

# DREAM BIG. HAVE FUN.

A look inside an established Student Run Business

Learn how to start a  
**STUDENT RUN  
BUSINESS**  
in  
**YOUR DISTRICT!**

Learn about **CARDINAL MANUFACTURING**  
of the Eleva-Strum School District in Wisconsin.

# WELCOME!

As a Middle and High School Technical Education teacher since 1998, I have been very fortunate to grow a student run business model into one which can be replicated in any school in any location with determination and the right partners. If you've heard of Cardinal Manufacturing in Wisconsin, this is the business and program my team and I have built with the help of many partners, students, the community, and our local school district.

This book is designed to give you encouragement to get started or inspiration to take the next steps to grow and enhance a student run business in your school. Our team has had the opportunity to host many schools over the years and develop workshops and in-depth training tools and resources that are provided for very low cost or for free thanks to generous donors who support the student run business model.

A student run business offers so many benefits to all those involved, but the focus is always on the benefits to the students. Any activity that can make the material students are learning more engaging and relevant to their everyday life and their future is a big plus. A student run business provides the most realistic risk and reward experiences for students while still taking place in a classroom environment providing real learning. In addition to all the real world measurable benefits, working in a student run business environment is the most fun way to teach students and provides a situation where everyone involved is winning.

My team and I have seen amazing student successes, opportunities, and partnerships that have resulted in so many beneficial outcomes. We are fortunate to be able to share our story and experiences to help and encourage others to provide these types of opportunities to their students and communities.

**For more information on live workshops, guidebooks, class outlines, step-by-step instructions, and more low cost and free resources please visit [www.StudentRunBusiness.com](http://www.StudentRunBusiness.com).**



Craig Cegielski, Cardinal Manufacturing Founder

## THANK YOU TO THE CHARLES KOCH FOUNDATION

We would like to extend our appreciation to the Charles Koch Foundation for making this book and additional resources available at no cost or low cost to teachers, districts, industry partners, and others who wish to be involved in student run businesses. Thank you for recognizing the potential of this model of education and the benefits it provides to students through the teaching of technical skills, employability skills, soft skills, professionalism, and encouraging entrepreneurship.

# CONTENTS

**PART 1: WHAT IS A STUDENT RUN BUSINESS?..... 4**

Benefits for Students .....8

Benefits for Teachers.....10

Benefits for other groups.....12

Getting started .....14

**PART 2: A GLIMPSE INSIDE A MATURE STUDENT RUN BUSINESS..... 16**

The Student Experience.....18

Partnerships .....24

The Teacher Experience.....32

**PART 3: INFORMATION AND REFERENCE..... 36**

Frequently Asked Questions .....38

Reference Material .....45



# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to provide ideas and encouragement to pursue starting or enhancing a student run business.

In-depth training and resources for starting and enhancing a student run business are available for free or very low cost. These can be found at [www.StudentRunBusiness.com](http://www.StudentRunBusiness.com)

This edition will include some basic definitions and background on student run businesses, but it is not intended to take the place of our step-by-step guides.





# CHAPTER 1

## WHAT IS A STUDENT RUN BUSINESS?

The student run business model of education is one huge partnership in which everyone involved is winning. Get a summary introduction to the model here in Chapter 1.



# WHAT IS A STUDENT RUN BUSINESS?

A student run business is exactly what it sounds like. It is a business that is primarily run by students in school for high-school credit and often for a paycheck of some kind and is ordinarily part of an elective program. The program is managed by an instructor or a team of instructors and takes place during the regular school day at school. The student run business has real products or services, real employees, real customers, real money, real deadlines, real challenges, and real learning opportunities.

## Real Products or Services

Cardinal Manufacturing is a Technical Education-based business focused on machining and metal-working projects. Other types of student run businesses could include any worthwhile product or service for which you can build a market.

## Real Employees

The student run business has real employees who need to apply and interview for a range of positions within the company and acceptance into the program. The student run business takes place during school hours at school and employees earn course credit and often earn some monetary pay for their work.



THE  
STUDENT RUN  
BUSINESS MODEL  
OF EDUCATION IS ONE  
HUGE PARTNERSHIP  
IN WHICH  
EVERYONE INVOLVED  
IS WINNING.

