

above
&
beyond

Summer 2010

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EMPIRE: First National Sales Meeting

A new era at Empire • Corporate Vision, Training and Future Goals

Our president, John Freismuth likes to promote: **Opportunity is nowhere.** Do you see this phrase in a positive or negative light? What is your first impulse? Opportunity does not always knock on the front door, you need to be prepared for it. Our first national sales meeting will give you the chance to see this phrase as John sees it, **"Opportunity is now here."**

Empire employees have spent the last year and a half focusing on our quality policy and vision statement.

In five years, Empire will be a leading producer of graphics in North America. We will develop our people by investing in education and training. Empowering employees to continually make improvements to the process and challenge them to improve themselves. By focusing on the needs of the customer, we will keep the company strong and grow our sales to over \$50,000,000.

After months of discussion and planning, Empire's Marketing Team will be hosting our first national sales meeting. VP of Marketing, Doug Billings, and the Empire Marketing Team, have created an agenda that pinpoints some of the needs of our outside sales reps.



Over thirty representatives from all over the United States, will be converging on Empire, July 15th and 16th.

Attendees will take part in plant tours geared toward newer reps, as well as, more in-depth tours for our experienced reps. They will also learn about Empire equipment acquisitions and how to sell those new capabilities.

Empire has brought in outside partners from FLEXcon to educate participants about materials and adhesives on the market. We also want to inform NSM Attendees of our partnership with TKO Graphix, and how these business relationships are mutually beneficial for all concerned.

The benefits of face to face conversations and discussions will only enhance and strengthen the relationships we are building with our sales force. Opportunity is knocking: Empire and our reps are ready to answer the call.

SAFETY AWARENESS NEWS

Workman's Comp - Understanding Mod factor

NATIONAL SAFETY OBSERVANCES



June

National Safety Month

National Safety Council (www.nsc.org)



July

National Fireworks Safety Month

Prevent Blindness America
(www.preventblindness.org)



August

National Immunization Awareness Month

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
(www.cdc.gov)



September

National Preparedness Month

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
(www.ready.gov)

EMPIRE SAFETY REMINDERS



Keep Up the Great Work!

Employees have 1000+ days with no lost time accidents.



New Fire Alarm System Installed

Plant-wide improvement



Hearing & Eye Protection

Personal Protective Equipment
Remember to use it, so you don't lose it!



Alert Your Safety Committee

Please notify any of the safety committee members if you have any concerns that need to be addressed.

Concerned about how your workers' compensation insurance premium is calculated? You should be. Your experience modification factor, or mod, is an important component used in calculating Empire's workers' compensation premium. Our mod is directly tied to Empire's safety record.

Understanding the mod data calculation provides you with the information necessary to control your mod to reduce your workers' compensation premium.

Calculating the mod is complex, but the theory and purpose of the formula is straightforward. Your company's actual losses are compared to its expected losses by industry type. The formula incorporates factors that take into account company size, unexpected large losses and the difference between loss frequency and loss severity to achieve a balance between fairness and accountability.

The mod factor represents either a credit or debit that is applied to your workers' compensation premium. A mod factor greater than 1.0, a debit mod, means that losses are worse than expected and a surcharge will be added to your premium. A mod factor less than 1.0, a credit mod, means the losses are better than expected, resulting in a discounted premium. Empire currently has a mod factor of 89. Which means we are 10% better than similar companies.

Since our mod factor has a direct impact on our workers' compensation premium, the key to controlling insurance costs is through accident prevention and safety management. The mod is based on data reported to the rating bureau by past insurers. Empire can impact its mod factor in several ways.

- Incorrect or incomplete data can cause incorrect mod factors. Review the loss and payroll data to make sure the calculation is complete and accurate.

- Losses remain in the experience rating formula for three years. The mod factor is influenced more by small, frequent losses than by large, infrequent ones.

- Develop a safety program, return-to-work program, and loss prevention procedures to reduce claim frequency.

- An effective inspection and accident investigation program are critical to managing claim frequency.

- Implement a management program to efficiently resolve claims.

