

INDA's Small Business Newsletter

Covering Issues That Affect You

October 2009

INDA SMALL BUSINESS E-REPORT

Welcome to the INDA Small Business e-Report. This monthly e-publication provides INDA members with insight and advice on operating a successful small business in today's nonwovens industry.

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NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR IDEA10 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Nominations are now open for the prestigious IDEA10 Achievement Awards, which are once again being co-sponsored by INDA and Nonwovens Industry magazine. The awards, presented every three years in conjunction with the IDEA International Engineered Fabrics Exposition and Conference, are designed to award innovation within the nonwovens and engineered fabrics industries.

Nominations will be accepted through December 31, 2009.

The IDEA10 Achievement Awards will recognize the leading companies, individuals and new products in the global engineered fabrics industry. The awards will be presented on the show floor during IDEA10, April 27-29, 2010, at the Miami Convention Center in Miami Beach, Fla.

All members of the global engineered fabrics industry are eligible for the IDEA10 Achievement Awards. Nominations can be made in five categories through a number of outlets, including the INDA website at www.inda.org and through the Nonwovens Industry site at www.nonwovens-industry.com.

A Selection Committee will then select three finalists in each category, and in early 2010 members of the industry will have the opportunity to vote on the recipient in each category through the Nonwovens Industry and INDA websites.

“These IDEA Achievement Awards promote innovation and recognize outstanding achievement within the worldwide engineered fabrics community and it is fitting that they will be presented during IDEA10, the most important industry trade show of the year,” says Rory Holmes, President of INDA, the organizer of the triennial IDEA Conference and Exposition.

Nominations are being accepted in five categories:

- IDEA10 Equipment Achievement Award ... Given to the company with the best equipment new product introduction since IDEA07.
- IDEA10 Roll Goods Achievement Award ... Given to the company with the best roll goods new product introduction since IDEA07.
- IDEA10 Raw Material Achievement Award ... Given to the company with the best fiber/raw material new product introduction since IDEA07.
- IDEA10 Short-Life Product Achievement Award ... Presented for the best new disposable product utilizing engineered fabrics introduced since IDEA07.
- IDEA10 Long-Life Product Achievement Award ... Presented for the best new durable product utilizing engineered fabrics introduced since IDEA07.

Anyone with questions on the nomination process should contact project coordinator Michael Jacobsen at 201-396-7005; [mjacobson@inda.org](mailto:mjacobsen@inda.org).

TEN REASONS YOUR TEAM HATES YOU

Every small business owner has to deal with different personalities, internal politics and the “people” challenges that go with running a business. This is true in nonwovens as well as any other industry. There are some general areas of “pain” that can be eliminated, though, many of which small business managers may not even be aware of. ThoughtLeaders LLC discusses some of these in a blog entitled “Ten Reasons Your Team Hates You.” Here’s what they have to say:

Reason Number 10. You don't prioritize. Everything is important. When you do this, you remove your team's ability to say no to less important work and focus their efforts on critical tasks. The fix: write down all the tasks you have folks working on and FORCE yourself to assign a High, Medium, or Low Priority to each task (and treat it as such). Thou shalt only have 33% of all tasks in each of those three categories - you can't assign everything a “High” importance.

Reason Number 9. You treat them like employees. You don't know a darn thing about them as a person (which makes them feel like nothing more than a number). The fix: [read this post about 7Up](#)

Reason Number 8. You don't fight for them. When is the last time you went to bat for a team member? And I mean went to bat where you had something to lose if it didn't work out? When you don't stand up for them, you lose their trust. The fix: identify something you should have gone to the mat for recently and get out there and fight. Get someone that raise they deserve. Go fight for them to get that cool new project.

Reason Number 7. You tell them to “have a balanced life” then set a bad example. You tell them weekends are precious and they should spend them with their family then you go and send them emails or voicemails on Sunday afternoon. The fix: either curb your bad habit of not being in balance or learn how to do delayed send in Outlook so your messages won't go out until Monday morning.

Reason Number 6. You never relax. You walk around like you have a potato chip wedged between your butt cheeks and you're trying not to break it. When you're uptight all the time, it makes them uptight. Negative or stressful energy transfers to others. The fix: laugh. Get a remote controlled car or tricycle to drive around the office, or put on a Burger King crown. When you relax, your team knows it's okay for them to relax too.

