



4-2013

HaworthNews (04/2013)

Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news



Part of the [Business Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Western Michigan University, "HaworthNews (04/2013)" (2013). *Haworth College of Business News and Magazine*. Paper 17.
http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/business_news/17

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Haworth College of Business at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Haworth College of Business News and Magazine by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



Venture capitalist to present business college talk

by Jeanne Baron
April 2, 2013 | WMU News



Valenti

KALAMAZOO—The leader of a billion-dollar company will be featured in the next Distinguished Speaker Series talk sponsored by Western Michigan University's Haworth College of Business.

Sam Valenti, chairman of the board of TriMas Corp., will present "Total Success: Why WMU is the Greatest Thing That Ever Happened to You" at **3:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 17**, in 2000 Schneider Hall. The talk will be followed by a question-and-answer period.

Sam Valenti

TriMas, headquartered in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., is a publicly traded billion-dollar manufacturer of highly engineered precision products for a variety of industrial, commercial and consumer-end markets worldwide. In addition to his role with that company, Valenti serves as chairman and CEO of Valenti Capital and World Capital Partners, investment firms located in Bloomfield Hills.

He also is the former president of Masco Capital Corp.; a 40-year veteran of Masco Corp., a Fortune 500 manufacturer of home-building and home-improvement products; and a past chairman of the investment advisory board of Michigan's \$50 billion retirement system. During his nearly 20-year participation with the advisory board, Valenti spearheaded the state's initial investments in venture capital as well as a broad range of alternative investments.

The two-time WMU alumnus serves on advisory bodies for the Harvard Business School, University of Notre Dame and University of Michigan Zell-Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies. He is a member of Business Leaders for Michigan and chairman of its Renaissance Venture Capital Fund. Valenti received the 2010 "Spirit of Michigan" award presented at the Accelerate Michigan Innovation Competition and was selected by Crain's Detroit Business as its

2007 Newsmaker of the Year and its 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award in its Mergers and Acquisitions Awards program.

For more information or to register, contact WMU's Cyntia Reeves at cynthia.reeves@wmich.edu or (269) 387-5069.

Work, Play and WMU!

Kowalczyk, a market manager at General Mills, heads up a team that sells to foodservice distributors as well as non-commercial foodservice operators throughout Michigan, Indiana and northwest Ohio. The team's customers include K-12 schools, colleges and universities, hospitals and business and industry cafeterias.

With more than 30 years of experience, the seasoned food and consumer package goods professional notes, "The biggest challenge in business is differentiating yourself, your products and your company from the competition. You must be dedicated, constantly and consistently improving to gain share. If the marketplace is not growing, the only means of gaining share is from your competition!"

After graduating from WMU, Kowalczyk worked in the retail supermarket industry but had a strong urge to learn the sales profession. He soon landed his first sales position in the meat industry with John Morrell & Company. Following a two-year stint there, he launched a 24-year career at Unilever where he worked in many different roles, including region manager, region chain account manager and manager of the eastern region chain accounts. Kowalczyk joined General Mills in 2007.

Throughout his career, he has maintained his passion for sports. "I love sports! I am a Detroit Lions season ticket holder; I attend most Bronco football home games and as many Bronco hockey home games as I possibly can."

Kowalczyk's love for sports does not stop at the sidelines. "I skate in a senior men's hockey league in Troy called the Michigan Sting. It is great exercise, camaraderie and keeps the competitive spirit alive in all of us. I also enjoy summer boating and watching the sunset from my summer home near Vicksburg (Mich.)."

Kowalczyk's passion for WMU doesn't end with sports. He loves all things WMU and is an admissions ambassador [link to <https://www.mywmu.com/s/1428/gid2/social.aspx?sid=1428&gid=2&pgid=504>], writing short congratulatory notes to admitted students "in the hope that it will sway any student on the bubble to commit to WMU."