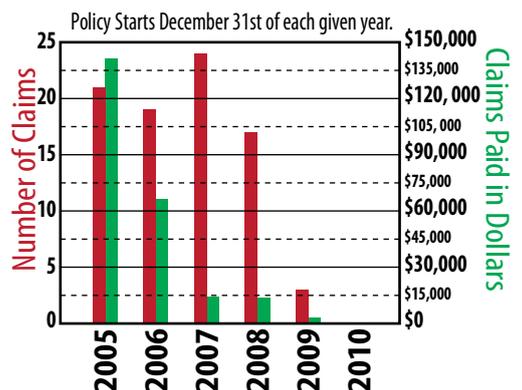
- Take an aggressive approach to providing light duty to all injured employees upon their release from treatment.

- Set safety performance goals for supervisors. Success in achieving safety goals should be used in performance evaluations.

- Train employees in their responsibilities for safety and enforce conformance.

- Communicate with employees on a formal and informal basis regarding the importance of safety.

Empire has established a proactive safety program as an effective way to reduce losses, that positively impact our mod and worker's comp insurance premium. We are moving forward to a healthier future.



Safety Coordinator:

Randy Hoff Plant Engineer

Committee Members:

Lee Vieth Plant Manager

John Johnson Asst. Plant Manager

Roger Henderson Insurance Agent

Amy Bettis Art Department

Keith Cook R&D

Steve Nelson Die Making

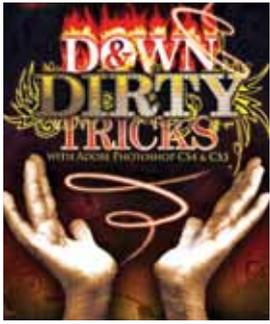
Brian Searle Maintenance

Deb Wolfe Level 3



calendar ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

Investing in Employees - Photoshop Seminar, Minneapolis, MN



As part of Empire's commitment to the education and growth of its employees, Amy Bettis, Amanda Kuehl and Paul Kiedrowski attended an Adobe® Photoshop® Down & Dirty Tricks Seminar in Minneapolis, MN. The meeting room in the Convention Center was filled to the brim with creative professionals from various backgrounds: digital photography, marketing and graphic design. All were watching the two wall size screens as Photoshop Expert and best-selling author Dave Cross led the assembly through several sessions. With the tutelage of Adobe® Photoshop® Down & Dirty Tricks Seminar we at Empire can be assured to benefit, more importantly, so will our customers, here's how:

- Utilizing industry leading layers and compositing techniques will allow us to design even more eye-catching marketing pieces, or give the customer's art their desired look.
- From a production end, shortcut keys and other tricks like the "Blend If" sliders will make tasks more efficient, while maintaining quality.
- Leveraging the "Smart Objects" feature within Photoshop gives us the ability to design templates within the program, allowing us to swap images with ease, which is very handy if a job has last minute revisions. Plus, this feature also allows the artist to re size an image without compromising quality.

As an employee it is our duty to do our role to the best of our abilities and knowledge. If your employer presents to you the opportunity to increase your ability/knowledge please accept. Writer, Peter F. Drucker said it best, "Knowledge has to be improved, challenged, and increased constantly, or it vanishes."

Digital and Doming Departments Expand



In the spring of 2010 Empire purchased additional equipment to expand our capabilities. Our doming department purchased Color Dec Ecodome machine. This new machinery will allow us to produce three-dimensional and flexible emblems, badges and labels, of incomparable beauty and elegance. We will be marketing this new technology as Empire E-fx dome. The Digital Department purchased a second Gandi large format printer to keep up with current demand. This purchase was also a necessary requirement for us to gain the opportunity to be able to be a supplier for Best Buy. Forward thinking will help expand Empire in new markets and grow our customer base as part of our long term plan.

Empire Partners with TKO Graphix to Help La Crosse HMAA

Empire worked with TKO to provide grand format banners for the La Crosse Hmong Mutual Assistance Association for their Hmong Cultural Community Center on Ward Avenue. These 8 ft. by 10 ft. banners will become part of a museum exhibit that recreates a Hmong village.

