



Michigan Celebrates
Small Business



2023

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MCSB is a collaboration of trusted statewide organizations who offer collective resources to support, connect and celebrate small business. Michigan Celebrates is presented by its founding organizations: Michigan Economic Development Corp. (MEDC); Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM); Michigan Business Network; Edward Lowe Foundation; and the Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

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AWARD CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

MICHIGAN 50 COMPANIES TO WATCH

The Michigan 50 Companies to Watch is the premier MCSB awards category that recognizes 50 Michigan companies that are up-and-coming with high potential for future growth and success. Award criteria includes annual revenue between \$750,000 and \$50 million, between six and 99 full-time equivalent W-2 employees, as well as a demonstration of substantial growth and a sustainable competitive advantage.

MICHIGAN DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

The MCSB awardee alumni community is now 900 companies strong, and grows each year. This community represents a substantial amount of the vitality that is foundational to the Michigan economy. MCSB recognizes alumni companies each year that best demonstrate the continued success of the alumni community. The “Great Place to Work Award” recognizes a previous Michigan 50 Companies to Watch recipient for their increased contributions to their community and who have fostered a creative, collaborative workplace culture to enhance performance and sustain a competitive advantage. The “Strategically Focused Award” recognizes a previous recipient that has strategically increased their sales since they were awarded to ensure continued sustainability in the ever-changing economy.

BEST SMALL BUSINESS RECOGNITION

Apex Accelerators, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), and SmartZones are organizations located across the state that provide support services to Michigan small businesses. Each region of these various support organizations selects a company to be recognized as a best small business honoree for demonstrating a strong relationship with the organization, as well as promising growth as a company

Apex Accelerators have been put in place to provide small businesses with government contracting at little to no cost. With help from Apex Accelerators, small businesses are able to connect with buyers and suppliers, attend networking events to gain exposure and receive professional advice when it comes to market research and writing proposals.

The **Small Business Development Centers** around Michigan provide entrepreneurs with a chance to receive input and assistance at no cost. From wanting to start a business with learning the fundamentals of growing a business, the Michigan SBDC is able to set small businesses up for success with their assistance in business startup, training and secondary research services, and innovation and product diversification.

SmartZones help small businesses accelerate, connect, and collaborate. Businesses are able to join accelerator services from technology assessments and mining to management recruitment and business planning. In a world where technology is ever-changing, SmartZones provide various resources to Michigan entrepreneurs.

VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

The “Veteran-Owned Small Business of the Year” is a business with at least a 51% ownership share held by a military veteran with a minimum of a “general discharge,” active-duty service member eligible for the military’s Transition Assistance Program, reservists and National Guard members. Proof of service (DD214, NGB-22, or other official proof of service must be submitted before the award can be presented). To be considered for this award, the company must demonstrate a stable number of employees; be financially stable; provide employment opportunities for members of the military community; and must be engaged in the community, including contributions and volunteerism to aid community-oriented projects.

MINORITY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

The “Minority-Owned Small Business of the Year” is a business that is at least 51% owned and run on a daily basis by a member (or collection of members) of four ethnic or racial groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans. The business must have a history as an established business, demonstrate a stable number of employees, and be financially stable. To be considered for this recognition, a company must provide employment opportunities for members of the minority community, have a positive company culture where employees are valued, and engage in voluntary efforts to support minority groups directly or issues affecting minority groups.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AWARDS

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Michigan District Office awards small businesses special recognition for the business leveraging SBA services, positively contributing to the economy and giving back to the community. SBA, Michigan District Office also awards “Centers of Excellence Awards” to SBA service organizations who make a significant contribution to small businesses.

AWARD WINNERS

2023 MICHIGAN 50 COMPANIES TO WATCH

AaDya Security	Domico Med-Device	Ore Dock Brewing Co.
ABA Pathways LLC	Doyle Inc. Roofing	Prosper-Tech Machine & Tool LLC
AEBetancourt	Elite Cos.	Sabo PR
Alma Tire Cos.	Erie Custom Signs	Saddleback BBQ
Atlas Wholesale Food Co.	Flash Steelworks Inc.	SafetyDecals.com
Baynes Apple Valley	Gaco Sourcing	Skin Boss Med Spa
BlackTruck Media + Marketing	Gougeon Brothers Inc.	Sniffer Robotics
Bohning	Grand Rapids Tech	Soft Goods
Bundled	ICAT Logistics Detroit	Soils & Structures
Cedar Springs Brewing Co.	Impact Fab Inc.	St. Clair Packaging Inc.
Chippewa Government Solutions	Income Power LLC	Superior Coffee Roasting Co. Inc.
Chunk Nibbles	Innovo	Superior Innovative Solutions LLC
ClickBid Event Fundraising Software	Kirlin Lighting	TotalCAE
Cogent Hex Inc.	LSPedia	TRUiC
Concetti	Macomb Powersports	Walsh Service Solutions
CorrPak	MDL Cos.	Waymark
Destination Consultants LLC	Ohana Ventures Inc.	

MICHIGAN 50 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Award: Great Place to Work
BizStream

MICHIGAN 50 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Award: Strategically Focused
Zolli Candy

MICHIGAN SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESSES

Barney's BakeHouse Bakery
Berridge Barn LLC
City Shield Security Services
Eagle Link LLC
Freedom Counseling LLC
Groovy Donuts
R.J.'s Metropolitan Ice Cream Co.
Sand Bay Marina Sales Service & Storage
Staffords Hospitality Inc.
Thumb Roast Coffee
Wood Shop Social

APEX ACCELERATORS BEST SMALL BUSINESSES

AJP Commercial Shredding
Arbor Corp. Inc.
Arvco Container Corp.
Austin Logistics LLC
Kall Morris Inc. (KMI)
North American Controls
Power Construction Group LLC
Prein&Newhof
SeaLandAire Technologies Inc.

SMARTZONE BEST SMALL BUSINESSES

Accelerated Filtration Inc.
Bearex
Ensired Solutions
Excelsior Engineering
Farmish
Giggso Inc.
Hybrid Robotics
MQT Innovations Inc.
Revolin Sports
Steelhead Technologies
Sticker Blitz
Urban Electronics Inc.
Workpack Solutions

VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

JetCo Solutions

MINORITY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

Allegiant Laundry Services
Walsh Service Solutions

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and a blue apron, is looking down at a white smartphone in his hands. He is standing in a greenhouse or nursery, with many potted plants visible in the background and foreground. The lighting is bright and natural, coming from a window or glass door. The overall tone is professional and focused.

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DE&I is for Small Businesses

By Consumers Energy

Job seekers and customers are eager to engage with small businesses who demonstrate commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I). It's about empowering co-workers to bring their best, most authentic selves to work, so they can serve customers better. It's about connecting with customers and vendors on their terms. It's about attracting and retaining a workforce that reflects the diverse makeup of the communities each small business serves. It's about being intentional about serving all businesses and individuals in a service area.

But how should small businesses build their DE&I strategies? As Michigan's largest energy provider serving 6.7 million of Michigan's 10 million residents, we formally launched our DE&I focus in 2020. We're continuing to learn lessons and best practices that can help your small business chart a more inclusive path.

LOOK INSIDE YOUR BUSINESS

What does your small business stand for? Whom does it stand up for? Who do you contract with? Your answers to these questions are the essence of your business's culture and the foundation of your DE&I action plan.

Businesses and organizations of all sizes often ask us how to launch DE&I initiatives. Our response? Just start! Consider these tips:

- 1. Create safe spaces.** Create a culture of listening and learning.
- 2. Appreciate DE&I in all its forms.** Race, gender, sexual orientation and other traditional measures are just the start.
- 3. View your co-workers and customers through a DE&I lens.** Systemic DE&I change happens in the space of process. Cultivate an environment where all co-workers and customers see, hear and feel DE&I's presence throughout their experiences.
- 4. Avoid resting on your laurels.** At Consumers Energy, DE&I isn't a moment—it's a movement. Deploy a DE&I approach that mandates continuous improvement.

SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Regardless of where your business is located, what industry you are in or who the business owner is, Consumers Energy is ready to provide business solutions to all diverse businesses. The following are examples of Consumers Energy's support for diverse businesses:

Westwood Heights Schools, located in Flint, Michigan, struggles with high poverty rates amongst their students. In addition, health risks loom in their water supply due to the past presence of lead. SitelogIQ (formerly Unesco) helped the school develop a five-year energy efficiency plan to both save energy as well as create a safe learning environment for students. These accomplishments led them to win first place in the annual Consumers Energy "Project of the Year" competition; they earned statewide recognition along with a \$15,000 award. Westwood Heights Schools' solution and prize reward has allowed the school and its education to flourish in current years.

Candra's Grooming Company in Kentwood, Michigan, focuses on all pet grooming needs. After noticing how much energy her services required, Candra sought to find a solution to reduce electric costs and act sustainably. A Consumers Energy contractor, called a Trade Ally, helped develop an energy-efficient lighting plan for the business. The new installations allowed Candra's Grooming Company to acquire funds to invest in business supplies and help open a potential second location. Consumers Energy made the company's goals possible and gave them the opportunity to create future objectives.

Melling Engine Parts, a manufacturing auto parts company in Jackson, Michigan, was looking to make their business more energy-efficient and sustainable. To help with this goal, Consumers Energy Industrial Energy Management (IEM) assisted in identifying opportunities to save energy, ultimately saving the company thousands of dollars. With these newfound funds, Melling Engine Parts invested in new resources for their manufacturing facilities and hired more employees. These successes, made possible by Consumers Energy, allowed for an increase in productivity and employee morale.

Take stock of what your small business cares about to form a ready-made rallying point for your DE&I strategy. Hire individuals who are diverse, building on the established innovative thinking within your business. Seek out diverse businesses in all aspects of diversity to work with as partners and customers.

Economic Impact of the 2023 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch 50 Awardees

Economic Impact in 2022

\$453 million in total annual revenue

57% increase in total annual
revenue compared to 2021

1,439 full-time equivalent employees in 2022

1,374 in Michigan • 65 out of state

498 net new jobs projected for 2023

1,888 in Michigan • 49 out of state

INCREASING IMPACT*

4-year look

From 2019 through 2022, the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch generated \$1.1 billion in revenue and added 451 employees (both in Michigan and out of state), reflecting a 57% increase in revenue and 22% increase in jobs for the four-year period. That translates into a 34% average annual revenue growth and 14% average annual growth in employees.

5-year look

These companies project continued growth in 2023, with a 4% revenue increase and 35% growth in employees (both in Michigan and out of state) compared to 2022. If their projections hold, these companies will have generated \$1.6 billion in revenue and added 949 employees over the last five years—a 144% increase in revenue and 96% increase in jobs since 2019.

Regional Distribution

Region	# of Companies
Southeast	17
West	12
Great Lakes Bay	5
I-69 Trade Corridor	3
Greater Washtenaw	3
Upper Peninsula	3
Capital	2
Southwest	2
Northwest	2
Northeast	1

Business Sector Distribution

Business Sector	# of Companies
Manufacturing	14
Professional services	5
SaaS	4
Accommodation or food services	3
Construction	3
Information technology	2
Agriculture	1
Entertainment and recreation	1
Healthcare or social services	1
Medical devices	1
Publishing	1
Retail trade	1
Real estate, rental and leasing	1
Transportation and warehousing	1
Waste management or remediation services	1
Other	10

Disadvantaged Classes of Business Ownership

Class	# of Companies
Woman-owned	8
Rural location	6
Minority-owned	6
Minority- and woman-owned	3
Woman-owned and rural location	2
Minority-owned and rural location	1
Minority- and veteran-owned	1
Veteran-owned and rural location	1

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (projected)
Revenue in \$ millions	\$193	\$260	\$288	\$453	\$471
Employees*	988	1,012	1,178	1,449	1,937

*full-time equivalent in Michigan and out of state

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How many employees do you have?