Sharing his love for WMU with prospective students is just one way he supports WMU. He also shares his business expertise with young Business Broncos by hosting an extern each summer through the college's Business Externship Program [link to <http://www.wmich.edu/business/career/externship>]. Under Kowalczyk's supervision, the student

spends one-half day with Kowalczyk learning about General Mills and the foodservice industry, followed by one-half day with an account manager selling to the company's distributor network. On day two, the student works with a food service customer specialist selling to operators. "I then meet with them over lunch to tie it all together and answer any questions," says Kowalczyk.

Regina Cassens- Focused on Innovation with a Global Perspective



At a young age, Japanese and integrated supply management student Regina Cassens became interested in Japanese culture. Study of the language in high school and continued passion for the culture propelled her to where she is today. Armed with her language skills and business experience, she is looking forward to post-graduation career with Arete, a New Jersey-based IT software consulting company where she will help expand the supply chain division to Japan. After training in New Jersey beginning in May, Cassens will move to Tokyo

to help the company transition and begin her international career.

When Cassens first began at Western, she was a pre-business student unsure of how she could use her passion and knowledge of the Japanese culture and language in a profession. After a meeting with Dr. Bret Wagner, associate professor of management, Cassens focused on double majoring in integrated supply chain management and Japanese as a way to pursue a career in Japan.

"Japan is the perfect place for Regina to put her knowledge of supply chain and the Japanese culture to work," says Wagner. "Because the island nation has such a large population and very few resources, they rely heavily on the efficient importing of raw materials and exporting of goods, which is a main component of supply chain management."

Cassens says that after two study abroad trips to Japan, she knows that her degree in supply chain was the right choice. She notes that the Japanese word "kaizen," meaning continuous improvement, is a mindset followed by the Japanese encouraging innovation, a tie to the evolving processes in ISM. She credits Wagner with helping her arrange her schedule at the college to complete multiple study abroad programs, helping her gain crucial experience with the language and culture.

"By experiencing the business culture in Japan, Regina was able to network globally, which is challenging for students who don't study abroad," says Wagner. "Regina's study of the Japanese culture and language is an important asset to her future career in supply chain management, which is a major part of the Asian business market."

Cassens has had opportunities to couple her knowledge of American and Japanese culture to benefit Japanese citizens in business. “With a focus on global communication, it is important for business professionals to understand how meetings and conferences are conducted in other countries,” says Cassens. During one of her study abroad experiences, Cassens met with Japanese business professionals to help them learn more about networking in America. Cassens credits WMU’s Study Abroad program with providing one of the top programs in the nation. Through her two study abroad experiences, Cassens was able to study at Keio and Rikkyo, two of the top universities in Japan.

“Western provides students who wish to travel abroad in Japan with the opportunity to study at some of the premier universities in the country,” says Cassens. “Students at other top universities throughout the United States don’t always have the opportunity to study at these schools. WMU makes it possible.”

Between two study abroad experiences and internships at Whirlpool, Case New Holland and Denso in purchasing, Cassens attended job fairs in Boston and New York where employers were looking for candidates fluent in Japanese and interested in career opportunities in the country, two areas which were a part of Cassen’s dream job. From a pool of applicants with engineering and MBA degrees from Ivy League colleges, Cassens pulled out on top and accepted the position with Arete following spring graduation.

MBA alumni in Grand Rapids – You’re invited!



All MBA alumni in the Grand Rapids area are invited to the MBA graduation celebration for spring MBA graduates on April 24 at 6 p.m. at the WMU [regional location on East Beltline](#). Join students, fellow alumni, faculty and staff as we celebrate our newest MBA graduates at a reception in Grand Rapids. Email roxanne.buhl@wmich.edu or call (616) 771-9477 to RSVP for this event.

Next speaker in business college breakfast series to speak about digital media strategy



KALAMAZOO—The president of MLive Media Group will share insights into digital media strategies later this month when he speaks as part of the Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series.