## Real Customers

The student run business will require real customers who pay money for goods or services provided. Customers can be pre-arranged through custom work orders or those who seek out services or finished products routinely provided by the student run business.

## Real Money

The student run business will handle real money and will require the organization to work closely with the financial office of the school district. This is an area where many programs ask for a significant amount of detail, and it is more fully covered in other resources. Visit [www.StudentRunBusiness.com](http://www.StudentRunBusiness.com) for additional resources. Money earned by the program is used to buy raw materials, cover operating costs, upgrade equipment, market the program, and pay student employees.

## Real Deadlines and Real Challenges

The student run business will have real life deadlines and processes along with the challenges that come with responsibility. Students learn how to solve problems and experience successes and consequences during the process.

## Real Relevant Learning Opportunities

The student employees of the student run business have learning objectives as part of the class and program. These may vary by the type of student run business and in the Cardinal Manufacturing Program this includes skills tests by position, production goals, soft skills knowledge checks, behavior and attendance, assigned projects and outside work such as career plans and other goal setting and planning exercises. Applying what has been learned in the classroom to real life happens naturally in a student run business setting.

## Benefits of a Student Run Business

It stands to reason that a student run business must benefit the student first and foremost. During the history of Cardinal Manufacturing, both the data and the experiences of all those involved has been overwhelmingly positive. Not only do students benefit, but the teachers, the school as a whole, the administration, the community, area businesses, and area post-secondary educational institutions benefit immensely. Overall, this model of education is one huge partnership in which everyone involved is winning.



# BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

At the most basic level, students benefit by earning credit toward a high school diploma as well as some monetary pay for their work. But they gain so much more than that by participating in a student run business program.

## A Student Run Business Makes School More Fun and More Relevant to All Students.

### Real World Application of Lessons

Students easily find the real-world application of what they are learning in their everyday interactions at a student run business. Many academic skills are utilized each day in the business operations from math, reading, and writing to lessons from other courses. Students experience firsthand how the knowledge is a benefit to their effectiveness. The hands-on application of learned skills helps students with understanding, retention, and realizing the importance of all the subject matter they have learned throughout their educational careers.

### Prevent Boredom

It's no secret that many students in a traditional setting are bored for any number of reasons. A student run business provides real life challenges and opportunities for problem solving each day. This is challenging for students and provides a rewarding feeling of accomplishment.

### Any Student Has a Place

Each student has talents, but not all students excel in a traditional classroom setting. A student run business provides an ideal opportunity for all students to find a role where they can shine and work to their full potential with success. A big part of the learning in a student run business is recognizing and respecting the range of skills required to successfully run a business. It takes a team effort and everyone is an integral part of that team. Students who may have struggled in a regular classroom can shine in this setting and gain a significant amount of confidence through real measurable achievements.

## Participating in a Student Run Business Teaches Valuable Life Skills.

### Soft skills

The so-called soft skills, how you work with and interact with others, are an important part of life that aren't usually formally taught in an atmosphere where they can be immediately practiced. Students who participate in Cardinal Manufacturing are taught early and often how to shake hands; initiate a conversation; communicate with co-workers, instructors, and clients; arrive on-time; and be responsible. Employers regularly tell us that these soft skills are more important to master than technical skills.



Wisconsin's governor, Scott Walker, visited Cardinal Manufacturing in 2014.

## Career and Life Planning

To participate in Cardinal Manufacturing, students must take prerequisite classes as well as submit a resume and successfully complete the interview process. Once students are part of the program, the classroom portion of Cardinal Manufacturing includes assignments on career research and reporting, developing individual plans and life goals, and gaining exposure to a range of educational and career opportunities through guest speakers and site visits.

## Expand Your Students' Horizons with a Student Run Business Exposure to New Opportunities

One of the main goals of the student run business is to expose students to new opportunities and encourage big dreams. Having high school students from a small rural town participate in a big city industry trade show is a regular example. For many of the students all aspects of this type of event are new and somewhat uncomfortable for them the first time around. Dressing professionally, introducing themselves and conversing with industry professionals, and having the opportunity to meet with representatives from large manufacturers of products they admire is an eye-opening experience and confidence builder. Cardinal Manufacturing students have been featured in national magazines and on national television shows. The program has received awards at the state and national levels and students have participated in all these significant events.