Do you think **EVERY SINGLE EMPLOYEE** is doing **EVERYTHING POSSIBLE** to prevent **ransomware**?

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 **cynthia kay**
AND COMPANY

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If 2021 was a rebuilding year for the state of Michigan, 2022 was a year of transformational growth. With laser focus and drive, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) spent 2022 collaborating with partners across the state to win transformational projects, celebrate place-based investments and promote the four-season beauty and opportunities across Pure Michigan.

DESPITE THE CHALLENGES AND CHANGES we've collectively faced over the past three years, Team Michigan's foundation remains the same: aiming to create a more equitable economy for all Michiganders who call our state home.

Among those key efforts has been MEDC's continued focus on supporting and celebrating the risk-takers and small business owners who are the backbone of the state economy. Michigan is home to over 900,000 small businesses, with 1.9 million small business employees, and more than 99 percent of Michigan businesses are defined as small businesses with fewer than 500 employees.

We at the MEDC are inspired by Michigan's small businesses and are proud to help them thrive. In July 2022, the MEDC announced a new Small Business Services and Business Solutions team as part of a heightened focus on supporting small businesses in Michigan. This team was created to play

MICHIGAN'S SMALL BUSINESSES CREATE BIG IMPACT

a vital role in helping existing small and microbusinesses grow in the state, while improving economic prosperity for all Michiganders through greater opportunities for small business ownership and access to capital.

That includes demonstrating a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusivity by addressing the need for more intentional and inclusive policies to support minority-, veteran- and women-owned businesses in the state. We know that economies grow faster and more vigorously when opportunities for prosperity are more equitably distributed across all segments of the population. To that end, the state joined partners at Michigan Women Forward, the Ballmer Foundation and Huntington Bank to launch the Michigan Economic Opportunity Fund in March 2023, a new \$10 million microbusiness loan program for women, veterans and entrepreneurs of color in Michigan. Entrepreneurs will be able to apply for up to \$50,000 in loans through this program.

In Michigan, nearly every indicator of the state's success is influenced and reflected by its small businesses. They play a

From a seasoned entrepreneur at the age of 17 and a mother/daughter duo, to a veteran warfighter and a tribally owned federal contractor, the 2023 MCSB Awards Gala honorees represent a range of passionate people in Michigan and the opportunities available to small business owners.

vital role in attracting talent to live and work in small towns and big cities alike and are economic drivers of the local communities. And while small businesses are essential to the growth and success of our state's economy, we also recognize that they are the connective threads in the fabric of our communities and play a part in our everyday lives. Whether shopping at a local boutique, stopping at the drycleaner up the street or sharing a meal at a favorite restaurant, each action supports Michigan's communities. With a common goal of uplifting and encouraging small businesses—and sharing their powerful stories—we can create significant impacts on our state's families, businesses and places we call home.

In the spirit of honoring small business owners and recognizing the important roles they play in the state, the MEDC is a proud sponsor of Michigan Celebrates Small Business (MCSB). As we celebrate the 19th Annual MCSB Awards Gala, this year's awardees reflect the diversity of industries, services and passionate business owners found across the state of Michigan.

Zolli Candy

Alina Morse, founder of Zolli Candy in Oakland County, is being honored at this year's gala with the Michigan 50 Distinguished Alumni Award at the age of 17. Morse was only seven years old when she was inspired to create a healthy alternative to the sucker she was offered at the bank; her persistence led to the creation of Zolli Candy, which is zero-sugar, vegan, allergy-friendly, gluten-free, made with natural flavors, no artificial colors and helps clean your teeth. Zolli pops are the number one fastest-growing, zero-sugar candy sold on Amazon, as well as sold in 25,000 stores across America and internationally in nine countries.

The company received coaching from Edward Lowe Foundation and MEDC-sponsored programs. Thanks to the MEDC's help, Zolli Candy was able to advance their marketing, operations and recruiting strategies. By narrowing down their target market and analyzing data, the MEDC and Edward Lowe Foundation assisted in developing processes to identify current and prospective customers. Zolli Candy created business processes and production time management with the help of experts through MEDC connections. The team was also provided resources to access training grants to train and certify employees and improve knowledge and capabilities of the team.

MICHIGAN'S SMALL BUSINESSES CREATE BIG IMPACT

ABA Pathways Inc.

As one of the 2023 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch, ABA Pathways Inc. in Livingston County is a women-owned company focused on creating a culture of collaboration, advocacy and opportunity for its clients and employees. Owners Jenipher Swanson and JoAnne Dodick are a mother/daughter duo who felt passionate about serving the underserved autism population and wanted to do something about it. Together, they obtained their board-certified behavior analyst certification and licensure, and in 2012 they opened their business to provide services for children with autism in Michigan.

Since ABA Pathways services a large Medicaid population, the business received federal COVID relief funds, grants and essential worker support funds through local, state and federal mental health organizations, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. They obtained a PPP loan through the federal government which allowed them to stay in business and retain all their staff; the business only closed for two weeks as they were deemed to be essential workers. With the help of the MEDC, ABA Pathways facilitated the support of its direct care workers with emergency retention funds and special wage increases. The work and coordination of all these agencies statewide during the public health emergency ensured the continued employment of staff.

We know that economies grow faster and more vigorously when opportunities for prosperity are more equitably distributed across all segments of the population.

JetCo Solutions

Before he became a business owner, Jon Tellier was a warfighter, with 11 years of active-duty service in the Army and another 12 years in the reserves. Tellier and his wife Sue started JetCo Solutions in Kent County to help small businesses win new business from government agencies. JetCo Solutions is a full-service government sales consulting firm that covers the entire government sales and marketing lifecycle—from research and bid writing through complete government capture services. JetCo Solutions' clients are highly qualified companies—mostly small businesses—with a product or service the government cares about.

Since its inception, JetCo Solutions has served hundreds of clients all over the United States, winning them almost \$4 billion in contract awards. Tellier and JetCo Solutions are being honored with the Veteran-Owned Small Business Award at this year's gala.

Chippewa Government Solutions

Another Michigan 50 Companies to Watch awardee, Chippewa Government Solutions, is a tribally owned federal contractor excelling in technology, training development and media production out of Chippewa County. Committed to serving federal agencies and creating economic opportunities for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the company successfully integrates Native American values and modern business practices. As a subsidiary of Sault Tribe Incorporated, Chippewa Government Solutions serves the federal government while generating revenue and jobs for the tribe. Profits support over 50,000 tribal members through health, education, and cultural initiatives. Their success stems from their competitive advantage, leadership, collaborations and growth partners.

Chippewa Government Solutions maintains strong ties with the MEDC and Michigan Small Business Development Center. These organizations provide support in business startup, certification processes and infrastructure development, including the establishment of the Tamarack Business Center in downtown Sault Ste. Marie. Chippewa Government Solutions will continue to maintain routine contact with multiple MEDC resources and feels passionate about being part of the team that leads to regional economic success.

At the MEDC, we understand the role we play within the state of Michigan to create significant and powerful economic opportunities for the 10 million-plus Michiganders who call our state home and the business owners who play a critical role in our state's economy and communities. Every day, small businesses across Michigan are investing in their workforce to create opportunities for

future prosperity. In working together as Team Michigan, we will build on the momentum of the past few years and continue to celebrate our accomplishments, from the success of our small businesses across the state, to making Michigan a top destination to build a life—and a business. Much like the sun rising over Lake Huron, our collective future is shining and bright.



Michigan Celebrates
Small Business

SMALL BUSINESSES MAKE A BIG IMPACT.

Michigan's economy thrives thanks to our state's small businesses.

Small businesses make a big impact, and Michigan's economy thrives due to the dedication of our state's small business community. Through the good times and the bad, small business owners carry the yolk boldly into the future, with the hope of making communities stronger. When one small business succeeds, they all succeed. Thus, pushing forward the mindset of "success is best when shared." Not only have these companies succeeded in a variety of ways, they have made waves in their communities through hard work and dedication.

Since 2005, Michigan Celebrates Small Business has dedicated itself to acknowledging businesses that continually have an impact. The MCSB gala aims to recognize those who are making impacts in their communities and those who are driven, innovative, and resilient. This year, 90 small businesses will be honored for their achievements at the 19th annual awards ceremony. The leadership and perseverance that shines through each one of these companies guides them down the path of success and opens doors of opportunity.

The companies honored as the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch have made a distinct impact on Michigan's economy through innovation, marketplace performance, and company culture. Out of the over 400 well-qualified nominations submitted, these 50 companies exude all the necessary qualities of a growing and thriving small business. These Michigan-based companies represent future-focused, second-stage businesses, employing anywhere from six to 99 full-time equivalent employees and generate \$750,000 and \$50 million in annual revenue.

This year's Michigan 50 Companies to Watch awardees have climbed their way to the top with the leadership, diversity, and dedication it takes to be in the Michigan Celebrates' family of small businesses. From 2019 through 2022, these companies generated \$1.1 billion in revenue and added 451 employees (both in Michigan and out of state), reflecting a 57% increase in revenue and 22% increase in jobs for the four-year period. That translates into a 34% average annual revenue growth and a 14% average annual growth in employees.

Michigan Celebrates Small Business understands not everyone's path to success looks the same—it is important we all celebrate differences and uniqueness. The following Michigan 50 Company profiles will provide their unique small business stories, highlighting the impact(s) they have made on their communities. Each business has a story of success and Michigan Celebrates Small Business wants to help tell that story.

Small businesses account for 99.6% of Michigan businesses and provide an abundance of benefits and opportunities in local communities. Small businesses provide families with jobs, strengthen communities, help the environment, and most importantly, support other small businesses.

Small businesses have a deeper impact than what meets the eye. It is important to Michigan Celebrates Small Business to give credit to the businesses who continue to make a big impact in our state.

We invite you to read through the following pages to learn more about these companies, understand their passion, and honor their dedication.

2023



AADYA SECURITY

Detroit

Raffaele Mautone

www.aadyasecurity.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We provide smart, simple, affordable and effective cybersecurity solutions for small and midsize businesses (SMBs).

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

The mission behind AaDya Security is serving a population that many within the cybersecurity industry have avoided due to its cumbersome nature and revenue potential. The major differentiator for AaDya's platform is that it combines everything that an SMB needs for security into one platform.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Throughout my career in IT, I noted the lack of focus from solution providers on the needs and challenges of the SMBs customer, leaving them vulnerable to increasing cyber attacks. So I decided to get to work on what started as a back-of-the-napkin idea to deliver an all-in-one solution to SMBs.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our all-in-one cybersecurity solution, Judy, has evolved with her AI/MachineLearning capabilities, as well as the other pillars we've built. We will continue to automate many of the tasks and features that burden SMB owners, IT departments or users.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The fact that small businesses are increasingly targeted by cyber threats and are being held to the same security and compliance standards as their larger counterparts.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Team, customers, purpose.



ABA PATHWAYS LLC

Lakeland

Jenipher Swanson

www.abaways.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

ABA Pathways offers a holistic, person-centered, multidisciplinary approach to services for children with autism.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

ABA Pathways plans to expand our services by opening three more centers in Michigan in 2023.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

In 2012, when we decided to open ABA Pathways, there were limited services available for children with autism. My passion for helping children with autism and their families drove my desire to become a business owner.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is attributed to employee teamwork and collaboration to meet the treatment needs of children with autism and their families. Our multidisciplinary approach includes applied behavior analysis, family guidance, speech, and occupational therapy.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The current trends that have impacted ABA Pathways the most include Michigan's direct-care worker shortage, high inflation, and the great resignation.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Teamwork, person-centered, kindness.





AEBETANCOURT

Grand Rapids

Arthur Betancourt

www.aebetancourt.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

AEBetancourt is an executive search firm that helps our clients implement comprehensive human capital solutions and increase profitability using the best resources available.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our near-term goals are to introduce more and new consultative services that will aid growing organizations and expand our team to support these efforts.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I saw a need for change in how recruiting firms were structured, specifically in the talent acquisition process. The drive to develop a better way of sourcing, recruiting, and hiring talent became the guiding principle behind our process and business philosophy for our organization.