The HMAA is a non-profit agency, established in 1982, that serves as an educational and charitable organization, assisting refugees with adjusting to life in the United States. During the past decade, the HMAA has emerged as a multi-cultural organization promoting the appreciation for diversity, advocating civil rights and culturally sensitive service for minority groups.

Among the services provided at the center are family counseling, domestic violence prevention and intervention assistance, job training and placement, several youth programs, and preservation of the Hmong culture. The center even hosts a blacksmith shop, in which many Hmong elders have come to utilize. They are capable of practicing their trade and sharpening their skills learned many years ago prior to fleeing their homeland, while sharing their rich heritage with the community.

If you wish to learn more about the La Crosse Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, check out their web site at www.lacrossehmaa.org.

June 30th - July 5th
Riverfest - Riverside Park
See schedule of events on web site
www.riverfestlacrosse.com

❖
June - October
Farmer's Market on Ward Avenue
afternoons in the parking lot of the Hmong Cultural Community Center
www.lacrossehmaa.org

❖
July - September
Movies in the Park (FREE)
July 16 - Goose Green Park
Field of Dreams
August 20 - Kids Coulee in Myrick Park,
Planet 51
September 10, Erickson Park
Little Giants

❖
July 15th - 18th
Midwest Motorcycle Rally
Check out website for rally locations
www.midwestmotorcyclerrally.com

❖
August 10th
Coulee Chordsman (HUTS)
Harmony Under the Stars
7pm Riverside Park Bandshell
www.couleechordsman.org

❖
September 10th - 11th
La Crosse Storytelling Festival
Myrick Park Main Shelter
lacrossestoryfest.com

❖
For more ideas visit
www.explorelacrosse.com

Jungle scenery, surrounding the Hmong village.



Typical Hmong village

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

Marketing Team

In the fall of 2008, Empire formed their own internal Marketing Team. Team members include, John Freismuth (President), Autum Jacobs (Assistant VP) Doug Billings (VP Sales/Marketing), Jennifer Schloesser (Creative Director), Amy Bettis (Project Manager) and Amanda Kuehl (Graphic Designer). Their goal was to promote Empire as a brand and create a unique corporate identity.

A complete overhaul of our corporate logo was the first item on the marketing agenda. Second item on our agenda was to create a tagline that would be synonymous with Empire. Jennifer Schloesser designed the dynamic swirl and logotype. The marketing team tweaked it further and chose the colors and developed the tagline, "The Art of Printing". The team wanted to convey that producing any given printed piece takes skill and craftsmanship.

Since then the team has lived up to our tagline, "The Art of Printing", designing marketing kits, which were targeted at specific capabilities at Empire. The focus of these kits was intended to educate both our sales reps and potential customers, as to why Empire is the right choice for their business. However, the team wanted these items to be creative and distinctive. Many of these kits pushed our production skills to the limit, showcasing just what Empire can do.

Empire has produced kits highlighting digital printing, cutting capabilities, doming, flexo, and Lean Manufacturing. We have created our own unique calendars, brochures, and timelines. We were so confident in the appeal of these pieces, that we entered four kits in a national print competition, the Gold Ink Awards, sponsored by the North American Publishing Company. Winners will be notified mid to late August. Award winners will be presented their awards October 4th at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago.



John Freismuth



Autum Jacobs



Doug Billings



Jennifer Schloesser



Amy Bettis



Amanda Kuehl

Employee Announcements

Congratulations to **Autum Jacobs** and her husband Codi on the birth of their daughter, Brooklyn McKenna
 Born: March 31, 2010
 Weight: 7 lbs. 14 oz.
 Length: 21 in.

Congratulations to **Denise Enger** and her husband Jeremy on the birth of their son, Colin
 Born: April 29, 2010
 Weight: 7 lbs. 11 oz.
 Length: 20 in.

Congratulations to **Suzie Robinson** and her husband Mike on the birth of their son, Charles Wesley
 Born: May 22, 2010
 Weight: 6 lbs. 13 oz.
 Length: 19 in.

Congratulations to **Kayla Mashak** and Josh Wolfe on the birth of their daughter, Kylee Nicole
 Born: May 29, 2010
 Weight: 9 lbs. 13 oz.
 Length: 21 in.