## Scholarships

Students who plan to pursue additional training after school as part of an apprenticeship, technical college, or university likely have costs associated with the education and will find they are eligible for more scholarships because of their participation in the student run business.

## Learning to Pay it Forward

Community connections are a natural outgrowth of a student run business. Community connections can lead to after-school jobs, references on college or job applications, friendships, scholarships, or connections to other resources or individuals. Student run businesses may do volunteer projects for the community such as clean up in a park, repair of a railing, or some other service. Taking pride in the community and feeling connected to individuals in the community is good for everyone.

## Encouraging Entrepreneurial Mindset

The best employees of any operation have the best interest of the organization as a priority and see the work from an owner's perspective. In a student run business teamwork is a priority and leaning about all aspects of the business and the importance of each individual role supporting the overall goal is reinforced. Students are always learning about how to serve each other and the customers. That hands-on experience instills a sense of ownership and thoughtfulness that is beneficial whether the student goes on to work, education, trades, the military, or to start their own business.

Top photo: A Cardinal Manufacturing donor pictured here with one of the student scholarship recipients. Bottom photo: A community service project taken on by Cardinal Manufacturing included building a custom snowplow attachment for a local resident's motorized wheelchair.



# BENEFITS FOR TEACHERS

Experienced teachers who have worked in a successful student run business model will tell you that it is the most fun and rewarding way to teach. While it requires dedication and focus to get started, the investment of extra effort at the beginning pays off with many rewards.

## Excellent Student Engagement and Behavior

### Application of Subject Matter

When a student is engaged and interested in the subject matter, they learn more thoroughly, retain more information, and are more successful when applying the knowledge. A student run business provides real life situations where learned skills are used and needed every day. This includes technical skills related to the business and foundational academics such as reading and math. Making learned material relevant to everyday life right away is a major benefit to having a student run business at your school.

### Improved Behavior

Participating in the student run business is a privilege. Students must apply for and maintain standards for continued participation in the business. Motivated students behave better in all classes to avoid losing access to the activities in which they want to participate.

### Leveraging Teachable Moments

While there are specific lessons and objectives of a student run business, those lessons are seamlessly integrated into the day-to-day operation of the student run business. Teachers and instructors are naturally reinforcing the lessons and material to students in relevant situations. It is a much more natural and enjoyable way of teaching and learning.

### Opportunities to Reach All Students

All teachers have students who for one reason or another are not showing their full potential at school. A student run business provides more latitude than a traditional classroom for all students to shine and where teachers can focus attention on individual student strengths. The hands-on learning approach is very effective for any student, no matter their academic history. Student success is very rewarding for both the student AND the teacher.





## The Best Way to Grow your Program

Have you ever met a teacher who received all the funding they needed and wanted to get all the materials and provide all the opportunities they dreamed of for students? A student run business can significantly expand what you are able to offer your students. A student business can start with an extremely small budget. The initial earnings can be invested in equipment and materials to provide more student opportunities and to improve the product or service offered by the student run business. The more revenue the student run business provides, the more you can invest in your teaching tools and opportunities to provide the ideal learning situation for your students.

## Promote Interest in Electives

Most student run businesses are part of an elective subject rather than a core academic program. As districts look at areas to fund or reduce funding, electives are often on the fringe and the more popular programs are more likely to receive resources. A student run business can encourage more students to become interested in the elective program around that operation because of the energy, the opportunity, and the continual effort at improvement. In short, you can encourage more students to develop an interest in a topic area that you love and have devoted your life to teaching and sharing with others.

## Gain Community Connections

Any instructional program becomes much more interesting with more participation and interest from the community. A student run business helps instructors organically connect with community members, area businesses, and other organizations. Community connections can provide opportunities for your students, possible projects and real paying customers, guest speakers, field trips, and program volunteers. The more connections you can make, the more supported your program will be.

# BENEFITS FOR PARENTS, SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITY

A student run business requires teamwork from many partners, and all the partners benefit from the collaboration.

## Parents Benefit when their Students Succeed

Parental support is a key to your success as many parents can encourage or discourage participation in the program. Parental benefits are tied to student benefits and achievements from the positive reinforcement of life lessons taught at home to seeing their student engaged and excited about their education and accomplishing their goals. The pay and scholarship opportunities are also aspects of the program that are appreciated.