How would you describe your company's success?

Remarkable and inspiring. We refuse to remain as we are but continue to push the boundaries and norms of the recruiting industry to provide what is needed now while continually evolving for tomorrow.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The increasing need to attract and retain high-quality talent means we have an incredible ability to help a growing number of clients and reinforces our intentional focus on being a trusted, innovative resource.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Inclusive, intentional, innovative.



ALMA TIRE COMPANIES



ALMA TIRE COMPANIES

Alma

Tony Grace

www.almatirecompanies.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a Michigan-based auto and heavy-duty mechanical repair company that also specializes in all classes of tire sales and service.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our next major accomplishment will be adding more service locations throughout the state, bringing more excellent service to our customers and more opportunities to hardworking people in our industry.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I decided to become a business owner because I wanted to create a space for myself and others to work hard, do a great job, and be rewarded and appreciated for hard work. I believe in the greatness of America and that anyone can be a success if they put their mind to it.

How would you describe your company's success?

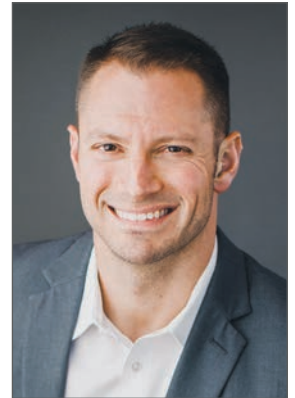
Our company's success is a direct reflection of our incredible team. When you focus on having the best people and taking good care of them, success is inevitable.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Supply chain issues pose a significant challenge for us right now. But we are staying agile and taking proactive measures to ensure that our customers can always depend on us.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Family-focused, performance-driven, team-oriented.





ATLAS WHOLESALE FOOD COMPANY

Detroit

John Kohl

www.atlaswholesalefood.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Treating employees, customers, and our community like family since 1949, Atlas Wholesale Food Co. delivers strong personal relationships through solutions-based food distribution.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

2023 is a year to deepen local customer and vendor partnerships by bringing back Atlas' annual food shows bigger and better than ever for the first time since pre-pandemic!

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Entrepreneurship has always been my passion. It was an honor to be trusted to take over my grandfather's company, Atlas Wholesale Food Co., when my uncles decided to retire.

How would you describe your company's success?

With the day-to-day demands of an industry that doesn't sleep, we strive to stay focused on our core values. It is the balance and push-and-pull of living these values while adhering to the metrics of daily expectations that help our company to thrive.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

In addition to the economic forces of inflation, supply chain delays, and labor shortages, we are pivoting based on shifts in customer and employee demands for technology and sustainability offerings.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Customer-obsessed, quality-driven, innovative.



BAYNES APPLE VALLEY

Freeland

Jenean Coughlin

www.baynesapplevalley.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are an experiential agro-tourism business focusing on bringing people in the tri-counties and beyond together under one roof.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are focusing on expansion of our building, including new parking spaces, two new bathrooms, and an extended roof to cover our outside seating.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We, as a family, want to make an impact on our community that lasts for generations to come.

How would you describe your company's success?

Expanding on what the past owners did successfully and adding key elements to keep people intrigued and excited for what's next.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The continued expanse of people spending money on experiences, not just tangible items.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Peace, love, donuts.



POWERING POSSIBILITY

Small businesses create strong communities. That's why the DTE Foundation proudly supports Michigan Celebrates Small Business and its mission to empower entrepreneurship throughout the state.

DTE
Foundation

GRANDPA
GEORGE
WOULD BE
PROUD

**GRAND
TRAVERSE**
DISTILLERY

5 DOUBLE GOLD
43 GOLD
25 SILVER
11 BRONZE
7 BEST OF CATEGORY

GOLD MEDAL
INTERNATIONAL
REVIEW OF SPIRITS

TOP 50
SPIRITS
IN THE
WORLD

GOLD MEDAL
SAN FRANCISCO
WORLD SPIRITS
COMPETITION

BEST
DISTILLERY
MICHIGAN MEETINGS AND
EVENTS MAGAZINE

5 STARS
EXCEPTIONAL
BEVERAGE EXPERTS

DOUBLE
GOLD
AMERICAN DISTILLING
INSTITUTE

SINGLE BARREL
BEST SPIRITS
PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER
CHEF'S CHALLENGE

BEST LOCAL
DISTILLERY
BEST OF
GRAND TRAVERSE

NORTHERN
MICHIGAN BEST
DISTILLERY
RED HOT BEST
BARS

TOP 6 IN
THE WORLD
WINE ENTHUSIAST
MAGAZINE

blacktruck

media + marketing

BLACKTRUCK MEDIA + MARKETING

Grand Rapids

Jason Dodge

www.blacktruckmedia.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We make your brand more visible online, when and where your customers need you.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Team growth in numbers, reach, and outcomes. We will grow at a sustainable pace that ensures long-term success through investing in the best technology and people to strengthen our position in the market and continue to be a trusted partner to clients at an international level.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I witnessed the way other companies were operating in search engine marketing, the promises that were being made, the unimpressive outcomes, and the way they treated their employees. I knew there was a different way to approach search marketing, one that helps educate other industries, and places a brand back in the driver's seat of its data without sacrificing the integrity of the process. So, I created a team that would right these wrongs and never looked back.

How would you describe your company's success?

We succeed through straight talk. Right up front, we don't guarantee results. Those who do are misdirecting you. Our honest, holistic approach means we use team expertise to devise and implement the right strategy to meet our client goals; then we work with our clients to help them understand exactly what we're doing, why we're doing it, and how it helps meet their business objectives. When our clients succeed, we succeed. It's really that simple.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Artificial intelligence (AI). The robots aren't taking your job. They are making you better and more efficient at it. At the end of the day, we should embrace the technology for what it is and add it to our toolkits. Just keep in mind: smart marketers still need to know their audience. Marketers need to understand the product or service at an intimate level to be able to audit what gets churned out of the machine—so, no matter what tool you're using, you ultimately become the fact checker.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Honest, agile, passionate.



BOHNING

Muskegon

Scott Billsby

www.bohning.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Bohning manufactures and distributes innovative archery, fishing, and golf accessories, as well as agricultural products from our facility in northern Michigan.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Bohning is currently in development of a number of innovative products for 2023, including a product made for fire and rescue teams.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

My mission has always been to solve problems for our customers and take care of our employees. This mission has been a constant for over 75 years and through three generations of owners.

How would you describe your company's success?

Success can be something as simple as the continued success of our employees, both personally and professionally. We pride ourselves as being a place for our employees to have not just a job but a career.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Through social media we are able to connect and inform the end users of our products. We feel more directly connected to our customers because of this new communication tool which allows us to be more nimble in product development.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Family, innovation, service.



bundled.

Gifting Reimagined
www.bundledmi.com

BUNDLED

Commerce Charter Twp.

Courtney Taylor and Chelsea Gheesling

www.bundledmi.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Bundled is a mission-based corporate gifting and fulfillment company that is known for building strong business connections through creative, efficient, and tech-based solutions.



What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

What started as a personal gifting company side hustle between two best friends in 2015 has launched into a rapidly growing corporate gifting, fulfillment, and kitting company. We aim to make the art of gift-giving and connection-building as simple and enjoyable as possible for our clients.

Why did you decide to be business owners?

Our co-founders, Courtney Taylor and Chelsea Gheesling, decided to create a company that allowed working women, especially moms, to be able to do it all.

How would you describe your company's success?

Once we were able to bring on team members, we were able to get to the place we are today. We still feel like we are just getting started and cannot wait to see where our current team of 15 will take us!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The push to support small businesses who advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Bundled is fortunate to have team members that bring nothing but joy, sunshine, and a positive attitude to our team every day because every team member is supported and encouraged equally no matter their ability level.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Inclusive, women-lead, hustling.



CEDAR SPRINGS BREWING COMPANY

Cedar Springs

David Ringler

www.csbrew.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are of German tradition, crafted in Michigan.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We will double our production of Michigan-made traditional beer.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted to share my love for Bavarian culture with my home community.

How would you describe your company's success?

We strive to be authentic and surround ourselves with great people.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

A renewed interest in craft and authentic experiences.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Make community better.





CHIPPEWA GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

Sault Ste. Marie

Rachel Heckel

www.chippewagovsolutions.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Owned by Sault Tribe Inc., the independent business arm of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, CGS is a Small Business Administration 8(a) certified firm that specializes in technology, training development, and media production, delivering highly effective solutions to federal government clients.



What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are pursuing rapid growth opportunities through the federal government as a prime government contractor, and anticipate multiple contract awards this year.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

CGS is owned by Sault Tribe Inc., the independent business arm of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

How would you describe your company's success?

Success to us means increasing the economic resilience of the Sault Tribe to build financial independence and autonomy for its future generations.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The main trends impacting us are not unique to small business but are the labor shortage and inflation.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Collaborative and customer-focused.



CHUNK NIBBLES

Troy

Brad Cocklin

www.chunknibbles.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We craft a nostalgic, third-generation snack mix that is enjoyed by people coast-to-coast!

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Expanding our facility and manufacturing capabilities to continue our growth.



Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We decided to put the endless hours of hardwork and dedication into something we could stamp our name on and be proud of.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our company growth can be attributed to both grit and being scrappy. We have faced a lot of challenges in launching a food business, even prior to a global pandemic and supply chain crisis.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

People are interested in knowing what is in the food they are consuming. Our snacks include recognizable ingredients that you can pronounce and enjoy. The other is that there is a swing in people's buying habits looking to support smaller companies that they feel connected to, rather than large corporations.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Inclusive, empathy, dedication.

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- Commercial Tire & Truck Service
- Commercial Truck Tire Retreading
- Complete Auto Care & Tire Service

ATS FLEET SERVICE



COMMERCIAL TIRE & TRUCK



MODERN MECHANICS



COMPLETE AUTO CARE



 ALMATIRECOMPANIES.COM



Crafting the future of the composite industry
with 54 years of experience.

Gougeon Brothers Inc. makers of Entropy Resins®, PRO-SET® Epoxy, and WEST SYSTEM® Epoxy.



Michigan Celebrates Small Business

50 Companies to Watch

AWARD RECIPIENT



CLICKBID EVENT FUNDRAISING SOFTWARE

Norton Shores

Matthew Burnell

www.clickbidonline.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We provide charity event fundraising software.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We hope to reach \$250 million in charitable giving with ClickBid events.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

To build a retirement for my family and to do something special.

How would you describe your company's success?

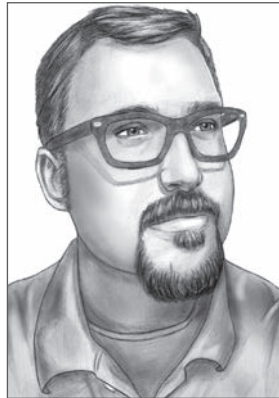
Our success is made possible by great people who are consistently supporting great causes.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Employee happiness. Making sure to keep great staff through purposeful work/life balance.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Knowing what matters.



COGENT HEX INC.

Port Huron

Eric Krohn

www.cogenthex.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Design, build, and integrate automated manufacturing equipment.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To increase our team to provide process solutions to more manufacturers.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

To bring our knowledge and experience directly to companies without the bureaucratic barriers.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is the result of our team's ability to learn and adapt to new technologies and challenges.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Labor and component shortages have propelled our company as a premier solutions provider.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Humble, hungry, smart.





CONCETTI

Detroit

Rachel Nelson

www.concetti.studio

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are interior design strategists; we deliver bold, professional interior design strategies for people who want their spaces to look, act, and feel like themselves.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To create an online quiz that empowers people to insert their authenticity into their built environments.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I was not finding a work environment with a culture that resonated with me and a design philosophy that I felt met client needs.

How would you describe your company's success?