Congratulations to **Mary Phillips** on your retirement, January 29, 2010
 31 Years at Empire. Thank you for your service!!!

In Memory of **Jeremy Kohls**
 Born: August 22, 1972
 Died: January 16, 2010
 He was a good employee, friend, fiance, brother, and father. Jeremy will be sadly missed by all of us.

Employee Anniversaries

JULY

- Steve Remen 38 yrs.
- Connie Peterson..... 24 yrs.
- Ralph Young 19 yrs.
- Chris Schultz 18 yrs.
- Tracy Kohls..... 16 yrs.
- Mary Arentz..... 16 yrs.
- Laramie Schwier..... 16 yrs.
- Debra Turnipseed ... 16 yrs.
- Joann Anderson 13 yrs.
- Curt Wier 11 yrs.
- Sheldon True 11 yrs.
- Teresa Koski..... 11 yrs.
- Jerry Fishbaugher 11 yrs.
- Robert Kranski 6 yrs.
- Dee Norling..... 5 yrs.
- Kevin Steele..... 5 yrs.
- Robert Trudeau 3 yrs.
- Chris Daugherty..... 3 yrs.
- Dale Westaby 3 yrs.
- Derek Remen..... 1 yr.
- Paul Kiedrowski 1 yr.

AUGUST

- Sue Maule 27 yrs.
- Angie Burnett 27 yrs.
- Mike Smith 23 yrs.
- Deb Wolfe..... 23 yrs.
- Steve Johnson 20 yrs.
- Sharon Ronnie 20 yrs.
- Lee Vieth 19 yrs.
- Jeff Meyer..... 19 yrs.
- Phillip Hartmann.... 14 yrs.
- Randy Stenberg..... 14 yrs.
- Julie Butterfield 13 yrs.
- Vicky Shelmidine... 13 yrs.
- Patricia Lastofka 11 yrs.
- Steve Lechnir..... 11 yrs.
- Greg Sparks 11 yrs.
- Jody Low 8 yrs.
- Terry Mc Clintock..... 8 yrs.
- Doug Kuehn 5 yrs.
- Cheryl Boyd 5 yrs.
- Josh Leisgang* 5 yrs.
- Levi Adank* 5 yrs.

- Julie Kane..... 4 yrs.
- Raymond Wurzel..... 4 yrs.
- Tanner Smith 3 yrs.
- Jessica Harper 3 yrs.
- Nathan Wesely* 3 yrs.
- Stephen Fisher* 3 yrs.
- Cory Vieth 2 yrs.
- Ashley Wells* 2 yrs.
- Ronnie Laack 1 yr.
- Dan Metz* 1 yr.

SEPTEMBER

- Steve Stenberg 32 yrs.
- Randy Smith 19 yrs.
- Nancy Gilbertson 13 yrs.
- Carolyn Fishbaugher... 10 yrs.
- Michael Rowlands.... 6 yrs.
- Kaara Freismuth* 5 yrs.
- Kim Page 3 yrs.
- Fawn Marsh* 2 yrs.

*Part-time employees

Welcome New Employees

- George Yang
- Scott Yang
- Steve Yang
- Monte Mabb
- Deanna Stanton

- Kristin Paradise
- Michael Gallup
- Miranda Worrell
- Nathan Monhaut*
- Michael Wolfe*

- Katie Kaiser*
- Alex Vaughan*
- Edmund Klajda*
- Madison Freismuth*

EMPIRE QUALITY POLICY

Empire Screen Printing has an ongoing commitment to fully satisfy our customer. Through continual improvement in all aspects of our business, we supply the best product and service in the screenprinting industry, in the most efficient and professional manner possible.

Coordinator: Amy Bettis	Proofreaders: Clark Martin
Editor: Doug Billings Nathan Monhaut
Layout Design: Cathy Buttell	Contributors: Ellie Grotelueschen,
Photographers: Amy Bettis Paul Kiedrowski, Kathy Vaughn,
..... Jennifer Schloesser Roger Henderson, Wendy Mattison

• **DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER: September 15, 2010** •

All articles and announcements can be submitted to: Doug Billings (2311) or Amy Bettis (2371)