T figures, your sales estimates and how you meet your estimates will reflect the actual content of your work: its value, as opposed to something like number of feet you fabricated for the month,” Hill explained.

The figure should be part of planning, scheduling and tracking, and it can be used to test scenarios (what might happen if we get this new customer?) as well as seasonal fluctuations. It can help a company look at what product mixes make the most money, and it can get rid of one very unpleasant aspect of business: surprises. It can be the basis of an incentive system, and it can serve as an explanation to staff on months when those incentives aren’t forthcoming.

“Just as your car runs best when it has a proper mixture of air and gas, your business operates best knowing how much volume you have and how much time you need to handle that volume,” Hill explained.

“When you know what your \$T needs to be, and you schedule it into your operations every day, you can have confidence you’re meeting your financial goals and can be a proactive business,” Hill explained.

Stay tuned to **MasterCast™ Connection** next month when Hill will share how that \$T can be plugged into operations for a “synchronous flow.” ■



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How to find and hire the right people every time

BY RIKKA BRANDON

WHEN I'M CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE at networking events, I nearly always get one of

two questions thrown my way:

1. "What is a headhunter?"
2. "How do you actually find the right people to hire?"

I hear the first one more than I'd expect or want to, but I hear the latter with a bit more frequency—and there's a reason.

One in three small businesses have unfilled job openings due to a lack of qualified applicants, and 43% of small busi-

nesses say their growth is impeded because of this shortage. (Wall Street Journal, July 9, 2014)

That's a loss of millions of dollars and huge, unimaginable amounts of stress that small business owners face. With all the other pressures companies in the cast polymer business must deal with, this is not a welcome addition to the load. Since I've been a recruiter for more than 10 years and filled over 400 jobs, I've developed my own sense about how to find and hire the right person for the job. Here are my tips:

Why I recommend a phone interview

One of the main reasons I do a first interview via phone is because most of my clients are national and some are even in different countries. It's physically impossible for me to conduct those interviews.

However, that's not why I prefer starting with a phone interview and strongly recommend them to my clients.

No matter where you are—no matter how small a town you're in—it will take at least 10-15 minutes for somebody to get in the car, drive to your office, get out, wait in the waiting room and then sit down to get interviewed. Common courtesy dictates that the interview should be a longer than it took the interviewee to get to you. That means each interview should last at least 15 minutes.

So what do you do if you realize in the first five minutes this isn't going to be a fit?

A phone interview will save you time.

A few questions by phone is an easy way to make sure the candidate is actually interested, and has the experience and qualifications you seek. It's also a great tool to gauge deal breakers upfront such as compensation, commute, etc.

A phone interview can help you focus.

Doing a phone interview helps entrepreneurs and people new to interviewing focus on what the person's saying without being distracted by their physical presence, such as how painful it must have been to get that nose ring or wondering why the candidate is fidgeting.

Without these distractions, you can make a more level-headed decision on whether to pursue this candidate. Non-verbal cues and appearance can be important, but for the initial conversation, you should be able to get the info you need from phone answers.

A phone interview gives insight into communication skills.

Today most business communication happens over email, on the phone and then in person. I use email to set up the phone interview because it shows me little nuances such as whether they use all capital letters or if they have terrible grammar. Depending on your business, the candidate may exclude themselves simply by typing "I ain't going to be around on Monday, so it'll have to be Tuesday."

The phone interview then gives you a firsthand chance to experience how they come across to customers. Are they hard to understand? Do they talk excessively loud or fast?

Step 1. Get really clear about the position

I can't find the right people to hire if I don't know the nooks and crannies of the job. The same goes for you. You need to outline the day-to-day responsibilities and recognize what positions or industries might have parallel positions. You should also recognize your own company culture so that you can see what personality type would fit well into the existing teams. You might also want to learn about the people who've been successful in the position in the past—and about the ones who haven't. (See "Writing a Good Job Description")

Step 2. Build a recruiting platform

Most small businesses post one or two ads and hope that a decent candidate applies. This is wishful thinking. A recruiter knows you need much more. I use a minimum of 12 sources to publicize jobs—job posting boards, social media, networking, association contacts, direct recruiting, resume databases and more. You may not need that many since you're familiar with what works in your community, but if you want more qualified applicants, you need more places to look. I suggest at least three sources to drive applicants to your job opening.