Operated with gratitude and integrity. We treat our employees, vendors, and clients well.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Since the pandemic we have adopted working remotely more, which has positively impacted employee satisfaction and increased productivity.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Welcoming, collaborative, loyal.



CORRPAK

Zeeland

Mark Wright

www.corrpakgroup.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

CorrPak takes a sustainable and cost-effective approach to structural, industrial, and alternative packaging products.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Expand our footprint in the east side of the state through organic growth or acquisition.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I have always had an entrepreneurial spirit and a long manufacturing career. I had the opportunity to acquire Eagle Packaging, which happened in July of 2021.

How would you describe your company's success?

We focused on building the right team and taking care of our people. We also improved quality and throughput to increase our on-time delivery. We identified and focused our core business and eliminated products that were not profitable.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Businesses are becoming more conscious about using materials that are harmful for the environment. Because of this push toward sustainability, our product has been able to provide an alternative to traditional packaging products.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Innovative, hard-working, diverse.



DESTINATION *Consultants*

DESTINATION CONSULTANTS LLC

Grand Rapids

Amy Young

www.destinationconsultants.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Destination Consultants is a full-service, third-party meeting planning firm with a strong focus on incentive travel, conferences, meetings, and experiential events.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

With a strong focus on brand visibility, our goal is to attract new customers who may be looking to outsource their meeting and trip planning. We hope to be able to increase sales by 25% in 2023 and double them by the end of year 2024.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I desired a more flexible way to work, and I saw a lot of investment in downtown Grand Rapids hotels, restaurants, and convention facilities. I knew there would eventually be a need for a destination management company, so I decided to take a risk!

How would you describe your company's success?

We offer specialty niche solutions serviced by a talented, diverse team. Our leadership is dedicated to mentoring, training, and supporting the staff so they can focus on delivering excellence to our clients (whom we treasure).

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

We figured out a while ago that the hybrid office environment works well for our team. A work/life balance, but with an emphasis on training and development, will continue to drive our success.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Authentic, adventurous, enthusiastic.



DOMICO MED-DEVICE

Fenton

Michael Czop

www.domicomed.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Domico Med-Device designs and manufactures life-changing patient interface solutions for diagnostic imaging, image-guided therapy, and surgical applications.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are implementing a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) software program that will provide the business with a single source of truth for business data. This is truly a major, total organizational effort that is planned to be achieved later this summer.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

After years of working in leadership roles, an unexpected opportunity occurred to own the business that I "grew up" working in. I believed in myself and in our team. I decided this was a great opportunity to leverage my experience, and with the help of a great team create a growth-oriented culture.

How would you describe your company's success?

Fun and rewarding, but we're just getting started. It has been a team working together to improve our processes and our customers' experience that is driving our success.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Employee recruiting and retention is a challenge that impacts Domico Med-Device. We continue to pursue employee engagement through respect, transparency, and opportunities for individual growth.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Resourceful, collaborative, community.





DOYLE INC. ROOFING *Cheboygan*

Joel and Karen Ross
www.doylerroofing.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Doyle Inc. Roofing works on low-slope commercial roofing for both new construction and re-roof projects.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Continued growth and community involvement.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

To continue a successful family business.

How would you describe your company's success?

We have been highly successful as a recognized firm with 35 years experience in roofing contracting and over 10,000 installations in Michigan.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Employee retention.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Connected, collaborative, progressive.



ELITE COMPANIES *Kalamazoo*

Jim Feltch
www.elite-companies.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Elite Cos. is a construction management firm focused on project delivery that positively supports client, trade, and designer relationships.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Continuing to grow our top-tier talent to meet our client needs.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted to expand my inner passion for the construction industry and create pathways for others to succeed personally and professionally.

How would you describe your company's success?

We are a construction management firm that works strategically, physically, and with integrity to support our project partners.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The major trends we focus on are talent acquisition and retention, and a market position that sets us apart. A key initiative in our company is what we call #NextGenConstruction. We are modeling growth focused on talent and collaborative partnerships with design and trade contractor firms that are able to adapt and maneuver with current market trends.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Intentional, fun, loyal.





ADA SIGNAGE

ERIE CUSTOM SIGNS

Jackson

Mike Shabluk

www.eriecustomsigns.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

As a wholesale manufacturer of interior ADA braille and wayfinding signage, Erie Custom Signs helps businesses in various industries get the quality ADA-compliant signs they need.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We will be focusing on new technology, specifically UV 3-D printing. We're also directing our attention to additional markets, including architects, commercial interior designers, and office furniture dealers. We aim to help these professionals get attractive interior signage that fits their clients' needs.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

My wife, Lisa, and I purchased Erie Custom Signs (formerly Erie Marking Tool) in 2009. This was during the Great Recession, and our decision to become business owners was based on the state of the economy. We wanted to enter a market that would allow us to sell products beyond our geographic area and create more jobs locally.

How would you describe your company's success?

The company has been able to enjoy steady growth and success, thanks to our commitment to excellence in everything we do. Those who order interior signage from us can look forward to step-by-step support and high-quality products.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Staffing is still an issue in Michigan, so we're figuring out ways to do more with less. Although challenging, the staffing issue has encouraged us to become leaner and more streamlined.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Supportive, motivating, collaborative.



FLASH STEELWORKS INC.

Washington Township

Gary Cola

www.flashsteelworks.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Stronger than titanium, lighter than aluminum, Flash Steelworks transforms low-cost steel into the highest-performing, truly weldable armor plate for defense and heavy industry uses.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Flash Steelworks is fully funded to fabricate high-volume production lines in two locations to produce ultra-strong armor plates.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I became a business owner to shift the profits I had previously created for others into a vehicle that would allow me to explore my theories and concepts that I believed had potential for exponential growth while improving the lives of mankind, my peers, and my family.

How would you describe your company's success?

The success of Flash Steelworks has been on an exponential trend that has reached the inflection point at which commercial success is now more vertical with results instead of horizontal in time.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The small business trend of working at the facility, in lieu of working remotely, is affecting Flash Steelworks the most. Having employees on-site instills a sense of comradery, which drives teamwork and productivity further allowing for higher wages as more work is accomplished in less hours.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Integrity, intensity, performance.





GACO SOURCING

Birmingham

Stephanie Wineman

www.gacosourcing.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

At Gaco Sourcing, we generate awareness and engagement by showcasing brands through quality promotional products.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

In 2023 our intention is to grow by recruiting college graduates and others to educate them about the branded merchandise industry. We are expanding our resources to offer several versions of online storefronts to accommodate client's needs.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

In 2008 I chose to become a business owner because I had an opportunity to source fitness-related products in China. I knew I wanted to provide for my family, as well as demonstrate to my girls the importance of being strong and independent.

How would you describe your company's success?

I have always said that success is created by the people you surround yourself with. Our team is accountable to one another as well as supports one another.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

One way we are sustaining a competitive advantage is emphasizing and introducing "sustainable" products to our clients. We know and recognize how increasingly important it is to have products that are from recycled material and are reusable.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Experience, partnership, creativity.



GOUGEON BROTHERS INC.

Bay City

Alan Gurski

www.gougeon.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Gougeon Brothers Inc. is an employee-owned, family-run company located in Bay City, where we manufacture Entropy Resins®, Pro-Set® Epoxy, and West System® Epoxy.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our next major accomplishment is to make our manufacturing process more efficient by introducing new technologies into our production line and implementing even more robust quality control measures.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

In the late 1960s, brothers Meade, Joel, and Jan Gougeon opened a boat shop that pioneered the use of epoxy for cold-molded wooden boat construction. Soon the Gougeon Brothers were selling the flagship brand, West System® Epoxy. Today any full-time Gougeon employee you speak with is a part-owner of the company and is vested in satisfying our customers.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our company's success is a testament to our commitment to providing the highest quality products with consistent results and unmatched customer support. We are proud of our achievements but remain focused on continuing this journey toward tremendous success.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Maintaining costs while providing high-quality products and services and the challenge of recruiting top talent in an increasingly competitive job market requires us to be more strategic and agile in maintaining costs and recruiting employees, while upholding our business model.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Welcoming, collaborative, rewarding.



GRAND RAPIDS.TECH

// YOUR PARTNER FOR EVERYTHING | TECH | MARKETING | SECURITY

GRAND RAPIDS TECH

Comstock Park

Justin Ayers

www.grandrapids.tech

Describe the company in one sentence.

We provide business technology services to various industries in Michigan.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our next major accomplishment will probably be an expansion on our new building.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I have wanted to be a business owner since I was about 13 years old. I believed that building something of my own would be more rewarding for me than working for another business.

How would you describe your company's success?

Exponential, yet slow and calculated. I started it with basically nothing and have only taken debt for real estate. It's a slower start that way, but avoids larger issues.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Moving to cloud computing. We sell a ton of cloud solutions and are moving most everything to the cloud these days.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Fun, professional, rewarding.



ICAT LOGISTICS DETROIT

Taylor

Daniel Cser

www.icatlogisticsdtw.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

ICAT Logistics Detroit is a worldwide logistics company specializing in complex, challenging shipments.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Establishing a footprint within the government and DoD space in transportation.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Supply chain and transportation is complicated, messy, and scary. I enjoy helping people make an overall positive impact on their business. If I can help you be better in your role and make your team successful, then I truly feel like I have won. Your success is our success.

How would you describe your company's success?

Other than 2008, we have always had positive growth. In the last few years we quickly tripled in size. We have had to hire hard, retain hard, and stay focused on growth with our customers and new business. It has been a team effort to get here.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

It is always difficult to compete with big box businesses. Our pricing model limits us to compete against the large competitors; however, our core competencies are more complicated shipments which don't necessarily fit within a big-box model.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Collaborative, engaged, innovative.



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recognized for
what makes us
proud every
day.



Congratulations, to all of the awardees, for being recognized as 2023 Michigan Companies to Watch. Every day, you set an example for what passion, commitment and hard work can do.

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MAY 8

Monday

ON TAP: THE NEW FACES OF LEADERSHIP AT AMERICA'S OLDEST BREWERY

Learn how the family's sixth generation — all women — is leading Yuengling into a third century.

SPEAKER: Wendy Yuengling Baker, D.G. Yuengling & Son, Inc.

MODERATOR: Peter J. Danchak, PNC Bank

MAY 9

Tuesday

WOMEN LEADING THE WAY

An energizing panel discussion with women who are game changers in their industries

SPEAKERS: SaLisa Berrien, COI Energy | Karen Hanlon, Highmark Health | Caroline O'Connor, Florida Marlins | Lisa Purcell, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum

MODERATOR: Laura Gamble, PNC Bank

MAY 10

Wednesday

CONQUERING MOUNTAINS AND BREAKING BARRIERS: A CONVERSATION WITH ALISON LEVINE

How courageous small steps can lead to big changes that can level the social and economic playing field

SPEAKER: Alison Levine, First American Women's Everest Expedition Team Captain

MODERATOR: Anna Vitelli, PNC Private Bank Hawthorn®

MAY 11

Thursday

CHALK TALK WITH JULIE UHRMAN

How Angel City FC is transforming the game of soccer into a movement for financial equality

SPEAKER: Julie Uhrman, Angel City FC

MODERATOR: Todd Wilson, PNC Bank

MAY 12

Friday

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT MONEY

Financial literacy for every stage of the game, from pre-K through college

SPEAKERS: Emily Bouchard, PNC Private Bank Hawthorn | Jeanine Fahnestock, PNC Grow Up Great® | MJ Roach, PNC Investments | Natalie Talpas, PNC Digital Product Management Group

MODERATOR: Amanda Agati, PNC Chief Investment Officer

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IMPACT FAB INC.

Holland

Ross Haan

www.impactfab.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a custom manufacturer specializing in high-mix, low-volume metal fabrication.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Implementing Industry 4.0 technology to create a better workplace for our team while driving innovation for our customers.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We desire to create a business that helps team members realize and use their God-given talents so that they can better themselves and bring God glory.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success comes from an unwavering commitment to our customers through teamwork, curiosity, and excellence.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The competition for skilled craftsmen has been most impactful to us.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Agility, respect, curiosity.