Reason Number 5. You micromanage. You know every detail of what they're working on and you've become a control freak. They have no room to make decisions on their own (which means yes, they'll make a mistake or two). The fix: back off. Pick a few low risk projects and commit to not doing ANYTHING on them unless your team member asks you for assistance. It'll be uncomfortable for you. But give it a try, you micromanaging control freak.

Reason Number 4. You're a suck-up. If your boss stopped short while walking down the hall, you'd break your neck. Your team hates seeing you do this because it demonstrates

lack of spine and willingness to fight for them. It can also signal to them that you expect them to be a sycophant just like you. The fix: try [kicking up and kissing down](#) instead.

Reason Number 3. You treat them like mushrooms. Translation: they're kept in the dark and fed a bunch of crap. Do you ration information? Do you withhold "important" things from them because it's "need to know" only? All you're doing is creating gossip and fear. The fix: stop acting like 007 and spill some beans.

Reason Number 2. You're above getting your hands dirty. You're great at assigning work. Doing work? Not so much. They hate watching you preside (and they hate it even more when you take credit for what they slaved over). The fix: get dirty. Climb under the proverbial tank and turn a wrench. Roll up your sleeves and pick a smaller project you can handle in addition to your other responsibilities and DO THE PROJECT YOURSELF.

Reason Number 1. You're indecisive. Maybe. Or not. But possibly. Yeah. No. I don't know. OH MY GOSH, MAKE A DECISION ALREADY! That's what you get paid to do as the leader. You drive them crazy with your incessant flip-flopping or waffling. The fix: DO SOMETHING! Acknowledge you might make a mistake but do something. A team is much more likely to follow a leader who makes decisions (even some bad ones) than a leader who makes no decisions at all.

There they are: 10 reasons your team hates you. Do any of them fit? I'll tell you what: I DARE you to email this post to your team members and ask them to anonymously circle any of the above behaviors that apply to you. I then further challenge you to fix the one or two that have the most votes. Trust me - all of you will be happier if you do.

LITTLE GUYS WILL BATTLE THE GIANTS FOR 2010 VISIONARY AWARD

Five consumer products covering a range of end-use applications have been nominated as finalists for the prestigious 2010 Visionary Award.

Now in its ninth year, the Award – which is given annually to a new consumer product that utilizes nonwoven fabrics in its final form – will be presented at the VISION 2010 Consumer Products Conference, January 20-22, 2010 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The finalists will make presentations during VISION 2010 and conference attendees will vote on the recipient of the 2010 Visionary Award.

“Even in the challenging business climate of the past 12 months, consumer products’ companies have invested in the development of new products and these five finalists of the 2010 Visionary Award are proof of the success of these efforts,” says Visionary Award Chairman Michael Jacobsen, of INDA, organizer of the annual Vision Consumer Products Conference.

“They represent the most significant advances in incorporating nonwovens technology into consumer products and they are being recognized not only for their technical attributes, but for their novel use of nonwoven fabrics as well,” Jacobsen adds.

The five finalists are:

The Dial Corporation/Henkel, Purex Complete 3-in-1 Laundry Sheets

The product does it all in one easy-to-use sheet. Consumers can use the same sheet from washer to the dryer providing cleaning, softening and anti-static benefits. Each sheet contains the proper amount of detergent, softener and anti-static agent for a single load of wash.

Advanced Cleaning Technologies, The Ultimate Cloth

The Ultimate Cloth is a patented, exclusive technology that makes it “the best cleaning cloth in the industry today.” The Ultimate Cloth is a streak-free window cleaner that cleans and polishes windows, mirrors, windshields and glass as well as many soft surfaces such as leather and vinyl.

Rockline Industries, Regenerated Cotton Wipe

The substrate for the Regenerated Cotton Wipe is made from 100% biodegradable materials – the blend is 25% viscose and 75% cotton. The cotton is produced from the post-industrial waste from the manufacturing of T-shirts, and the recovery process to regenerate the cotton is energy and water friendly.