Dan Gaydou, who has led MLive since February 2012, will talk about, “Strategies That Win in a Disrupted World,” at 8 a.m. Friday, April 26 in 2150 Schneider Hall. The event, which is free and open to the public, begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required and can be

made by contacting Kayla Hunt at (269) 387-6059 or kayla.j.hunt@wmich.edu. Free parking is available in the Fetzer Center parking lot.

As well as being president of the statewide multi-media news and marketing solutions company, Gaydou serves on community boards for Spectrum Health, the Right Place, the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, the Michigan Colleges Foundation and the Gerald R. Ford Foundation. Gaydou is a graduate of the University of Michigan and is a Certified Public Accountant. He has received honorary doctorate degrees from Baker College of Flint and Hope College in Holland, Mich.

In addition to the April 26 event, the 2012-13 Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series schedule includes:

- May 31: Bill Rose, president and chief executive officer, Kalamazoo Nature Center
- June 28: Sharon Carlson, WMU director of University Archives and Regional History Collections

The Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series provides an opportunity for the local community to hear top business leaders, WMU faculty, alumni and friends of the Haworth College of Business discuss current topics of interest to the community.

APICS Golf Outing is April 20—Register Today!



The WMU chapter of APICS, the Association for Operations Management, is once again hosting a golf outing for students and alumni. The outing will take place on April 20 at the Lake Doster Golf Club in Plainwell, Mich.

The event includes 18 holes of golf with cart and steak dinner; \$65 for alumni and friends. Hole sponsorship and raffle donation opportunities available. Check in time is noon with a 1:30 p.m. shotgun start.

Local Groceries—Here to Stay

On the heels of the 2013 WMU Food Marketing Conference, we checked in with our in-house experts on the hottest topic of the food consumer package goods industry—local products. “Research indicates that this trend is here to stay and that consumers will pay premium for local products,” says Phil Straniero, executive-in-residence of Haworth’s food and consumer package goods marketing program.

A survey done by AT Kearny to determine the motivations of shoppers to buy local foods and the strengths and weaknesses regarding local foods in retailers, found that over half of shoppers like to buy local foods because they find it to be healthier and believe that they’re helping the local economy.

The good news is that local foods are getting easier to find. Farmers markets are becoming mainstays in communities and independent super markets are placing more of an emphasis on local foods, providing customers with items such as dairy, meat and produce. Straniero says that even large chain grocers are starting to incorporate locally sourced foods in their product assortment.



Echoing the importance of local products, senior Holly Evey says understanding industry trends was the goal of a recent student trip to the National Grocers Association’s annual convention in Las Vegas. While there, Evey says she and fellow students explored the local trend by attending sessions and spending one-on-one time with industry mentors.

During a 2-hour mentor session with Carole Bitter, president of Friedman’s Markets, Evey was able to glean insights by discussing exhibit floor presentations and conference session summaries with industry mentors. The mentors

provided knowledge about food trends and consumer engagement practices. The salient point for Evey: that the local trend impacts the big companies more than she realized.

“Our mentors helped us connect how local food trends are impacting all types of marketing—advertising, public relations and especially mobile,” say Evey. She cites large grocery chains are not only embracing local purchasing, but hosting farmers markets in their stores and on their properties, as one insight she gained. Understanding how a large company can act locally was a significant point.

So is this local focus a trend or is it here to stay? “As a food industry educator, consultant and corporate board member, I believe that the continued focus on locally produced foods will result in many positive impacts in the areas of commerce, health and community involvement for years to come, says Frank Gambino, professor of marketing and director of the food and consumer goods marketing program.



During the convention, twelve food and consumer package goods marketing students participated in a national case competition. A team of four WMU students was selected to work with Chiefs Supermarkets in Ohio to help them develop a strategy to grow their market share while enhancing the shopping experience.

The students created a number of unique techniques to engage shoppers within the store

with coupon and mobile phone applications and other technology innovations, to encourage product collaboration, such as purchasing local products produced and sold in Chief’s stores.

Editor: Cindy Wagner cindy.wagner@wmich.edu

Haworth College of Business

Western Michigan University

Kalamazoo MI 49008-5457 USA

(269) 387-5050