## How the School District Benefits

### Financial Resources and Savings

A student run business generates income for the district. While the income may be small at first, it can help provide needed materials and equipment for elective programs and cover any costs associated with the student run business. In addition to the income created, partnerships with area businesses often result in additional scholarships for students, donations of valuable materials or equipment, and other financial wins for the district.

Student run businesses can provide their services for free or for cost of materials to the school. Cardinal Manufacturing supports the district's facilities team by performing repairs, welds, and some fabrication of equipment, furniture, and fixtures throughout the district that are within the capabilities of the students. This provides significant savings each year and promotes repair and upkeep of items that may not have been completed in a timely manner.

## Partnerships with the Community, Businesses, Post-Secondary Institutions, Trades, and Military

Every school is a part of a community and partnerships make that community stronger. A student run business naturally strengthens these relationships on behalf of the district and enhances the opportunities for all students and the support of local educational initiatives.

## How Businesses Benefit

### Connections with the Future Workforce

Hiring managers and business owners gain an opportunity to learn about the skills students are taught in school. Businesses can help bring current and relevant topics and themes to the classroom.

## Student Run Business as a Supplier

Businesses may find your student run business to be a reliable and low-cost supplier of a product or service necessary for their successful operations.

## Generating Interest in Their Industry

Area companies can help build their pipeline of future employees when they share information about their company, the important work they do, and what it is like to have a career in a specific industry or business. Hosting student tours, guest speaking at a class, and mentoring student run business employees are several ways to foster positive connections.

## A Useful Place for Donations

All businesses upgrade equipment and often the old equipment has a lot of useful life left, but not a lot of market value. Supporting a student run business by donating used equipment can provide valuable resources, an easy and worthwhile place to go with donations, and other benefits that come along with supporting a non-profit organization.

## For Post-Secondary Institutions, Military, and Trades

### Promote Programs and Engage Students

Many students are very unsure about their future plans after high school. Post-secondary educational institutions, military, and trades have a wide range of outreach activities to provide information and experiences for high school students. Partnering with a student run business to promote areas of study helps students “try on” careers and have hands-on experiences that are relevant to the programs before committing to the program. In addition, the very nature of the student run business attracts students from a wide range of backgrounds and exposes the students to many future opportunities. The post-secondary institutions get to interact with students who are researching programs and careers more deeply than the average high school student.

