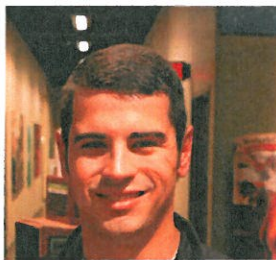


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s in the corrugated container and
toiding carton converting industries. p.8

Paperboard Packaging wanted to know who are the promising influencers in the corrugated container and folding carton converting industries. We asked industry leaders for suggestions on who's up and coming in the industry. We then contacted these converters and asked them a series of questions. From their answers, we've chosen these innovators, thought leaders, problem solvers, and change agents in the corrugated container and folding carton converting industries.



Name: Maggie Beach
Age: 31
Company: Elegant Packaging
Title: Project Manager/Sales
Years with company: 1 year 8 months

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

I took the initiative to lead Elegant Packaging into the world of social media. I have created Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter pages for my company. In this day and age it is necessary for companies to have at least one social media outlet. It is often how a customer first hears about a company as well as a way for a company to send a message out to a mass audience. I am also currently working on creating monthly email blasts to send to some of our regular customers to get them more informed on our industry and processes, to show our diverse box style options and the benefits of each individual style, and to highlight some of Elegant Packaging's accomplishments. I have worked on becoming a leader in the industry by participating in local AICC events and webinars. I have also assisted in organizing a few AICC events.

In your opinion, what are the key traits of a leader?

Leaders must be strong. They have to be confident and knowledgeable. A leader should be someone that others respect and want to follow. A leader should be approachable, not intimidating. A leader should be someone that others feel comfortable going to with a question or concern, and who takes the time to explain procedures, or to listen to trepidations. They work well with their colleagues and will lead in brainstorming a solution to any problems. A leader should remain professional and lead by example.

Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

I am strong-willed, confident and knowledgeable. I'm outgoing and people tend to like me from the start, and naturally follow my lead. I'm very good at explaining things to colleagues; in every job I have had I tend to be the person that trains new employees in my position and who people come to with their questions. I'm extremely approachable and easy to

talk to, so much so that I've had numerous colleagues in the past make remarks such as, "I can't believe I just told you all of that; I never talk about my personal life." My friendly and approachable personality is a weakness as well as a strength of mine. I'm very open and genuinely enjoy just about everyone I've ever met, which can cause my professionalism to take a back seat. I need to work on setting boundaries for myself to limit what I discuss and how lax I act in the work place. I have significantly improved on this from my first job after college, but it is an area I still need to work on. I could also use some improvement in regards to my sensitivity. Although it is good for a leader to be conscious of others' feelings and to be a caring person themselves, they also need to keep their emotions in check. I tend to get offended easily and have a hard time shielding my hurt. I need to work on masking my feelings and on not taking criticism so personally.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

One weakness is obtaining vendor materials in a timely fashion. We can't order materials until we receive a PO from our customer, and often the customer wants their finished boxes much sooner than we are able to produce them. One of the main causes of this is board; it usually takes about a month from the time we order board until we receive it. I am currently working with one of our board vendors to have them stock certain board calipers that we use most often. This shortens our board turnaround time by about three weeks and, providing everything else is on schedule, it can help us get the order completed for our customers that much sooner as well. I have also on several occasions driven to pick up materials from local vendors myself, which saves some time and money on shipping.



Name: Jeremy Cohen
Age: 36
Company: Acme Corrugated Box
Title: Operations Manager
Years with the company: 12

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

To be a leader within the company I continue to work at being an ambassador across all departments; I work at coaching employees and discussing work and personal items. Most importantly, I

find that thorough, annual performance reviews that have consistent personal and departmental goals are a great way to show your people that you care; you are interested in their development and how they can add value to the company. As for the industry, I have focused in my 12 years to meet as many people as possible that can and have helped develop my skills. These industry contacts include suppliers and veteran industry leaders, as well as a network of other corrugated box companies that I can bounce ideas off.

In your opinion, what are the key traits for a leader?

Key traits of a leader are someone who can listen well, have a vision, form a plan, and carry out the plan by directing people and delegating tasks. Leaders are people that others want to follow. It's about building relationships with others, garnering their trust, and moving forward as a team to accomplish goals.

Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

As an engineer by education, I typically see things in black and white. But to be a leader you need to be able to decipher grey areas as well. I am working on being more flexible, both for our internal customers as well as our external customers.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

All organizations have strengths and weaknesses. I see people as our #1 asset. The biggest gap we have in our facility is a skills gap, both at the operator and maintenance levels. We have worked hard to develop internal training programs, which we call "Acme University." We also send our people outside for training via TAPPI, AICC and other technical forums to become more competent in their skills. This way, they can add more value to our company and help us become a better, low-cost producer.