INCOME POWER LLC

Waterford

Patrick Lloyd

www.incomepowerllc.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Income Power LLC is a leader specializing in electrical vehicle (EV) charger installations and infrastructure including maintenance, service and warranty work while also providing any residential or commercial electrical work.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

The next major accomplishment is to not only provide car charger installations but expand into maintenance, service, and EV warranty work in areas across Michigan, with expansion into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Texas.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

After leading a team of electricians in Iraq and Afghanistan, I knew I wanted to return to Michigan and recruit, lead, and train young men into this rewarding technical career.

How would you describe your company's success?

A vision that has led to our accomplishing goals, with a focus on our quality employees and customer service.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Supply chain issues and continued focus on recruiting and retaining high-quality employees.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Integrity, efficiency, quality.





INNOVO
Traverse City

Brian Mullally and Trae Allman
www.innovodev.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We put in the work for real community revitalization and development of apartment homes and industrial spaces.



What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Leasing a recently completed 421,000-square-foot industrial building in the heart of Detroit.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

To see out and supercharge misfit development projects that others shy away from.

How would you describe your company's success?

We specialize in impact real estate projects where our energy, expertise, and capital can deliver new opportunities and benefits in higher growth markets that create more value for our residential communities, industrial tenants, partners, and owners. We have achieved strong growth, developing and managing more than 1.65 million square feet of industrial, apartment, and retail projects in Michigan, Florida and Missouri.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The increasing need for workforce housing, as well as the resurgence in industrial demand, is creating new opportunities for reimagining new spaces.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Talent, perform, grow.



KIRLIN LIGHTING
Detroit

Chris Brownell
www.kirlinlighting.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Kirlin designs and manufactures LED light fixtures and lighting systems for health care and architectural applications.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To complement the many award-winning health care lighting products Kirlin has introduced since 2020, we will be designing and launching a comprehensive, modular, and feature-rich product series for downlighting and accent lighting across architectural, institutional, health care, residential, and commercial projects.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Ownership and management of Kirlin Lighting has been in our family for five generations, since the company's founding in 1895.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our customers know they can count on Kirlin to embrace and create new lighting technologies, while simultaneously providing the assurance of an established, respected, long-standing provider.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The importance of technology, automation, and integration is continuing to grow. This includes automated manufacturing processes in our factory, wireless controls inside our fixtures, technology-centric sales and marketing procedures, and more.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Quality, problem-solving, innovation.





LSPEDIA

West Bloomfield

Riya Cao

www.lspedia.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

LSPedia provides easy-to-use, cloud-based solutions that protect the pharmaceutical supply chain and enable complete compliance with the Drug Supply Chain Security Act.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

LSPedia will complete its DSCSA Exceptions Pilot, a cross-industry program designed to predict and solve the problems caused by a massive increase in pharmaceutical transaction data as the Drug Supply Chain Security Act enters full enforcement this year. The results will protect patients from pharmaceutical shortages by providing trading partners with tested ways to fix errors that would otherwise halt product movement.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I held corporate positions for 18 years before LSPedia. I wanted to bring a greater impact to the world. I was also drawn into the creative process of starting and running a new business.

How would you describe your company's success?

We went from zero to the largest serialization data exchange processor in the pharma industry.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

EOS. It gave LSPedia a proven framework to operate and grow.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Expertise, ownership, trust.



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MACOMB POWERSPORTS

Chesterfield

Lloyd Hildebrand

www.macombpowersports.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a powersports dealership that sells outdoor motorized family fun.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We look forward to adding another major brand to our business in the very near future!



Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted to have personal and financial freedom, while getting to work with some of the most amazing employees in the industry.

How would you describe your company's success?

Employees are what make a company successful. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of you. We pride ourselves on customer service, which can be somewhat of a lost art in today's marketplace.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Interest rate hikes have changed consumer buying behaviors, causing a ripple effect producing higher carrying costs on the products we sell when inventory doesn't turnover as frequently.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Growth, process, fun.



MDL COMPANIES

Bay City

Michael Loomis

www.mdlbay.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

MDL Cos. offers high-quality commercial construction, property management, insurance restoration, and real estate investment services.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

MDL Cos. is working on a local development deal that will provide housing for 130 residents. This deal would be developed by our investment division, built by our construction team, and managed by our property management division.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I decided to become a business owner so I could make a lasting impact on my community and build a legacy that my children can continue.

How would you describe your company's success?

I would describe my company's success as achieving sustainable profitability while also creating a positive impact in the community and maintaining a healthy work/life balance for myself and my employees.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

With the ever-increasing importance of company culture, we have been ahead of the curve in this area. This has allowed us to bring in better talent that we credit to the overall growth our company has had over the past few years.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Collaborative, supportive, balanced.



OHANA VENTURES INC.

Grand Rapids

Scott and Christine Vogel

www.nothingbundtcakes.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

The bakeries specialize in handcrafted bundt cakes.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To open a third location in West Michigan and to exceed life-to-date financial and in-kind donations of \$300,000 to incredible nonprofits within the communities we serve.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We wanted to make Michigan our forever home (moved here from Boston) and to lead a business focused on purpose and people before profits.

How would you describe your company's success?

Patiently and consistently executing our marketing strategies of "Cake Begets Cake" and "The Power of Moments" while prioritizing our purpose and people before profits.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Authentically engaging the community we love with a hyperfocused approach.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Ohana, servant leadership.



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ORE DOCK BREWING COMPANY

Marquette

Andrea Pernsteiner

www.oredockbrewing.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Brewing, pouring, and celebrating life on Michigan's northmost coast, Ore Dock Brewing Co. crafts products and experiences that foster community engagement.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are embarking on a large-scale build-out that includes indoor and outdoor service components, increased manufacturing space, and a public greenway in the heart of Marquette's historic downtown.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I have an internal drive that is continuously creating ideas, and fortunately, I have a partner who thrives on execution. Business ownership was the choice we made when we couldn't fight the urge to make our vision a reality and became brave enough to take the leap.

How would you describe your company's success?

While we work extremely hard, we would not be successful without the help and support of friends, family, the Marquette community, and the incredible team we work with every day. It is through the ideas, cooperation, and collaboration with those around us that has built Ore Dock Brewing Co. into what it is today.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The seasonality of regional tourism as it relates to production and staffing dynamics.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Passionate, dedicated, inclusive.



PROSPER-TECH MACHINE & TOOL LLC

Richmond

Heidi Devroy

www.prosper-tech.net

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a build-to-print production machine company serving the medical, aerospace/space, and defense industries.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We plan to scale up operations through system improvements and capital investments of equipment and automation.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

When one door closes another one opens. Bob Devroy, co-founder, lost his job in 2007, when the company he was working for went bankrupt. Together, Bob and his wife Heidi took a leap of faith through the open door (well, actually to their garage where they first started their company). Within a year, they were looking for a larger space to move to when the business started to take off.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is truly a blessing from God. From starting in 2007 during the Great Recession in our home garage, we never could have imagined growing to this size company with so many exciting opportunities ahead of us.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Industry 4.0.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Teaching the trade.





SABO PR *Grand Rapids*

Mary Ann Sabo
www.sabo-pr.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Sabo PR is an integrated communications firm that helps businesses, municipalities, nonprofits and educators tell compelling stories, engage relevant stakeholders, and build successful brands.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are promoting two of our accomplished team members to grow our service lines.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I decided to start my own business after working at another agency where I loved what I was doing—supporting clients through effective communications—but not where I was working. I thought I could build that proverbial better mousetrap, so I hung out my own shingle and have never looked back.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is based on the strength of our team.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Since the pandemic, the need for flexibility has never been greater. We provide our team with flexibility so they, in turn, can be equipped to meet the needs of our clients.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Supportive, collaborative, driven.



SADDLEBACK BBQ *Okemo*

Matthew Gillett
www.saddlebackbbq.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We own four restaurants: two BBQ and two pizza.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Expanding and growing the number of locations we have.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted a new challenge and to be able to share my cooking.

How would you describe your company's success?

It's surreal. When we first opened, I never imagined having multiple locations, let alone having two different restaurant concepts. I'm so thankful to the entire team for their incredible determination.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

At this point, it seems inflation is having the greatest impact. Not only is it impacting the price we purchase our food, it seems to be impacting consumer habits.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Determined, creative, thoughtful.





SAFETYDECALS.COM

Ludington

Nick Tykoski

www.safetydecals.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

The leading worldwide manufacturer of signs and decals.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We will be one of the first companies to install a certified traffic sign printer in the United States, and the first in the state of Michigan.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I come from a family of entrepreneurs. My grandfather started his sign company in 1947. I am the third-generation entrepreneur in my family.

How would you describe your company's success?

We treat our employees as part of our family. We create a culture in our workplace that ties hard work to profit and employee incentives.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Uncontrollable rising costs have made it difficult to secure long-term contracts with set pricing. It also affects our ability to hire needed staff as we are not sure of profit margins long term. Major worldwide manufacturers require contract terms that hinder available profits.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Always a family.



SKIN BOSS MED SPA

Haslett

Dr. Terry and Catherine Matthews

www.skinbossmedspa.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Skin Boss Med Spa is a cutting-edge skin care facility that offers a broad portfolio of skin-related treatments and pampering for all ages and skin types, including injectables, laser treatments, body treatments, facial treatments, permanent makeup, and medical grade skin care.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our staff members consistently engage in education and training opportunities. We are moving toward the launch of additional office locations in 2023 or later, and have also considered expansion to provide education and training opportunities for other medical professionals.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We opened our first Lansing Urgent Care clinic in 2006 and for the past 17 years, have expanded the business to eight urgent care clinics serving greater Lansing. Our experience as business owners of urgent care clinics and our passion for skin care inspired us to venture into the medical spa industry.

How would you describe your company's success?

Skin Boss Med Spa has developed a momentum of growth based on our elite patient experience, highly skilled and trained staff, and consistent production of amazing results.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The ability for our patients' experiences and outcomes via social media has been incredibly impactful to our business.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Innovative, collaborative, inspiring.





SNIFFER ROBOTICS LLC

Ann Arbor

Arthur Mohr

www.snifferrobotics.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Through our U.S. EPA-approved SnifferDrone™ method, we help landfill owners better detect their sites' emissions that are harmful to the environment, odorous for neighbors, and can be captured to improve revenue by converting more gas to energy.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Closing our capital raise to help us scale our business throughout the United States and internationally.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Independence and control with an opportunity to create and build. Make an impact on the environment. Test my abilities after a successful career in corporate America.

How would you describe your company's success?

You hear it often, but it is very true of our company. It is all about our team. I'm so very proud of our team. From our employees, extending to our advisers and partners, we have a professional, responsible, results-oriented, passionate, skilled, and truly wonderful team who have dedicated themselves to customer satisfaction resulting in a new technology that is changing an industry.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Increased focus on our environment throughout the world, especially pertaining to the need to better quantify and reduce methane emissions which is critical to sustaining our future quality of life.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Respectful, trusting, empowering.



SOFT GOODS

Detroit

Josh York

www.softgoodsdetroit.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Detroit-based cut-and-sew apparel factory selling premium, American-made knitwear.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We plan to raise a round of funding and launch DTC menswear brands.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I believe that manufacturing locally can create jobs and build a better way to make things that is equitable for all involved. There are a lot of issues in the apparel-manufacturing space that I think need to be solved. When I was leaving my corporate career 5.5 years ago, I felt that I am uniquely qualified to start a business like ours and felt that I should do what ought to be done!

How would you describe your company's success?

Our company has pivoted multiple times over the past five years due to drastic shifts in the market. But through it all, our product has become incredibly refined and we've built a stable model for sourcing quality, American materials, hiring and training staff in our city, and growing in a responsible, sustainable manner.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Right now, the slowing economy is having the largest impact on us.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Nice, family-oriented, dedicated.