Procter & Gamble, Infinity feminine hygiene pad

This newest feminine hygiene pad from P&G features a soft cover sheet designed to work with the pad's Infinicel core, Microdots for fast absorption, a new wing design for secure protection, form-fitting channels for leakage protection and a wider design in the back to provide increased coverage.

Superior Felt and Filtration/Wein Products, Fitseal disposable respirator mask

This mask employs nonwoven tribo technology coupled with a medical adhesion system that makes it an effective disposable mask in swine flu/H1N1 protection as well as for use in protection in dealing with SARS, Avian Bird Flu, disaster clean up, emergency response, terrorism and tourism abroad.

Last February at VISION 2009 in New Orleans, Ahlstrom's Disruptor™ nonwoven water filter media received the 2009 Visionary Award. Previous recipients include Kimberly-Clark's Spa Sensials personal care treatment (2008); Covidien's (Tyco) Swim Pants (2007); Chicopee's Disaster Relief Blanket (2006); Fiberweb's Resolution Print Media (2005); Church & Dwight's Brillo Scrub 'n' Toss (2004); FMJ ChemBio's Civilian Quick Escape Mask (2003); and Procter & Gamble's Swiffer (2002).

For complete program and registration information for VISION 2010:

<http://www.inda.org/events/index.html>.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

While employee issues are one area on which every small business owner needs to focus, another is the overwhelming amount of information now available – and accessible – to you and your team every moment of every day. Managing this incredible amount of data can become a full time job. Harvard Business Review provides some advice on how to make sure this doesn't happen.

According to a 2008 AOL survey of 4,000 e-mail users in the United States, 46% were "hooked" on e-mail. Nearly 60% of everyone surveyed checked e-mail in the bathroom, 15% checked it in church, and 11% had hidden the fact that they were checking it from a spouse or other family member.

Most organizations unknowingly pay a high price as individuals struggle to manage the information glut. For one thing, productive time is lost as employees deal with information of limited value. In the case of e-mail, effective spam filters have reduced this problem. Still, a survey of 2,300 Intel employees revealed that people judge nearly one-third of the messages they receive to be unnecessary. Given that those same employees spend about two hours a day processing e-mail (employees surveyed received an average of 350 messages a week, executives up to 300 a day), a serious amount of time is clearly being wasted.

Another set of problems involves the constant interruptions we face, whatever the value of the content. When you respond to an e-mail alert that pops up on your screen or to the vibration of your BlackBerry when you're "poked" by a Facebook friend, you do more than spend time reading the message. You also have to recover from the interruption and refocus your attention. A study by Microsoft researchers tracking the e-mail habits of coworkers found that once their work had been interrupted by an e-mail notification, people took, on average, 24 minutes to return to the suspended task.

Distractions created by incoming e-mail and other types of information also have more-subtle consequences. Research by Teresa M. Amabile of Harvard Business School has identified reduced creative activity on days when work is fragmented by interruptions. And we know from other research that even young workers, who have lots of experience frequently switching from one device or application to another, need uninterrupted periods during which to successfully tackle particularly demanding tasks.

What does all this add up to? It's not easy to quantify the costs of these and other consequences of information overload. But one calculation by Nathan Zeldes and two other researchers put Intel's annual cost of reduced efficiency, in the form of time lost to handling unnecessary e-mail and recovering from information interruptions, at nearly \$1 billion. He says organizations ignore that kind of number at their peril.

Organizations are increasingly realizing that they stand to benefit from helping people get a better handle on the problem. Besides enabling individuals to process information more efficiently, companies should also encourage them to be more selective and intelligent about creating and distributing information in the first place.

Several new technologies focus on regulating e-mail volume within an organization. A pilot software tool called Postware requires employees to affix a noncash “stamp” to each internal e-mail they send, drawing from a fixed daily allotment. A market-based system known as Attent, developed by a company called Seriosity, allots users equal amounts of a virtual currency, which they use to attach a value to each message as a signal of importance. Recipients can then prioritize their inboxes on the basis of the value assigned to individual messages. The currency on incoming messages is deposited in the recipient’s account for use on later outgoing e-mails. Of course, “wealthy” e-mail users, who receive lots of currency from senders seeking their attention, will have more to spend on outgoing e-mail, possibly skewing the apparent importance of messages from them.