Step 3. Develop recruiting pitches

As manufacturers of a specialty product, you're a success because you've developed marketing skills. Use those skills in appealing to applicants. You'll also have better luck finding the right employee to hire if you put on your marketing hat, take a step back and see your job from the potential employee perspective. What makes this position appealing? Why would someone leave their current position for this? You've got to sell the job—particularly when you're pitching to passive candidates: people who didn't actively apply for the job, but may have come from other sources such as colleagues, suggestions from family/friends or current employees.

Step 4. Execute

Post the job, seek out qualified people online, and email or call colleagues and associates who may know someone qualified. If you find someone in your own search who's qualified,

Writing a good job description

Step 1: Determine exactly what your business needs

Without a need to fill, there isn't any reason to go through the expense of hiring someone. Ask yourself: What gap will this new hire be filling? How will their expertise push your company forward?

Step 2: Figure out what goals you have in mind for your new hire

If you're going to find and try to hire a highly qualified person, it's extremely important to have clearly defined expectations. Are you looking for a manager for the plant line or someone who has exceptional sales skills?

Step 3: Define specific skills, experience and education requirements

After you've defined the goals you have for the hire, outline exactly what you are asking in the way of background. This will help you sort through resumes more quickly.

Step 4: Address the intangibles. What kind of person do you want to be around?

Since you may be adding a new member into your team, it's important to decide in advance what kind of person would be the best fit for your company culture. What personality traits and work style will mesh best? If the role requires a high level of attention to detail and a methodical approach to work, be sure to include that in your job description. Likewise, if he or she will be cold calling and driving new business, the candidate needs to be outgoing, able to handle rejection and able to build relationships from scratch.

Important tip: When developing your position description, keep in mind the realities of people's personalities. If you were hoping to combine an outgoing business development person with a detail-oriented bookkeeper, you're likely to be out of luck. Don't hobble together one full-time role that would be better served by two part-timers. It's much better to have two people working part time at jobs they love than one person who is unhappy with half his or her time at work.

email that person directly. That's what we do as recruiters, but you can, too. This may take a few hours, but once the postings are up and emails are sent, lean back and wait for responses to roll in.

Step 5. Review and assess

Now that you've got an inbox full of applicants, scan those resumes or applications quickly: Just give a 10-second perusal to each. Then, set up a system to sort the good from the less-than-amazing. Always start the interview process with a phone and see if anyone seems promising. (See, "Why I recommend a phone interview.")

Conclusion

Reading an article like this one is an easy first step. Executing the rest of these steps requires time and effort you may not want to expend. However, it's well worth it when you find the right person for the job. ■

RIKKA BRANDON is a recruiting consultant, who recently published a new book *Hire Power*, which is packed with tips on hiring with confidence. She has a multitude of other employment tips on her website at www.rikkabrandon.com.

Reichhold

WITH THIS ISSUE OF MASTERCASTM CONNECTION, we begin a series focusing attention on the many long-time suppliers to the cast polymer industry. We're beginning with POLYCON Platinum Sponsor Reichhold. The magazine took a camera along on one of the technical tours of its Durham headquarters given by the company during the event.

Reichhold has a long history that stretches back to 1927 when Henry Reichhold started the company. Some highlights of that history are:

- 1955 Initial public offering made.
- 1981 Reichhold named a Fortune 500 company.
- 1987 Dainippon Ink and Chemicals acquires the company.
- 1989 The polyester resin and coating resin businesses were acquired.
- 1992 A new headquarters and research facility opened in Research Triangle Park, NC.
- 1995 Reichhold moves into Mexico by acquiring Celanese Mexican.
- 1996 Brazil resins and polymer business acquired.
- 1998 The company acquires European business BIP.
- 2006 A Turkish business presence is established.
- 2008 A lab opens in China.
- 2009 A manufacturing plant opens in India.
- 2011 A manufacturing plant opens in China.
- 2014 Reichhold moves into an expanded facility in Durham.
- 2015 The ownership is reorganized.