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SOILS & STRUCTURES

Muskegon

David Hohmeyer, P.E.

www.soilsandstructures.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a Michigan-based engineering and consulting firm that specializes in geotechnical engineering, structural engineering, pavement design services, construction materials testing, and structural steel detailing.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We plan to build a new, state-of-the-art 27,000-square-foot building to accommodate our growing business in Muskegon. The goal is to give our employees a healthy and functional environment to work in, whether that be an office, a shared space, laboratory, or garage.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

As a second-generation family business, we were there from the start. It only seemed natural to take over after the founder retired. We remember the makeshift counters, the second-hand cabinets and reused desks, and those stories are what makes a strong foundation to continue building upon.

How would you describe your company's success?

Without a doubt, our employees are the foundation for our success. Daily innovation and collaboration are the drivers to solving problems for our clients.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The infrastructure in Michigan is aged and crumbling from our bridges to our highways to our rural roads. Soils & Structures has been preparing and is ready to assist in the building back of those necessities.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Trust, trust, trust.



ST. CLAIR PACKAGING INC.

Marysville

Alan Miotke

www.stclairpackaging.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a manufacturer and distributor of corrugated and chipboard products.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are purchasing two machines that will allow us to internalize work that we have been outsourcing. This equipment will also provide us with new sales opportunities in the market where we have not been competitive in the past.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I decided to become a business owner because God put it on my heart. I am driven to positively impact the lives of our associates at St. Clair Packaging, our customers, and the community. I wanted to create a business where people feel respected, valued, and appreciated.

How would you describe your company's success?

I use the word "grind" often. We grind every day to get things done! We have a dedicated group pulling in the same direction. Also, we are thankful for our customers who have continued to be loyal to us throughout the years.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Continuing to have open and constant communication with our customers will remain impactful. When our supply was challenged starting back in 2021, over-communicating with our customers was imperative. It took our relationships with our customers to a new level. As their businesses evolve, communication is key.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Integrity, respect, impactful.





SUPERIOR COFFEE ROASTING CO INC.

Sault Ste. Marie

Ron Kurnik

www.superiorcoffeeroasting.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We provide a unique and elevated experience in roasted coffee, operating a wholesale and retail business, and a flourishing café in the heart of Michigan's oldest city!

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our campaign to help emphasize the importance of clean water in the Great Lakes region and beyond. After all, great coffee must have equally great water to make it with.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I discovered early on that following my dreams and following my skills were two very different things. Thankfully, I did not follow my dreams, but rather my skills! I probably would have ended up as a poor, crestfallen musician otherwise! I knew I had few creative bones in my body, I could handle risk, and I knew how to use money wisely. And for an introvert, I'm pretty good with my "human resources" as well!

How would you describe your company's success?

Good timing, good people, and a steady approach.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The ever-increasing presence online, and our social relevance, especially given the strength of the younger consumers in our field.

Describe the company culture in three words.

...but first, coffee!!



SUPERIOR INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS LLC

Detroit

Wendy Turner Miller

www.sisautomotive.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a facility service-provider specializing in waste management, janitorial services and industrial cleaning.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are currently growing our company into other markets, in addition to automotive. These markets include health care, utility companies, and municipalities.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I started my own business with a vision of sustainability. Community involvement and the creation of building a family legacy has always been a dream of mine to fulfill.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success has been made possible through dedication, hard work, and a passion for constant improvement.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The ability to acquire workers in our post-COVID world has been my biggest challenge.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Superior, committed, solutions.





TOTALCAE

Plymouth

Rodney Mach

www.totalcae.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We help companies utilize computer-aided engineering (CAE) to adopt high-performance computing and cloud to reduce their simulation times from days to hours.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Continued global expansion of our managed HPC clusters and cloud to take our success to the next level.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

My parents owned a tool-and-die company, so growing up, I always wanted to own a company like them. After working in the high-performance computing (HPC) industry, I saw an opportunity to help clients adopt HPC and started my own business.

How would you describe your company's success?

TotalCAE-managed HPC cluster and cloud offerings have helped clients reduce their time to market for innovative products, including medical devices, alternate energy solutions, and electric vehicles. It is exciting to see products we use daily and know we were part of that success.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The use of cloud computing.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Customer-focused success.



TRUiC

Ann Arbor

Nagabhushanam Peddi

www.truic.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Truic is a media and tech company providing free guides and tools to help entrepreneurs get started.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are developing our AI platform of tools to help entrepreneurs.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted to have the freedom to explore and innovate.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our growth is accelerating consistently now as the exceptional value we provide to our users and service partners is being recognized.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The development of AI and its use to help small businesses.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Team, community, innovation.



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WALSH SERVICE SOLUTIONS

Kalamazoo

Rich, Dan, and Wally Walsh

www.walshservicesolutions.com



Describe the company in one sentence.

Walsh Service Solutions provides civil and marine construction and remediation services.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We would like to obtain our 8(a) and HUBZone designations.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We wanted to do things better than what we were seeing in the industry, so we made it happen.

How would you describe your company's success?

We have a strong focus on providing outstanding customer service.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The availability of quality personnel.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Walsh Service Solutions!

Waymark®

WAYMARK

Freeland

Alex Persky-Stern

www.waymark.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Waymark makes it possible for anyone to produce professional quality commercials for any platform, including TV and CTV, in a matter of minutes.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Waymark plans to bring AI to local media space to enable creative production for every business at scale.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I accepted the role as CEO of Waymark because of the great team and fun technology.

How would you describe your company's success?

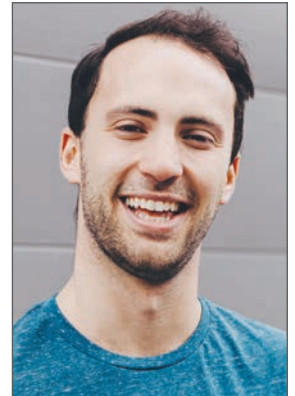
The result of years of energy and dedication put toward solving problems for real people.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The growth and interest in new channels of advertising for small local businesses.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Close-knit, positive, hardworking.



STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED



ZOLLI CANDY
Commerce Township

Alina Morse

www.zollipops.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Zolli Candy is a healthy candy company.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To continue expanding our product selection and retail presence.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

After a trip to the bank with my dad as a kid, I realized there was an opportunity to build a mission-driven healthy candy company.

How would you describe your company's success?

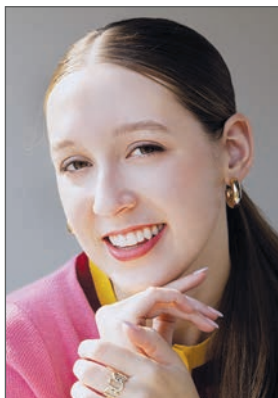
Success has been sweet!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Supply chain issues.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Full of smiles!



GREAT PLACE TO WORK



BIZSTREAM
Allendale

Mark Schmidt

www.bizstream.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

BizStream is a full-service digital agency focused on elevating brands, websites, and products.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Expanding our services to offer a comprehensive suite of solutions, including analytics, strategy, branding, and more, to serve our clients' needs better and help them achieve their goals.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We decided to become business owners because we wanted to build something different—a company where people are excited to come to work and where we deliver exceptional solutions to our clients.

How would you describe your company's success?

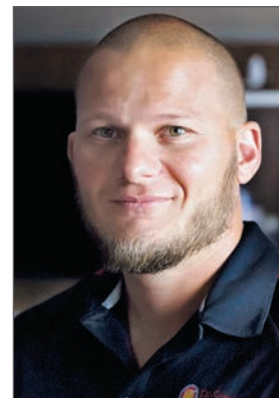
We measure our company's success by the impact we have on our clients, employees, and the community. Ultimately, our success is driven by our commitment to delivering value and making a positive impact on those we serve.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The increasing demand for digital transformation and online presence. As more businesses move online, the need for digital solutions and expertise is growing rapidly. We are committed to staying ahead of the curve by providing cutting-edge digital solutions to help businesses thrive in the digital landscape. This includes leveraging emerging technologies, such as AI and machine learning, to deliver more personalized and effective solutions to our clients.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Fun, caring, fearless.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



BARNEY'S BAKEHOUSE BAKERY

Bay City

Jarrid Weighman

www.barneysbakehouse.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a full-service bakery specializing in homemade breads, donuts, and pastries.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Enhancing our online ordering and shipping of virtual hug boxes.



Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I started a home-based bakery out of my home at age 13 and grew it until I needed a storefront. My passion is baking and helping people celebrate special occasions with sweet treats.

How would you describe your company's success?

We took over a 92-year-old family-owned bakery in November 2020. We didn't know what to expect. The community has been more than welcoming to us. We kept some legacy products and added in some fresh new offerings to our bakery.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Staffing is our biggest challenge right now. Finding and keeping the right mix of employees is our top priority.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Welcoming, customer-focused, friendly.

SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



BERRIDGE BARN LLC

Greenville

Brian and Autumn Murray

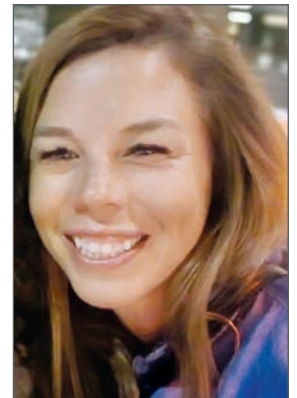
www.berridgebarn.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Berridge Barn is a beautiful property to celebrate the joy of being together.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our goal in the next few years is to start and complete the renovation of our barn.



Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We were inspired to start our business after searching for wedding venues for our own wedding. Soon after our wedding, we started searching for properties with barns. We were lucky to find Berridge Barn because it is truly a beautiful and charming property for life's big events.

How would you describe your company's success?

Berridge Barn is successful every time we have a wedding and reception at our venue. Weddings are fun and joyful for us and our customers!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The giant world of social media and the ever-changing trends in the wedding business are two trends that impact our business.

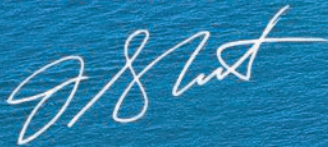
Describe the company culture in three words.

Friendly, collaborative, positive!



**LIFE IS SHORT'S,
DRINK IT WHILE
YOU'RE HERE.**

**Congrats to the 2023 Award Winners.
Stay awesome hungry, see you Up North
this summer.**



20

**CELEBRATING
20 YEARS**

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50 Companies to Watch.

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SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

CITY SHIELD
SECURITY SERVICES*Detroit*

Cathy Heinrich

www.cityshieldsecurity.com**Describe the company in one sentence.**

City Shield Security was founded with the goal of elevating and professionalizing the contract security industry by providing thorough training for our employees and opportunities for continuing education and increased workforce development.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Our next goal is the development of the City Shield Training Academy, to further our belief that a security officer is a sustainable career choice.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

In 2017, we noticed the need for a different type of security company in the downtown Detroit entertainment district: a friendly, concierge-style security officer. Given our combined law enforcement and hospitality backgrounds, it seemed to be a good time to take a leap of faith and start a security company.

How would you describe your company's success?

It is successful due to the family members working tirelessly to meet client expectations. The City Shield family extends beyond the Shenouda family; it includes the employees, the vendors and the clients, who truly understand what we are trying to do at City Shield Security Services.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

To provide a high level of customer satisfaction, we know that our security officers need professional development to reduce turnover and maintain the standard of service that clients expect.

Describe the company culture in three words.

People, process, technology.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



EAGLE LINK LLC

Bark River

Jill McDermott and Lynda Reese

www.eagleprosix.com**Describe the company in one sentence.**

Eagle Link LLC, featuring ProSix Equine and ProSix K9, designs and manufactures

patented therapeutic

training and rehabilitation knitted elastic wraps, sold throughout the USA and in 24 countries, to date.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

The addition of international distributors to broaden our reach.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We became business owners because we knew our products offered lifesaving benefits to horses and dogs, so we accepted the responsibility to make our products available, seek research studies, and become a resource for healing.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is measured by every animal who moves better and feels better—and their numbers grow daily!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Social media keeps us connected to our customers.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Connected, collaborative, compassionate.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



FREEDOM COUNSELING LLC

Kalamazoo

Liz Cary

www.freedomcounselingkalamazoo.us

Describe the company in one sentence.