Other, more futuristic tools under development aim to sense our work patterns and determine when we don’t want to be bothered. Microsoft researchers are developing a set of applications, dubbed Priorities, that might, for example, delay someone’s e-mail alerts by gauging not only a message’s urgency but also the recipient’s receptiveness to an interruption. The software would automatically assess the message (Does it include a phrase like “as soon as you can”?), the user’s activity (Are you in a scheduled meeting with someone from your client contact list?), and the user’s mental state (Have you been actively working on a document that has led you to ignore other alerts in the past few days?).

A company’s responses to information overload will invariably require not only technology but also a change in collective behavior. That can begin with education. Nathan Zeldes, the former Intel engineer, combined technology and education in a real-time software tool called the Intel Email Effectiveness Coach, designed to help users achieve productive e-mail behavior. When the user clicks on Send, but before the message is transmitted, the program gently warns about potential e-mail blunders and breaches of etiquette—for instance, a “Reply to All” that will send the message to everyone on the distribution list.

Companies also need to establish organizational norms for electronic communication, either explicit or implicit. If a standard is implicit, senior executives should set an example. No employee wants to be the first to abandon a practice that contributes to e-mail overload, such as sending weekly reports to all division heads simply to maintain visibility.

A firm might create a weekly “e-mail-free morning”: a ban on in-house, though not external, e-mail (and possibly phone calls, instant messages, and drop-in chats). The aim would be to carve out an extended stretch of relatively uninterrupted time.

Or a manager might identify for her direct reports situations in which an in-person exchange or a phone call should replace an e-mail—not so much to foster face-to-face interactions as to speed decision making. When three or four e-mails have bounced around a group, someone may simply need to pick up the phone and settle the issue at hand.

The IT department could come up with guidelines specifying the preferred communication channels for different types of information. For example, e-mail could be reduced significantly if group newsletters and announcements were posted on a company intranet or wiki, which pulls in people seeking the information instead of pushing it at them. A rule of thumb: If the information in an e-mail you're about to send, even if potentially important in the future, is not urgent, post rather than push.

The IT folks could also replace those irksome confirmation-of-receipt requests from senders with auto-responses from recipients. Such responses would alert senders to your personal schedule for answering e-mail and urge them to phone if something needs attention sooner than you are likely to respond. That could reduce confusion stemming from differences in people's unspoken expectations. If I think of an e-mail as something to be answered within the business day and you think of it as something to be answered upon receipt, ill will and bungled decisions may ensue. If you escalate the contacts—instant message, voice mail, a huffy visit to my cubicle—you'll end up increasing the total volume of information related to a single request.

ADDRESSING COMBUSTIBLE DUST HAZARDS

In the nonwovens business, information overload and employee challenges are nothing compared to operational safety in the manufacturing plant. One serious issue in manufacturing facilities is the presence of combustible dust, which can cause safety issues and is on the radar of OSHA due to recent dust explosions resulting in employee injuries and deaths.

Conversion Technology Inc. (www.conversiontechnology.com), a leader in combustible dust safety, recently issued a report on this issue. According to their experts, questions to ask include:

- What is OSHA doing to address the issue?
- How does a facility determine if its dust is combustible?
- How does a facility develop a strategy for mitigating the hazards?

As background, according to CTI, for years there have been no specific OSHA regulations regarding the danger that combustible dusts present. However, in March 2008 OSHA reissued its Combustible Dust National Emphasis Program (NEP), in effect establishing an inspection schedule for facilities at which combustible dust is likely to pose a hazard. Obviously taking these hazards very seriously, OSHA officials are currently performing inspections to enforce this NEP across the country, and fines totaling in the millions of dollars have already been issued. Nationally, nearly 4,000 violations have been issued during over 800 OSHA inspections.

Clearly, regulation is increasing and will continue to do so in the months to come, for OSHA's plan to address these hazards is by no means at its peak yet. In the near future, OSHA will release an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR), officially beginning the process of creating specific regulations relating to combustible dust and

facilities associated with such dust. Stakeholder meetings are tentatively scheduled to take place in December 2009.