Name: Jared Mathes

Age: 26

Company: Vanguard

Packaging

Title: Marketing and Brand
Development Director

Years with the company: 2

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

Hard work goes a long way and is noticed by those throughout

your organization. I work to go above and beyond in my own tasks, while learning other aspects of the company that are not required. Sometimes looking at something from the 30,000 ft. view can help you on the ground. I have built a founda-

tion within my department that allows us to think about the upcoming years, not days. We have implemented programs that have built a strong foundation. This foundation allows for forward thinking and creativity. If some ideas fail, we are still strong as a company because our foundation is strong.

In your opinion, what are the key traits of a leader?

Knowing how to delegate. There are a lot of smart people who are the best at what they do, but are not leaders within their business. Moving a project or idea forward requires multiple people and multiple skill sets within a division. Great leaders do more with less time because they can rely on their co-workers to perform at a high level that is in line with their own level of work.

Communication. Leaders know how to communicate basic tasks and ideas, but great leaders understand how to communicate these same ideas in different ways, tailored to the person or group they are working with. Identifying your team and their operating styles is key.

The "It" factor. This is different for everyone, but to me it is the understanding of your goals to the point that those on your team recognize how to reach those goals. Your confidence is transitioned to others and there is no doubt that you will complete your tasks. Your customers and co-workers see this confidence and are attracted to your ideas.

Creativity or thinking outside the box. Companies are always looking for fresh ideas. You don't always have to reinvent the wheel. Understand the basic concept and put your twist on it.

Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

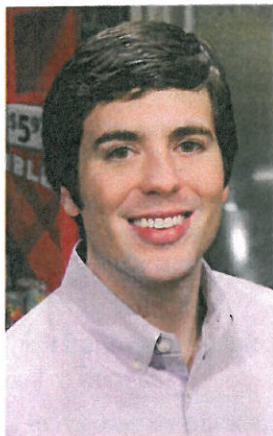
I believe that I am an excellent communicator throughout the different divisions within our organization, as well as with the customers I work with daily. This communication helps us work efficiently with little downtime. I am also very creative. I recognize where we need to implement a new marketing strategy and where we can alter existing ideas. I feel that these traits will assist me in the future to continue delegating throughout the organization.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

A current weakness in our company deals with delegating duties and bridging the age gap of employees. As our company grows, new hires have occurred and new divisions opened. Technology plays a huge part in growth, as new ways of operation require a new type of thinking. More hires of the younger generation have been added to accommodate new technology and the knowledge that comes with these new employees.

The problem becomes how to properly delegate tasks to the younger group of employees that do not have the experience that your veteran staff possesses. Do you take the time to fully train these veterans or have the younger staff take

on some of their responsibilities during the transition and growing pains of this time? No one from the younger crop of employees will reach veteran status if you are not giving them the opportunity to learn and take on tougher jobs. We are working to have our veterans assist this younger group, while not slowing down our production rates. Incorporating this transition at the proper pace will make our company stronger as a whole.



Name: Justin Mathes
Age: 30
Company: Vanguard Packaging
Title: Executive Director, Point of Sale
Years with the company: 5

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

A manager is chosen by his or her superiors. A leader is chosen by those who have enough respect to follow a particular individual. I have strived to fall into the second category and through my actions give our employees compelling reasons to follow me.

So why would our employees be willing to follow me? I believe a primary reason is I have had the benefit of working for family ownership that has expected me to work my way up through the company. This has been a great benefit to me in terms of understanding and being able to personally complete most of the day-to-day operations necessary for our business to be successful. I believe the most appropriate term is a "boots on the ground" type of philosophy.

From an industry standpoint, I believe my background in M&A and crisis management has allowed me to bring a unique perspective to many discussions. Especially in this time of industry consolidation, an understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of an active M&A environment is, if nothing else, somewhat unique to an independently-owned corrugated box operation.

In your opinion, what are the key traits of a leader?

A leader is the calmest but most concerned team member during times of stress. A leader is never too good to complete simple tasks, and never too afraid to make a hard decision. I have found that indecision is more expensive than a bad decision and a true leader sleeps better at night having accepted that fact. To sum it up — calm, responsibly fearless, purposeful, confident, and humble.