Freedom Counseling LLC provides in-person and virtual outpatient mental health and substance abuse counseling to Michigan residents.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We have grown nonstop by adding to our team for the past two years. Enjoying stability and building into our existing team is the next step.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I learned so much in agency work but decided it was time to take my knowledge and put it into action for myself. I will never again be limited in my ability to generate income or miss time with my children due to vacation time limitations.

How would you describe your company's success?

I follow God, and He has never let me down.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The impacts of bureaucratic insurance companies and their power to make changes without notice or concern for those who provide the services on their behalf.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Family foremost always.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



GROOVY DONUTS

Williamston

Andrew Gauthier & Monica Lucas

www.groovydonuts.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Groovy Donuts serves fresh, hand-crafted donuts and locally roasted coffee.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Expansion, either a third location or partnerships with other local businesses.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted to do something I could wake up to every day, not wondering what else I could be doing with my life, but how I could be doing this better. I have found that as a business owner.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is due to the fact that we don't give up when things are tough. Failure is the greatest teacher—it can be a tough one for sure! We've had some extremely tough times, but we never quit. We've always kept working at our craft. We always want to get better at what we do!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Increasing prices have been incredibly tough to deal with over the past year. As a business owner, you have to price your goods appropriately to be able to turn a profit, but need to walk the fine line of upsetting your customer base.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Community and team-oriented.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

R.J.'S METROPOLITAN
ICE CREAM CO.*Jackson*

Robert and Yvette Wilkie

www.rjsmetroicecreamco.com**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

We are a one-stop-shop
destination restaurant!

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Opening a second location
in Lansing.

**Why did you decide to be
a business owner?**

This journey started off as therapy after losing our son.
Pain to purpose.

How would you describe your company's success?

Hard work! We are always putting our customers first.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Trends in social media.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Experience, fun, destination.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

SAND BAY MARINA SALES
SERVICE & STORAGE LLC*Presque Isle*

Brandie and Kevin Krajniak

www.sandbaymarina.com**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

It's in the name!
We offer marine sales,
service, and storage.

**What is the next
major accomplishment
planned for the
company?**

To increase our retail space.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

To have greater freedom and be driven by my passion.

How would you describe your company's success?

The continuation of growth to meet our customers needs.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Accessibility.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Respect, flexibility, communication.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



STAFFORDS HOSPITALITY INC.

Petoskey

Reginald Smith

www.staffords.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Stafford's Hospitality provides premier waterfront dining and historic lodging throughout northern Michigan.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Adding on and expanding some of our existing lodging properties.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Over 60 years ago, my father and mother started Stafford's Hospitality by purchasing a small country inn, called The Bay View Inn at the time, where they had met as college students one year earlier. I am honored to have the opportunity to continue their commitment today alongside our team of over 300 associates at five locations in the greater Petoskey area.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is in the memories our guests create when they experience Stafford's Hospitality. We love our local community and our new and repeat guests. We have been, and always will be, all about hospitality.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Availability of affordable housing for staff.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Dedicated, customer-focused.



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Power Construction Group LLC

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Erie Custom Signs

Edward Lowe Foundation

SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



THUMB ROAST COFFEE

Croswell

Missy Bobo

www.thumbroastcoffee.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We remind people all around the world that they matter through great coffee.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We will be looking to partner with distributors that fit with our brand.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I became a business owner to create something new and special for our area: the Thumb of Michigan.

How would you describe your company's success?

Slow and steady, as we intended.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Sustainability has impacted us the most. We are changing our business model to bring it into alignment with our values.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Open communication, radical honesty, positivity.



SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



WOOD SHOP SOCIAL

Mount Pleasant

Jim Wood

www.woodshopsocial.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We are a full-service restaurant and bar.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We are planning an expansion that could make us truly the most unique restaurant and bar in our area.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I like the freedom to be able to control the creative aspect of the company and not be tied down by corporate restraints. I truly feel that small business owners initially help control the narrative when it comes to trends and how businesses operate.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our success is based on giving the community something that has been lacking. We have been successful thus far, but we also know that we have a long way to go and plan on getting better every day.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

We are all about talent management and how important it is for long-term success, prosperity, and longevity. We feel that the more results we all achieve, the longer our talent will want to stay with us, fostering an environment of both individual and team success.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Fun, inclusion, integrity.



**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



AJP COMMERCIAL SHREDDING
Flint

April January

www.ajpcommercial.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

AJP Commercial Shredding provides on-site document shredding and off-site document management services.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Recycling management of solid waste and metal materials.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I've always had the desire to dictate my professional career.

How would you describe your company's success?

Client referrals and repeat clients have allowed AJP Commercial Shredding to thrive.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Being present on all social media platforms as a single owner/operator.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Ethical, secure, proven.



**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



ARBOR CORPORATION INC.
Ann Arbor

Nidhi Puri

www.arborcorporation.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Arbor Corp. Inc. (Arbor) provides construction management and engineering services with a focus on delivering high-quality projects on time and within budget, while fostering a culture of inclusivity, empowerment, and mentorship.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Our next major accomplishment is to expand our services to new markets, while maintaining our commitment to quality and reliability, as well as promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout all aspects of our operations.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I noticed a gap for women-owned businesses in the construction management and engineering industry. By leveraging my expertise and passion, I was able to establish a successful business that makes a positive impact and paves the way for future generations of women leaders.

How would you describe your company's success?

Arbor's success can be described as consistent, reliable, and driven. Arbor has a track record of delivering high-quality services to clients on a consistent basis, is known for being dependable and trustworthy, and is always striving to improve and achieve greater success.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

As a construction management and engineering company serving the federal government, we are seeing a growing trend toward sustainability in the industry. We are committed to promoting sustainable practices and minimizing the environmental impact of our projects.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Customer-focused, quality-driven, collaborative.



**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



ARVCO CONTAINER CORP.

Kalamazoo

Greg Arvanigian

www.arvco.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Arvco Container Corp.
manufactures corrugated
packaging.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

The investment in new
state-of-the-art equipment.

**How would you describe your
company's success?**

Our success is due to our main focus in developing long-
standing relationships with customers and employees.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Workforce development.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Strong, family-oriented.



**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



Austin Logistics

AUSTIN LOGISTICS LLC

Detroit

Austin Hill

www.austinslogistics.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Austin Logistics offers
consulting services in the
areas of professional services
and businesses interested in
entering the government space.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Developing strong relationships
with small businesses and
seizing opportunities.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Truthfully, entrepreneurship has saved my family
countless times, and it was something I knew I could
sustain and grow for myself, my family, and the
community.

How would you describe your company's success?

I would describe our success as sudden and calculated.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Developmental training.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Connected, engaging, innovative.



**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



KALL MORRIS INC. (KMI)

Marquette

Troy Morris

www.kallmorris.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Kall Morris Inc. (KMI) uses proprietary software and exclusive hardware to non-destructively and efficiently retrieve orbital debris to protect critical space assets and continue building the future.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Our validation experiment to the International Space Station (ISS) in the next 12 months.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We decided to become business owners to make our positive dent on the universe, and follow through on the mission with singular focus.

How would you describe your company's success?

KMI has succeeded with fantastic dividends on the investments of time and talent dedicated by our team, advisers, mentors, and supporters.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The renewed interest and investment in space solutions, from large firms and small businesses alike, continues to propel our people and possibilities onward.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Collaborative, creative, communicative.



**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



NORTH AMERICAN CONTROLS

Shelby Township

Tony Sciacca

www.nacontrols.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Designs and manufactures hydraulic, pneumatic, suspension, and fuel products for the defense industry.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Expansion in developing additional products for submarines.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I became a business owner because I enjoy solving problems independently.

How would you describe your company's success?

We are successful by being more than just a distributor. We understand the requirements of the defense industry, which allows us to serve the industry better.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The increase in component and labor costs. Also, increased costs due to regulations such as cybersecurity.

Describe the company culture in three words.



Engaging, challenging, motivating.





**When local businesses thrive, our community thrives.
And we're big fans of thriving.**

At Huntington, we make it a point to work with those who move our community forward. That's why we're proud to support Michigan Celebrates Small Business. When they open their doors each day, we can feel their efforts to bring our neighborhoods together.

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Our world may be full of challenges, but working together we can accomplish great things. Congratulations to all of the Michigan Celebrates Small Business 2023 Awardees.

**LET'S TELL
YOUR STORY.**

Storytelling Creative Services

**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



**POWER CONSTRUCTION
GROUP LLC**

Cheboygan

Andrew Beydoun

www.powerconstructiongroup.net

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Power Construction Group offers general contracting, demolition, carpentry, and design.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Our next major goal is to self-sustain our office in northern Michigan. The next step would be to acquire an office in Florida and start performing work in that region, simultaneous to our performance in Michigan.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

As a service-disabled veteran, I thrive on helping others. I started in the medical field and worked my way into construction due to my father. I saw the opportunity to start my own company with the help of the benefits offered by State of Michigan, and I took that leap.

How would you describe your company's success?

I would describe our success as given by the grace of God. I would also like to thank my team for their hard work and dedication to their craft with precision.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The need for professional and qualified general contractors has impacted us the most. This is how we maintained our growth in presence in the great state of Michigan.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Integrity, partnership, solutions.



**APEX ACCELERATORS
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**

Prein&Newhof

PREIN&NEWHOF

Grand Rapids

Tom J. Newhof

www.preinnewhof.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Since 1969, our civil engineering firm has been focused on Michigan infrastructure, making a better way for us all.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

We are currently in the design phase for constructing a new state-of-the-art laboratory facility immediately adjacent to our Grand Rapids headquarters.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Founders and civil engineers Ed Prein and Tom Newhof believed that a project has the best results when the engineer stays involved from start to finish. Today, as an employee-owned firm with 150 team members in seven offices located throughout West Michigan, we continue to follow this philosophy.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our values drive our team, our work inspires us to see farther, together with our clients.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Our industry—municipal, civil, and environmental engineering—has been strong. With ARPA and IIJA funds our clients are receiving for community projects, our strongholds are with supply chain/material shipping, labor pool, and economy/inflation scenarios.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Purposeful, transparent, rewarding.





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APEX ACCELERATORS BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



SEALANDAIRE
TECHNOLOGIES INC.

Jackson

David C. Sparks

www.sealandaire.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We develop autonomous sensor systems for the collection of decision-critical data from difficult environments.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To further expand upon the deployment of our innovative technological developments with multiple customers across government, scientific, and commercial markets.



Why did you decide to be a business owner?

With my experience and passion for research and development, my co-founder and I started a development company to leverage local business and academic resources and tap into the abundance of technically-minded workers to provide jobs and solve tough technical problems.

How would you describe your company's success?

The community, both in government and commercial forms, knows SeaLandAire and trusts us to bring value to the development process, providing cost-effective technological advances.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Recognition of the value of small businesses expanding America's leadership in advanced technologies.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Curiosity, collaboration, dedication.

**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



ACCELERATED FILTRATION INC.

Midland

Scott Burr, Ph.D.

www.acelfil.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Accelerated Filtration Inc. is dedicated to developing and commercializing technologies that address growing global water challenges and enabling greater capability in processing source water, reusing processed water, and treating wastewater.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Launch of the VelRay X™ water filtration product in 2023.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

To develop and commercialize technologies that are critical to quality of life and a sustainable global ecosystem.

How would you describe your company's success?

We have a talented team that understands our customers' problems and are commercializing solutions that meet all aspects of their needs.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

A rich and vibrant startup atmosphere, both here in Michigan and in the United States.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Excellence in everything!