An essential first step for every industrial facility, regardless of type, is determining the nature of any dusts onsite. Combustible dust, according to OSHA, is often either organic or metal dust that is finely ground into very small particles and presents a fire or explosion hazard when suspended in air. These dusts exist in a wide variety of industries including agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, metal processing, wood and paper, food, plastic and rubber products, and chemical plants, among many other types of facilities. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) establishes that "any material that will burn in air" in a solid form can be explosive when the particle size is reduced. In addition, some normally noncombustible materials, when reduced to a finely divided state, present a potential for a serious fire or explosion. A number of factors, including dust particle size, shape, and moisture content, are at work in determining a dust's combustibility. Sometimes, the combustibility of a material can be found on its Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), but more often than not, analytical testing of dusts is necessary to conclusively establish whether a dust is combustible or not.

While determining the nature of any dust at a facility is the initial step in handling combustible dust hazards, it is by no means the last. To fully understand the hazard facing a facility, the entire nature of the process and the layout of the equipment, structures, and utilities need to be evaluated. Since OSHA is already conducting facility inspections and issuing violations based on the NEP, it is important for companies to make these evaluations now to ensure compliance with the NEP and prepare for the formal regulations that are on the way.

So what should a facility be doing now to identify and eliminate hazards, protect workers and avoid large OSHA fines? A number of clues can be gathered from the actions OSHA has already taken. During its inspections, the bulk of the violations handed out by OSHA under the NEP relate to facility housekeeping measures, hazard communication, use of personal protective equipment, electrical hazards, and general duty clause citations. In order to address these problem areas, a few of the common acceptable measures employed by facilities include (but are not limited to):

- Dust control measures that prevent dust from accumulating in work areas and duct work, including regular, strict housekeeping measures;
- Ignition control and hot work programs which eliminate the potential for sparks in areas where dust has accumulated;
- Employee training to educate workers on the dangers associated with combustible dust and to instruct them on proper practices for identifying and eliminating hazards;
- Protection measures including spark detection and suppression systems to prevent explosions from happening, and explosion venting and isolation devices to prevent primary explosions from creating much larger secondary explosions.

Based on responses from several industrial sectors, it appears the latter – the need for explosion protection controls – is the highest concern for plant management. This is due to the fact that explosion controls can often require extensive financial investment as well as potential process layout modifications. Finding funding and sufficient process downtime is exceedingly difficult as facilities are competing to keep cost down and production efficient.

So, how does a facility decide which controls provide the greatest safety benefit for the lowest cost and smallest disruption of operation? The key is to conduct a detailed hazard analysis of the processes handling combustible dust and all areas of the facility affected by dust. Material testing data, process flow rates, equipment configuration, material handling procedures, structural integrity, ventilation, dust collection, and numerous other factors need to all be evaluated to assess the likelihood and potential severity of a dust deflagration or explosion. Once the likelihood and severity of hazards have been assessed, a facility can establish a priority for addressing the individual hazards present. In many cases, it has been found that relatively inexpensive and easily implemented controls can provide a significant hazard reduction. Alternately, if a number of explosion protection controls are needed, but installing all at once is not economically feasible, the prioritization of hazards allows the facility to develop an effective implementation schedule that will optimize hazard reduction efforts.

INDA MEETINGS CALENDAR

2009

[Filtration 2009 International Conference & Expo](#), November 17-19, Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois

2010

[Vision 2010 Consumer Products Conference](#), Sheraton New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana

[IDEA 2010 International Conference & Expo](#), April 27-29, Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami Beach, Florida

[INDA Nonwovens Training Course](#), May 11-13, INDA Headquarters, Cary, North Carolina

[INDA Elementary Training Course](#), June 8-9, INDA Headquarters, Cary, North Carolina

[World of Wipes \(WOW\) 2010 Conference](#), June 21-23, InterContinental Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

[INDA Nonwovens Training Course](#), August 17-19, INDA Headquarters, Cary, North Carolina

[International Nonwovens Technical Conference \(INTC\) 2010](#), September 20-23, Hilton Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland

[INDA Nonwovens Training Course](#), October 19-21, INDA Headquarters, Cary, North Carolina

[Filtration 2010 International Conference & Exposition](#), November 30-December 2, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS

We would love to hear from you. Just email us at [mjacobson@inda.org](mailto:mjacobsen@inda.org) to let us know how you are getting along. Michael Jacobsen, Editor