

05-13-16 | Empire Screen Printing Press Release

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Pictured Below (L-R) Empire owner, Jim Brush, Cindy Brush, Kaara Freismuth & Empire President John Freismuth



13th Annual Wisconsin Family Business of the Year Award - 2016 Winners Announced!

The award celebrates the accomplishments and the impact that family-owned businesses have on our communities. The judges consider the family business' contribution to its community and industry, its positive links between family and business, and innovative practices it may use. On Thursday, May 12th at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, the following Wisconsin companies from around the state were honored.

Judges were impressed with Empire's can-do attitude, industry leadership and dedication to continuous innovation and commitment to environmentally sustainable business practices and processes. For more information about this honor please contact Amy Bettis at Empire Screen Printing for more details and a copy of our submitted award application.

Grand Awards

Empire Screen Printing, Onalaska - Large Company

Badger Basement Systems - Medium Company

Shiloh Dairy, Brillion - Small Company

Special Awards

Architectural Design Systems, Inc. - "Communication - Commitment - Creativity"

Gordon Flesch Company, Madison - "Wired for Success"

Tamara's the Cake Guru, Oshkosh - "Sweet Success"

Each nomination is reviewed in-depth by a panel of judges composed of independent Wisconsin business leaders. Wisconsin companies as small as two employees to as large as 6000 employees have been nominated.

Qualifications

- Be a Wisconsin-based family-owned company
- Have intentions of passing ownership to the next generation
- 2015 Grand Award winners are not eligible

Award Categories Grand Awards Categories

Small Under 50 employees

Medium 50 to 99 employees

Large 100 or more employees

Special awards may also be given to companies excelling in a particular area.

Judging Criteria

- Contribution to community and industry
- How family values influence business
- Innovative practices
- Economic flexibility and profitability
- Positive links between family and business
- Business performance
- Challenges overcome

Our Story

Self-reliance, determination and innovation drives Empire as a successful family business. These values are synonymous with Empire's founder and owner Jim Brush. Beginning, as a one-man operation, Jim learned to rely on his own strengths and talents to succeed. He asked himself these questions: *How can I do it myself? What obstacles must I overcome? How can I make it better?*

Guided by these principles since 1960, Jim steadily built his business. In 1961 he brought his brother Billy into the operation as Empire's first employee. Together, they continued to create art and screen print decals for customers, growing Empire's customer base. Jim inspired those values in his first employee and in each successive employee and family member after that. *How can Empire be self-reliant? Do we have the determination to overcome obstacles? What*

can we do to improve the process? Almost six decades later, we still ask those questions, and answer them on a daily basis. At Empire we never settle for 'good enough'. We strive for greatness.

We can attribute our industry advancements to the answers of these questions. Empire was one of the first screen printers to replace solvent inks with UV inks in the 1970-80s. In the early 90s in our bid to become more self-reliant, a computer graphic department was added. That department was soon followed by an in-house machine shop. If we couldn't buy equipment to do what was needed, we built it. Since 1991, Empire's machine shop continues to successfully develop, modify and build our production equipment.

On the leading edge of technology for the next millennia we began to digitally image screens and printing plates, abandoning graphic art film and the harsh development chemicals. Embracing this path to environmental sustainability we dramatically changed how screen printing is done by being the first in the world to successfully implement UV-LED ink curing technology into the screen print process. It was a deliberate choice to improve our industry, and make our UV-LED technology non-proprietary, openly sharing this game changing discovery with our peers. This willingness to share our innovation has placed us on the national stage. We are recognized for our commitment to the culture of social responsibility and environmentally sustainable printing practices.

As we continue to answer our founder's original questions. *How can we do it ourselves? What obstacles must we overcome? How can we make it better?* The answer was lean manufacturing. Both Jim Brush and John Freismuth have instilled the value of lean manufacturing principles, and advocated a relentless pursuit of continuous improvement, quality and service. Empire is creating and sustaining a culture of solution-based problem solving techniques through lean practices and environmental awareness. We cultivate our extended family of employees and business partners to respect Empire's long-term philosophy and ensure our future prosperity.

Any questions please direct them to Amy Bettis HR/Marketing at Empire Screen Printing.