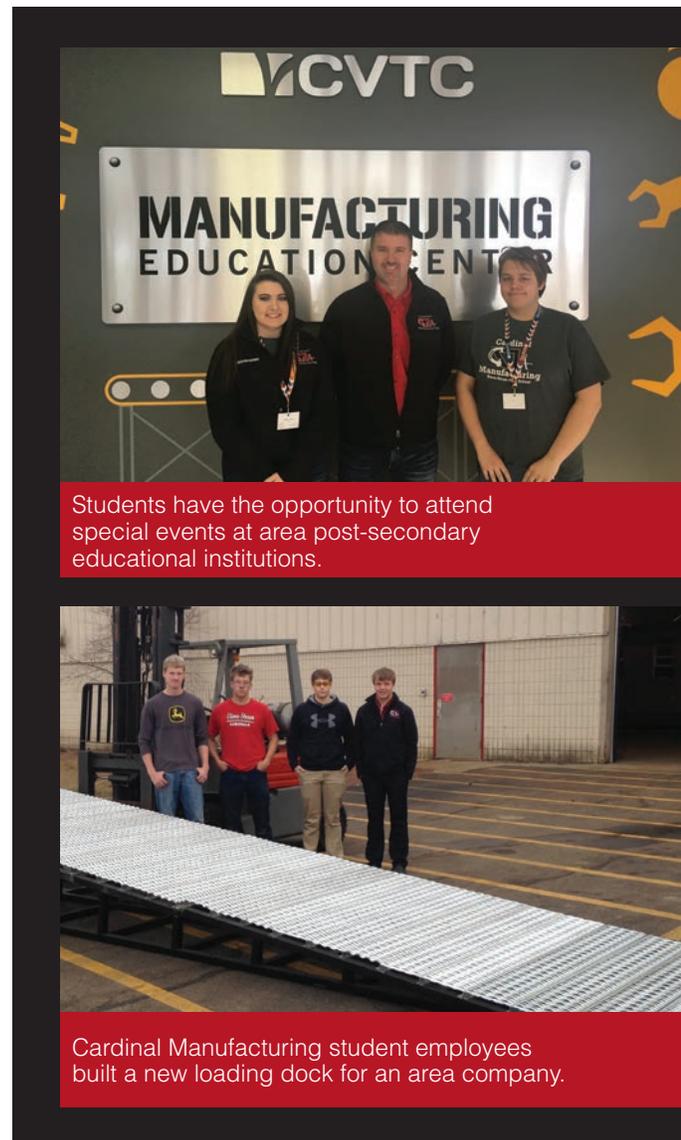
## For the Community

### Public Service

All student run businesses should make serving the community a part of their business plans. Not only are there projects that need attention, but community groups often welcome the volunteer assistance and provide an easy way to get project experience. This could include items for local parks, libraries, municipalities, public facilities, the school itself, etc. Students gain an increased sense of pride in their community when they see projects they have directly improved.

### Community Pride

A successful student run business instills a sense of community pride. In the case of Cardinal Manufacturing, the organization benefits from contributions of time or donations from individuals and businesses in the local area that have no connection other than proximity. Teaching and reinforcing employability and entrepreneurial skills is needed and respected by the area community.



Students have the opportunity to attend special events at area post-secondary educational institutions.

Cardinal Manufacturing student employees built a new loading dock for an area company.

# GETTING STARTED WITH A STUDENT RUN BUSINESS

Starting a student run business takes planning and preparation. Initially it can demand time and energy spent both in the classroom as well as outside of school hours. As with any new project, the leader has planning, work, and delegation to accomplish, in addition to their usual school classroom schedule.

## Tips to Lessen the Load

Getting started can seem daunting, and it does take work and dedication. Here are some tips to help lessen the load and speed up the start-up process.

## Use Available Resources

Fortunately, today there are many successful student run businesses throughout the United States. While each has its unique features, all student run businesses have some things in common. Learn from your colleagues around the country and use their best practices as a guide for how to create and operate your new student run business. You should be able to access everything from processes and procedures to managing the details and building a following from other successful organizations. Taking the time to research and adapt existing ideas will save you many development hours. Cardinal Manufacturing has helped develop detailed step-by-step start up resources for student run businesses. In addition to free guidebooks, low-cost workshops are held regularly for anyone interested in starting or improving their student run business.

## Develop Partners Early

Work on building supportive relationships and a core group of volunteers who will work with you on the student run business. Your partners can be a mix of backgrounds and should include someone from school administration, a private businessperson (or a few), and a parent. Having a strong core group will help divide up the tasks and bring a range of professional expertise to advise the activities of the new student run business.

## How Do You Know if a Student Run Business is for You?

### ❓ Do You Have Ideas?

Of course one of the first decisions to make is choosing a type of business to run. What service or product will your business provide? Who might your customers be? Do you have a name in mind? Will the business operate year-round or seasonally? What types of skills will be needed to work in this business? What businesses are a natural fit with your academic program and local area?

### ❓ Do You Have Time?

Starting a student run business does take extra time and focus. Take a realistic look at your overall schedule and decide if you have an extra 10-20 hours per month in your schedule to dedicate to researching and planning for a student run business. For many teachers this is less like work and more like fun, but it still takes some time. If you don't have a lot of margin in your schedule it may be an opportunity to partner with other teachers or to make adjustments to your school schedule if the administration is heavily supporting the idea of a student run business. Finding partners and delegating duties can also help lessen the load.

## ? Do You Have the Support of Your Administration?

School administration must support the creation of a student run business because you will rely on administration for some functions of the business. Early in the planning process you should begin an open dialogue with administration and gain their support and assistance right away. You will need to keep in mind that the student run business will reflect upon the entire district. The district office must be a partner in the endeavor.

## ? Do You Have Space or Raw Materials to Start With?

You may have to get creative in finding the space and materials to start the business. Remember, successful organizations start small. The first business projects might include prepping the space or hosting fundraisers to get seed money for the initial supplies. What instructional spaces or materials have a value or purpose once the lessons are completed? Get inspired by other student run businesses to make the most of the raw materials you have at your school.

## ? Do You Have a Core Group of Students to Help Kick This Off?

The very first years of any student run business are very important. Foundational work to get the business on its feet as well as establish a sense of pride and standards are the main goals. You will be relying on this initial group of student participants to help set the stage for the program's future success.