Today, Reichhold has seven major brands of products including resin, corrosion resistant products, flame retardants, binders, green products, high-performance resins, gelcoats, bonding pastes and more, and is a major research and development resource for composites. Its 1,300-plus employees operate 19 different manufacturing sites in 12 countries, and the company has five specialized technology centers. It also services more than 2,000 customers in more than 85 countries. ■



Employees at Reichhold's headquarters spend a good deal of time in research labs.

From top to bottom are: Doug Copeland on the Pultrusion Machine, Frank Martin conducting tensile testing and Chris Ren measuring viscosity.





At left: Reichhold's Ken Lipovsky studies cup gel time exotherm. Meanwhile, Allen Lee (right) prepares laminate in one of many labs.

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Members receive a monthly electronic newsletter featuring new research and studies of the industry, current educational programs available, industry updates and new regulations, upcoming events and announcements. Members also receive the quarterly MasterCast™ Connection magazine, which provides them feature articles on manufacturing and business trends, highlights on manufacturers and suppliers, and advertising opportunities for suppliers and distributors.

And this is just the beginning! As a newly formed association we are growing in membership and developing new strategies to promote our industry every day. Join today!



It's time now to renew your membership

Because ICPA's fiscal year ends July 1, it's time to start thinking about renewing membership. The new ICPA has made that easy by allowing people to get online at the website to take care of this.

Go to www.theicpa.com and click on "Join." It will explain the dues structure and allow members to register and pay by credit card or check.

POLYCON 2016 a huge success; join us next year!

POLYCON Raleigh broke last year's record with an attendance of 130. But perhaps as importantly as the numbers was the fact that many who came had not attended last year's meeting and some hadn't been to an ICPA event in years.

Planning has already begun for next year's event, which will be March 22-24 in Dallas. Check your email and ICPA Insider monthly newsletter for dates and additional information.



ICPA President Todd Werstler, Tower Industries, (left) gave a special President's Award to Dirk De Vuyst, International Marble Industries, for his tireless efforts on behalf of both the old and new associations.

Three long-time members honored at POLYCON

ICPA has a strong backbone of people who have seen many years with the association and industry. Three of those long-timers were honored with Leadership Excellence Awards at POLYCON Raleigh. They included:

- **Phil Chisholm**, Builders Marble, Inc., Jackson, MS
- **Larry Kraft**, Custom Marble, Inc., Millstadt, IL
- **Harvey Wise**, CoMar Products Inc., Cayce, SC

"What can I say about these three except they all worked hard at making our trade association the best it could be," said Jack Simmons, ACS Stone, who presented the awards. "I believe each of them will tell you they not only gained much knowledge in the process, they also built lasting friendships from many POLYCONS in the past," he added.



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Also honored for long-time service during POLYCON was Reichhold's Bill Schramm. Schramm recently announced his retirement so ICPA wanted to recognize his many years of service and help to the industry.



ICPA Leadership Excellence Awards are presented to people who have passionately and steadfastly supported the organization. This year's honorees included (from left) Phil Chisholm, Harvey Wise and Larry Kraft.

Staying in touch has never been easier

Not only does ICPA have an upgraded, user-friendly new website for connecting members to their organization, it also will be active on Facebook and LinkedIn.

All these channels provide members a valuable resource for staying up to date on other members and for keeping in touch with them both professionally and socially.

The Facebook site is: www.facebook.com/groups/196727340343053/

The LinkedIn page is: www.linkedin.com/company/international-cast-polymer-association.

The web site is www.theicpa.com. ■

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