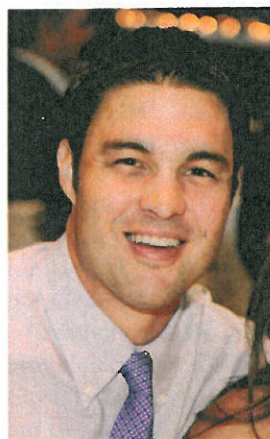
Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

I have never had a problem making a decision, but that doesn't mean I don't sometimes lie in bed at night second

guessing myself. I am not sure if great leaders transcend the tendency to second guess themselves, or if they just do a great job of hiding it.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

I have found it difficult to hire people of my generation. Students departing college with many tens of thousands of dollars in debt tend to leave expecting a managerial position with a six-figure salary. I don't blame them, but there is a big gap between expectation and reality. The most valuable employees at our company have worked here for 20-30 years. Over those decades, both they and Vanguard have benefitted from that long-term commitment to progress. I question whether or not that type of work ethic and loyalty is going to be replaceable.



Name: Ken Petty
Age: 38
Company: Indiana Carton Co. Inc.
Title: President
Years with the company: 14

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

I was promoted to president of the company this year after serving as vice president and

general manager for the past five years. Prior to my time in the general manager role I focused on operations management and human resources. I continue to pursue educational opportunities that focus on communication skills, change management, mentoring and strategic thinking.

I was recently installed on the board of directors of the Paperboard Packaging Council. I just presented a case study on Food Safety in Packaging. I also have been a contributing member to the subcommittee on production efficiencies. Prior to my installation on the board, I was invited to and participated in the PPC's New Generation Leadership group.

In your opinion, what are the key traits of a leader?

Integrity. A leader must be trusted in order to authentically influence and compel employees to do their best work.

Self-Awareness. Leaders must have a bearing and situational awareness of how they are perceived in order to maximize their efforts.

Selflessness. I prescribe to the servant leader model in which the ordinary pyramid, with the boss/leader on the top, is flipped. This model figuratively places the leader underneath his or her subordinates in a support role. In my opinion it is a leader's job to own this selfless role as support.

Communication. "Because, I said so" no longer works if

it in fact ever worked. For this reason I believe a leader must provide the "why" to most requests and invite constructive debate. People want to know the reasoning behind a task and also want to be "in the know." Keeping your team informed at every level galvanizes a team and eliminates future dissent.

Enthusiasm. A leader who is seen as indifferent to the cause will crush any spirit within the group. The result is a team of punchers.

Focus. A leader must be able recognize and discard the daily distractions that take a group off course.

Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

Personally I struggle with communication. In a day with only so many minutes, spending the time to effectively communicate to all levels and provide adequate dialog often falls by the wayside.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

Currently we are addressing accountability by simplifying job descriptions, work instructions, and standard operating procedures. We are taking a "time-out" to review expectations and assign a primary and secondary for each company deliverable.



Name: Keva Sonderen
Age: 30
Company: Sonderen Packaging
Title: Principal
Years with the company: 10

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

I am currently taking a class at Gonzaga University called the Emerging Leaders Pro-

gram; I am the board secretary for the Executive Women International Spokane Chapter; My brother Matt and I also run an informal lunch group of next generation family business owners in our community. We meet once a month and talk about relevant issues to our family business.

Sonderen Packaging is a member of the Independent Carton Group and I frequently attend those meetings to gain knowledge and build relationships with other leaders in our industry (www.independentcartongroup.com); Sonderen Packaging is a member of the Paperboard Packaging Council (PPC). I also attend those meetings if possible to make contacts and learn about the latest challenges, technologies and progress in the industry.

In your opinion, what are the key traits for a leader?

Emotional intelligence, humor, passion, sacrifice, reliability,

trustworthiness, humility, compassion, vision, and resilience.

Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

I possess all of those traits. However, sacrifice and reliability are current challenges for two reasons. Making sacrifices in regards to the time spent on work is challenging because I am continually attempting to achieve balance in my life. I have two young children and work full time in addition to being involved in the community. I also value and understand the importance of setting aside time for myself. I am not able to spend as much time working on the business as I would like at this point in my life because spending time with my children is incredibly important to me. Hence I am not willing to sacrifice that time if at all possible.

Reliability is a challenge because I am currently wearing so many hats and am overloaded with commitments, deadlines and projects. It is very important to me to be regarded as someone who is responsive and who will follow through when I say I am going to do something. This is a challenge for me at the moment as there just are not enough hours in the day.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

We do not have any weaknesses, only opportunities for improvement. We enjoy taking on new challenges and coming together as a team to overcome them. Finding new, better or more efficient ways to achieve our goals is what makes this business fun. There is never a dull day.