## ? Do You Have Business Connections for Networking?

It is never too early to network and make connections with local businesses. The expertise and advice they can provide as you are starting up are extremely valuable. Some businesses will be more receptive than others to becoming involved and assisting you. Be ready to serve these potential connections and ask what your program could do to help them as you start reaching out to meet people.

## ? Do You Have a Strong Desire to Go the Extra Mile for Your Students?

A successful program does not happen by accident. It takes dedication, focus, enthusiasm, and optimism. If you are the type of teacher who is motivated to do an outstanding job for your students, a student run business can be the method to reaching all your goals and attaining accomplishments you may not have dared dream of.



Metal Shop 2005



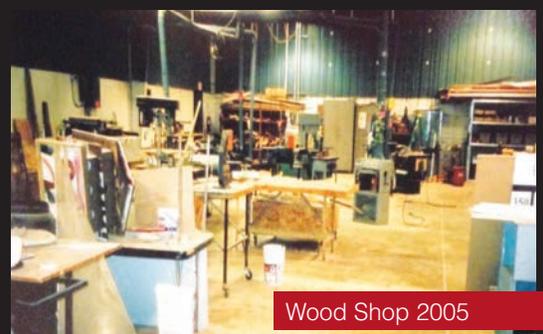
Metal Shop 2021



Welding Booths 2005



Welding Booths 2021



Wood Shop 2005



Wood Shop 2021

A custom storage rack was designed and built by Cardinal Manufacturing for an area packaging company.

At the time of the compilation of this book, Cardinal Manufacturing has been established for 15 years. When groups visit for a tour or a workshop it's easy for them to think that Cardinal Manufacturing is an overnight success or somehow different from what they are trying to start.

Every great idea has humble beginnings, including Cardinal Manufacturing. This chapter is designed to provide encouragement for programs that are still in the foundational stages.

Getting to this level takes dedication and consistent focus. The work is an investment that pays dividends for all involved. When the partners and plans begin to fall into place and work together the new opportunities and achievements can start to feel like they are effortless and exponentially amazing. The work is fun and becomes even more fun and rewarding as you continue to build upon your success.





# CHAPTER 2

## A GLIMPSE INSIDE A MATURE STUDENT RUN BUSINESS

As this book is being written we have experienced major successes such as an extensive renovation of our facilities, continual significant donations of equipment and sponsorships, more sophisticated opportunities for our students, support staff for the program, and opportunities to encourage other schools to create or enhance their student run businesses through workshops and online guides. We continually look for ways to improve the experience and value the program provides for our students.



# THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT CARDINAL MANUFACTURING

## Learning

Cardinal Manufacturing is a class in which students earn credits toward graduation. While the class includes some lecture and written assignments, the vast majority includes specific training and hands-on application of lessons each day. Guest speakers, demonstrations, and field trips take place during class time throughout the year. Students learn about the operations of the business through active participation.

The class consists of primarily seniors and takes place during the last two class periods of the day. All employees participate in the same class at the same time of the day. The work completed includes their job duties in the Cardinal Manufacturing business as well as classroom assignments which include research and reporting projects. Students receive grades and credits for participating in the class.

## Monetary Earnings

Cardinal Manufacturing students earn profit-sharing money in addition to their class credits. At the current time students in the Cardinal Manufacturing program earn between \$800 to \$2000 of profit sharing which is paid to each student in a lump sum at the end of the fiscal year. Cardinal Manufacturing has an equation in place to determine the amount each individual student will receive as students work varying numbers of hours and some work overtime and extra during the summer.

Scholarships- The Cardinal Manufacturing program currently has several different scholarships available, all of which have a requirement that the student was a successful participant in Cardinal Manufacturing. Some are tied to training in a particular field, others are renewable for each year that a student continues their education up to a four-year degree. This past year our program participants have been awarded over \$62,800 in scholarships.

## History and High Standards

Over 15 years, Cardinal Manufacturing has developed a history and identity in our community, district, and with students. Our current student employees have never known school without Cardinal Manufacturing in it. This strong history has helped us build a culture of achievement and respect for the program and within the program. Students arrive each day ready to uphold high behavior standards, learn, and serve others.