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



BEAREX

Jackson

Tom Jurasek

www.bearex.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Industrial IoT: Empowering manufacturers to understand and impact their utilization.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

The launch of Bearex auto-detecting IoT edge device.

**Why did you decide to be
a business owner?**

I recognized that small to midsize manufacturers in the state of Michigan were struggling with profitability. Current solutions are built to serve large organizations that require an in-house technical team with a lot of available resources to implement, leaving the smaller manufacturers underserved.

How would you describe your company's success?

Success is based on impact. Our client impact stories help define the results and success of our work.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Available state programs in order to help manufacturers step into Industry 4.0 technologies has positively impacted our ability to support our clients.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Collaborative, client-focused, driven.





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**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



ENSPiRED SOLUTIONS

East Lansing

Dr. Denise Kay

www.enspiredsolutions.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Enspired Solutions is a women-owned and led cleantech startup company commercializing an award-winning, patented chemical technology that permanently destroys toxic PFAS compounds and returns them to non-toxic components without the need for off-site disposal.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

In spring 2023, we will be pilot testing our first commercial-scale treatment equipment on PFAS-impacted wastewater at a Michigan industrial facility.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I have a passion for reducing the impact of toxic chemicals in our environment to both people and wildlife; however, the industry remains far from inclusive. Enspired Solutions is an opportunity to make a positive impact on the physical and social environment by launching a female-owned and led company.

How would you describe your company's success?

Since 2021 we have grown from benchtop chemistry to a commercial-scale product. Our success is built on our dedication to mitigating environmental effects of toxins, and we have benefited from the assistance and opportunities afforded us by multiple business advisers.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

With a potential recession headed our way and customers watching their bottom lines more carefully, we believe that building relationships with people is what will help us grow our business.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Inclusive, collaborative, groundbreaking.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



EXCELSIOR ENGINEERING LLC

Rochester

Mark Bowers

www.excelsior.engineering

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Excelsior Engineering provides design services and expert advice, specializing in embedded systems that leverage FPGA, GPU, and ASIC-based hardware acceleration for digital signal processing, computer vision, and artificial intelligence applications.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

We are looking forward to working closer with a major North American automotive manufacturer and expanding our research partnership with Oakland University.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I started Excelsior so that we could work on a wide range of interesting and challenging embedded system projects.

How would you describe your company's success?

Excelsior's success is driven by our passion for embedded systems; we enjoy constantly learning about new things (e.g., new chips, computing architectures, programming techniques, etc.) and figuring out how we can put them to work for our clients.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

There is increasing demand for embedded software expertise in the automotive industry, particularly in southeast Michigan, due to the growth in advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) and vehicle electrification.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Innovation, collaboration, integrity.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**


FARMISH
Grand Rapids

Terra Osman
www.getfarmish.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Farmish is a marketplace app for users to buy and sell homegrown produce, backyard chicken eggs, honey, plants, trees, garden supplies, and more.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Farmish is expanding our market membership features to build a path for producers to go from hobby to side hustle to building a scalable homegrown business.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted to build something that I saw a need for in my own life and that would help other people to make connections in their own communities.

How would you describe your company's success?

Farmish is growing fast. With over 100,000 downloads within our first eight weeks, we have users all over the U.S. and Canada.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The growing interest in localizing the supply chain.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Fast-growing startup.


**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**


GIGGSO INC.
Troy

Ravi Venugopal
www.giggso.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

AI operations management platform and services.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To launch no-code AI observability at a low cost for AI startups across the U.S.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I am fascinated in applied AI, and I wanted to help contribute to regulate and make AI responsibly accessible to consumers.

How would you describe your company's success?

Grateful to Michigan's initiatives and clients, our organic, bootstrapped platform delivers great value to customers.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The increasing adoption of AI across industries is driving the need for greater AI observability. This trend is creating a growing demand for our AI observability platform and services as more organizations seek to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of their AI systems.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Innovative, inclusive, inspirational.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



HYBRID ROBOTICS

Traverse City

Matt Goddard

www.hybridroboticsinc.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Hybrid Robotics manufactures robotic solutions for the unmanned marine industry.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

We are in the middle of manufacturing our new tether management system (TMS) and expect a very successful launch.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

My partners and I wanted to be able to manufacture and innovate some of our ideas we thought of in college that had a major impact on the marine industry.

How would you describe your company's success?

We have an amazing team, and we are flexible!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Supply chain shortages in 2022.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Innovative, passionate, driven.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**



NEWGAIT

Marquette

Benga Adeeko

www.thenewgait.com

**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

We provide hope to people with mobility limitations by developing solutions to help them walk better.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned
for the company?**

We are wrapping up our BAF engagement with Central Michigan University, in which they are testing our device against the standard of care. We are patiently awaiting the results of that study that will quantify the results my team and I have seen for years.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

I wanted to be a business owner for two reasons: first, to have more autonomy over the work I performed; and second, to have a bigger impact in life.

How would you describe your company's success?

Like most companies, we have had our share of ups and downs, but through it all, our core team has persevered. The success of our company has been a result of our determination and belief in our mission.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

Inflation and supply chain constraints are the two biggest trends affecting our business right now.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Collaborative, progressive, curious.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**

REVOLIN
SPORTS

REVOLIN SPORTS
Holland
Hugh Davis
www.revolinsports.com
**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Revolin Sports designs, manufactures, and sells high-performance sporting goods that are better for the planet, starting with pickleball.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned for
the company?**

Revolin Sports is expanding its line of high-performance pickleball paddles to reach even more players across the country. Continuing to push our sustainable material science innovation, we will launch a recyclable paddle with an accessible price point for new players.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Revolin Sports grew from my love of pickleball and a belief that I could make better equipment for players and the planet. I knew we could do better and that I had the tools and the drive to make that happen.

How would you describe your company's success?

Revolin Sports is pioneering the use of sustainable materials in high-performance sporting equipment. We have applied our patent-pending biocomposites to create innovative equipment for the fastest-growing sport in the USA—pickleball. Our growth is evidence of our success. In 2022, our revenue grew 330%!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The prioritization of sustainability. New technologies have long been pioneered in the world of sports. Businesses and consumers are realizing that it's time to invest in innovation that combats climate change.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Trustworthy, relentless, customer-obsessed.


**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**

STEELHEAD
technologies

STEELHEAD TECHNOLOGIES
Laurium
Jeff Halonen
www.gosteelhead.com
**Describe the company
in one sentence.**

Steelhead provides job shop manufacturers with an ultramodern operating system to boost profit and productivity.

**What is the next major
accomplishment planned
for the company?**

Steelhead is working to commercially deploy AI driven scheduling to tackle very complex and dynamic plant scheduling challenges.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

When I become aware of a gap between the way something could be and the way it is...it gnaws at me. Starting a business is the ultimate tool to solve any given problem.

How would you describe your company's success?

Steelhead's success to date is due solely to the people involved. From customers that are more like partners, to investors, founders, employees and contractors. With everyone solely focused on using technology to help move these shops into the new age, the results have been stunning.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

When businesses are handed from an older, more analog generation to a more tech-savvy, digital generation, the appetite for modern, easy-to-use technology becomes pretty acute. They have the mentality, "There has to be a tool for this." Even smaller shops expect great tools!

Describe the company culture in three words.

Ownership, entrepreneurial, results.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**

sticker blitz

STICKER BLITZ KNC.

Warren

Matthew and Joshua Stephens

www.stickerblitz.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We provide ridiculously easy and fast custom stickers.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

To invest in technology that will improve customer experience and overall throughput.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Entrepreneurship has been a long-term desire of ours.

How would you describe your company's success?

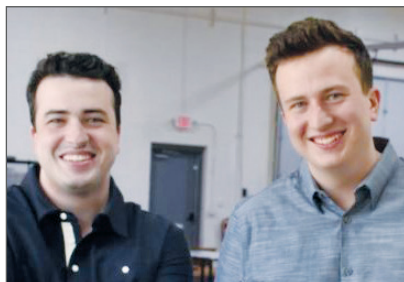
Our growth is almost faster than we can keep up with and exciting to be a part of!

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The need for small-run printing jobs and the lack of viable options in the market.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Fun, friendly, fast-moving.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**

**URBAN
ELECTRONIC
GAMES**

URBAN ELECTRONICS INC.

Detroit

John Wolff

www.urbanelectronicgames.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

Gamify experiences through augmented reality and blockchain technologies.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Alpha release of our premier augmented reality title, "TontachiAR" in October, while expanding our B2B tech-stack to clients.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Playing video games was great, but making video games seemed like a dream job. I wanted to create experiences that could bridge virtual reality with our present reality.

How would you describe your company's success?

Our ability to amalgamate emerging technologies into casual consumer applications. Our ability to solidify strategic partnerships with top companies in our field.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The need to deliver high-value products and be competitive with minimal investment capital or opportunity.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Explore, play, discover.



**SMARTZONE
BEST SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**

Workpack Solutions™

WORKPACK SOLUTIONS

Marne

Douglas Scranton

www.cartonerp.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

We provide enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems for printed packaging manufacturers.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Supporting other printed packaging markets.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We enjoy helping companies and their employees be successful.

How would you describe your company's success?

We are industry experts who use innovation and technology to streamline processes.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The increasing importance of automation.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Innovative, industry-experts, teamwork.


**VETERAN-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESS AWARD**


JETCO SOLUTIONS.

Birmingham

Jon Tellier

www.jetcosolutions.com

Describe the company in one sentence.

JetCo Solutions is a service-disabled veteran-owned small business that helps clients sell to all levels of government.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

JetCo Solutions has plans to open satellite offices in strategic defense locations. Also, cybersecurity is a top priority. We will become CMMC-certified to support the nation's efforts to safeguard security information that supports and enables our warfighters.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

Before starting JetCo Solutions, I was fired from my previous job. It really was a matter of survival at the time. I have never looked back, but I don't think I would have started JetCo without that "gentle" nudge. Now we're able to help companies across the U.S. looking to get into government contracting.

How would you describe your company's success?

JetCo's success has always been measured by our clients' success. When they win, we win. We get there by caring about our people, being intentional in our process, and embracing creativity.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The application of AI in proposal management is a trend we are following closely. We're interested to see if it will improve client success rates.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Impressive, dedicated, highly responsible.



MINORITY-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



WALSH SERVICE SOLUTIONS
Kalamazoo

Rich, Dan, and Wally Walsh

www.walshservicesolutions.com



Describe the company in one sentence.

Walsh Service Solutions provides civil and marine construction and remediation services.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

We would like to obtain our 8(a) and HUBZone designations.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

We wanted to do things better than what we were seeing in the industry, so we made it happen.

How would you describe your company's success?

We have a strong focus on providing outstanding customer service.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The availability of quality personnel.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Walsh Service Solutions!

MINORITY-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESS AWARD



ALLEGiant LAUNDRY SERVICES
Hartford

Jeremiah Smith

Describe the company in one sentence.

Allegiant Laundry Services (ALS) specializes in medical textiles and provides other various wash-and-fold commercial laundry services to a variety of businesses throughout southwest Michigan.

What is the next major accomplishment planned for the company?

Allegiant Laundry Services plans to partner with a major health care group, and develop a highly efficient medical textile processing plant in the city of Kalamazoo. In addition, ALS will also be developing affordable housing apartments, and self-service laundromats.

Why did you decide to be a business owner?

At a young age, I had an entrepreneurial spirit and knew that owning my own business was in my future. When the recession hit, I began to harness my entrepreneurial spirit and find a way to work for myself.

How would you describe your company's success?

The success of my company has been by the grace of God. I started the business 12 years ago. There have been many bumps in the road along the way, but faith, core values, passion, and desire to take care of family were the anchors to keep pushing forward.

What small business trend is impacting you the most?

The most impactful trend that influences our small business is the rising inflation. We continue to strengthen our customer relations, take innovative approaches, and add a personal touch on our services.

Describe the company culture in three words.

Inclusive, collaborative, respectful.



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