Name: Matt Sonderen
Age: 33
Company: Sonderen Packaging
Title: Principal
Years with the company: 15

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

I demonstrate leadership in my company by working with our team to clear road-

blocks that may hinder them from achieving our vision of retaining customers for life. Within our industry I am involved in the Paperboard Packaging Council's New Generation leaders committee. I regularly attend the annual PIA/GATF Continuous Improvement Conference. I listen to and try to implement as many employee-generated ideas as possible.

In your opinion, what are the key traits for a leader?

A leader must be able to set a vision for others to work toward and be able to clearly communicate that vision to

those they lead. At the same time, they must be a servant first. Having a leader to provide support and build team members up is what will make an organization successful.

Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

I think I excel at seeing the vision and setting direction for the company with the help of our talented executive team. The greatest challenge is communicating that vision to the rest of the company so that everyone makes decisions that move the company in the right direction. We are effective at communication but there is always room for improvement. Becoming a true servant leader is something I aspire to.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

In the market space we target, we have very few weaknesses, only opportunities for improvement. Our ability to recognize problems, find root causes, and work as a team to come up with rock solid corrective and preventative actions is what allows us to continually improve what we do for our customers and is just one of the keys to what keeps them coming back time and again.



Name: Brock Welch

Age: 26

Company: Welch Packaging Group, Inc.

Title: Field Sales Manager

Years with the company: 3

In what ways are you working to become a leader in your company and in the industry?

I have been working hard to earn the trust and respect of our team at Welch Pack-

aging for many years. I am trying to become a leader through simple day-to-day interactions with other team members, customers, other leaders, etc. In the sales capacity, I'm able to see what areas we need to improve on internally, as well as externally (from the customer's perspective). For example, if we miss a delivery, why did we miss the delivery? I'm the one who asks the questions and tends not to be satisfied until we find the root cause — and fix it.

In your opinion, what are the key traits for a leader?

Leaders possess the ability to identify problems, provide solutions to those problems, and have the capacity to initiate change. They understand their vision/mission and effectively utilize people to help achieve the company's objectives.

They manage/organize people well. Leaders develop in-depth relationships with their team, and furthermore,

build the trust and confidence of the people they work with each and every day. They bring out the best efforts in everybody on their team (i.e., inspire). A leader also sets the precedent — they are driven, highly motivated, competitive-natured, and full of 'positive' energy.

Leaders are not afraid to make decisions, regardless of how difficult the situation. Leaders give guidance; they communicate effectively; they ensure everybody knows their role. They are risk-takers and possess an entrepreneurial spirit—resourceful and industrious.

Which traits do you possess now and which traits do you need to work on?

Currently, I believe I have a lot of the innate traits to be a good leader. I tend to develop relationships easily with people and they in turn learn to trust in our relationship. I strongly dislike talking about myself — not the company — but me personally. The reason I mention that is because it gives me the ability to be a better listener and ask more questions. That helps people not only trust, but see that I truly care and want to understand them as a person.

Furthermore, one of my stronger traits in my opinion is the energy component. I make it my goal to work harder than anyone. I try to carry that passion, positive attitude, and competitiveness over to the people I work with every day. One of the weakest areas for me is communication. I have never been the best communicator — and I realize it — so it is something I have to work twice as hard on to ensure I'm communicating with people effectively.

What do you see as a current weakness in your company and how are you currently working on eliminating it?

When we were a smaller sheet plant, we were capable of doing things 'our way' without standard processes and procedures in place. Well, the processes were there but if you chose not to follow them it didn't make much difference because everybody had a handle on the business. As we've scaled over the years, we continued to try to do things 'our way,' which consists of everybody doing what they were used to doing 10 to 15 years ago. That said, we are very weak in communicating and following basic processes that effect our day to day operation.

In order to help eliminate, or mitigate, this weakness, I, along with some other team members, have initiated a group of meetings in which each department of our business is represented (e.g., sales, production, purchasing, customer service, shipping, etc.) in order to collect their insight into what this process should be and what information is required to ensure efficiencies for everybody. These meetings have taken place and have yielded some positive feedback on what needs to happen in order to improve the process. We are currently in the midst of creating a universal document that will be used to start the process (sales) and end the process (scheduler) that includes every piece of information pertinent to each department to do their job for an order. **PBP**