## Coursework

To participate in Cardinal Manufacturing, students must apply with a resume and interview, complete prerequisite courses, and follow behavioral guidelines. As part of the class, students learn technical skills, planning and goal-setting, as well as professional employability skills as part of the formal curriculum of the program. Assignments include researching and reporting on industries, careers, and future training opportunities. Students continually work on their student portfolio which includes updating their resume and documenting work experience with photos and descriptions of projects they have completed.

## Job Duties

Students complete real world work in their assigned position. They each have a position description and skills to learn and eventually master. In addition to their daily technical skills, all students perform other duties such as placing orders, contacting customers, making professional phone calls, writing professional emails, and making other requests. Students host many visitors throughout the year from the public, customers, dignitaries, and other school districts.

## Employability and Entrepreneurial Skills

While students might think the most important skills they are learning in Cardinal Manufacturing are the technical ones, the most valuable lessons they are learning and applying are the employability and entrepreneurial skills. Often called the “soft skills” these include positive attitude, showing up, working hard, getting along, paying it forward, being flexible, solving problems, teamwork, and continual learning.

Early on, our program was fortunate to attract the attention of an influential leader in a manufacturing business more than 100 miles from our district. This individual introduced a document entitled “Nexen Group Ten Commandments for Career Success.” Over the years our instructors and teachers refer to “The Nexen 10 Commandments” daily and sometimes multiple times each day (find the Nexen Group Ten Commandments for Career Success at the end of this book). While these employability skills are part of the Cardinal Manufacturing program, the positive message they send has permeated the entire school to a certain degree.

The exposure to how a business operates provides a foundational knowledge students can apply to a future business they may be employed in or may choose to start as their own. Employees who take ownership in their dedication to a company are a terrific asset.



# THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## Big Opportunities

Cardinal Manufacturing students have exposure to big opportunities thanks to industry partners. These opportunities have been a lot of fun and reinforced to the students that they are part of something big. Students are smart and they want to do work that matters and helps others.

## International Trade Shows

The International Manufacturing Technology Show (IMTS) is held in Chicago every other year and attracts more than 100,000 people from all over the world. Cardinal Manufacturing has been invited and sponsored by an industry partner to attend the show as their guests and help in their booth continually. This is a great experience for students both in experiencing the big city and practicing all of their professional skills at the trade show.



Most of the students in our rural district have never visited a big city prior to this event (and that is a significant experience for them.) Much preparation goes into these trips as students will be staying in high rise hotels, eating out, using public transit, and seeing tourist attractions often for the first time in their lives. Pair that with participating in the trade show, and it is a significant learning experience that is very impactful for students. Students are paired up and assigned duties at the event. Students have been coached and have their portfolios and business cards ready to hand out. Typically teams are assigned research about a new machine or software we are hoping to purchase for Cardinal Manufacturing.

## Local News Coverage

We have been very fortunate to receive positive coverage from news media outlets in our area. Our exposure has grown from that first article.





*One year Cardinal Manufacturing was looking for a new tumbler to save deburring and polishing time on our parts. Our student, Grant, was the lead on this project speaking with many different vendors at the large show and gathering information. Once we returned to school, Grant contacted the vendors and shipped sample parts for the companies to run in their tumblers and mail them back for inspection. The student took the lead on this project, asked about educational discounts, and negotiated a price as a student representative of Cardinal Manufacturing while still in high school. The tumbler was ordered and is still in use today and has turned out to be a great purchase for the organization.*

## National Magazine Features

Through Cardinal Manufacturing partnerships and connections we have had the opportunity to be featured on the cover of Modern Machine Shop magazine, a national industry trade journal. Over the years Cardinal Manufacturing has been the subject of other articles and features.

## National Television Show Appearances

Cardinal Manufacturing had the opportunity to connect with Titan Gilroy, host of the television show "Titan American Built" and have their crews visit and film multiple episodes at our facilities with our students during its two seasons on the air.

When the national television show "Military Makeover" visited our hometown community for a show and project, Cardinal Manufacturing had an opportunity to be a part of the project and program when our shop built some items for the project and when the program featured Cardinal Manufacturing in the episodes about their project.

*Another standout experience from the IMTS show included a visit with a vendor in which we learned that he was originally from our state. He mentioned what he missed most about Wisconsin was the aged sharp cheddar cheese. We made a note of that and when we got back to school arranged for a local cheese factory to mail him a block of the oldest, sharpest cheddar cheese they had. We did this just because we knew he would appreciate it and as a way to pay it forward (Nexen 10 Commandments number 5). A few days later, we received an email from him thanking us for the cheese and stating how great the students were.*

*He then offered for us to go to his catalog and order \$1,000 worth of tools and he'd mail them to us free. This is not an unusual experience for our team. We have received so much more in return than we have had the chance to give.*

# THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## Celebrities

Cardinal Manufacturing has been fortunate to attract the attention of many regional and national celebrities over time and the student employees have had opportunities to personally meet and interact with them. Meeting these individuals has been inspiring for students.

- President Barack Obama
- Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker
- U.S. Senator Ron Johnson (WI)
- Wisconsin State Representative Warren Petryk
- "Titan American Built" Star Titan Gilroy
- Green Bay Packer Super Bowl winner Gilbert Brown and his sister, Carla
- Dukes of Hazard Star Tom Wopat
- Green Bay Packer player Jeff Janis
- WWE All-Star Wrestling Star Lacy Evans
- Green Bay Packer player Ha Ha Clinton-Dix
- Military Makeover host Montel Williams

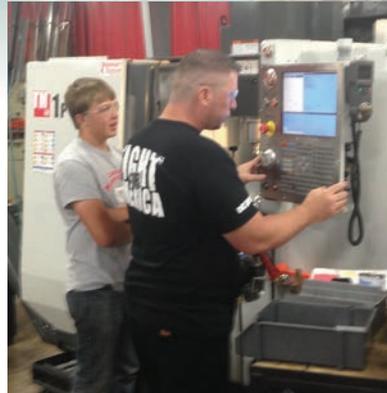




*Taping of Titan American Built television program.*



Local resident, Kelly Oium, and owner of replica General Lee meets Tom Wopat (Luke Duke) from the Dukes of Hazzard during a Cardinal Open House.



*Craig Cegielski at the White House to receive a national award.*



Mr. Cegielski and Mr. Rohrscheib visited Senator Ron Johnson in Washington D.C.



*Jeff Janis of the Green Bay Packers signs autographs at a Cardinal Manufacturing event.*

*Gilbert Brown, retired Green Bay Packer, visited Cardinal Manufacturing.*



Jeff Janis of the Green Bay Packers visited Cardinal Manufacturing.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## Advisory Groups and Developing Partnerships

Cardinal Manufacturing exists in its current state due to the strong partnerships we have created with a broad range of organizations. These relationships did not happen by accident but are a product of our work in cultivating them over the years. In the beginning, teachers spend many off-school hours contacting area businesses and arranging meetings to make connections with the area business community.

Just a few initial meetings could be enough to get your operation going. Once your organization gains momentum and becomes established more companies will reach out to you to connect. When you are new you need to begin the relationship building process. It gets easier and more successful over time.

**The only way for you as a teacher to form partnerships is to get out and start meeting people.**

1. Call or email to set up a meeting at their location
2. Ask them for a tour of their operations during your meeting
3. Ask how you can best prepare your students to work at their company
4. Be ready to provide your program goals and vision in a short prepared speech
5. Invite them to visit your location for a tour and ask for their feedback and advice during that visit

Be polite, friendly, energetic, and enthusiastic while you learn everything you can about their business.

**The number one rule is to not ask anyone that you have just met for funding.** Establish a strong relationship and allow companies to choose how they want to help your student run business.

When inviting potential partners to your school shop, you will want to prepare in advance. Make sure everything looks great and that the students are ready to show their professional skills while being polite and friendly. Have students greet your guests and give the tour.

**It is appropriate to ask your guests:**

- For feedback and advice.
- For suggestions or connections where you might be able to get some of the items on your wish list.
- If there is anything the students could build for their business that would help them out.
- If the class can visit their company on a field trip.
- If they would be a speaker to present to your class about their business and employability skills.



## Preparing for a Potential Partner Visit

Prior to hosting an invited guest, be sure to prepare your space and the students on how to host. Students should be coached on how to answer the door, introduce themselves and shake the visitor's hand. Have the students offer them water or other refreshments appropriate to the visit.

## Establishing Quality Relationships Takes Time

Establishing a relationship can take a year or more. As you do this, you will develop the ability to have more open conversations. We have a rule that we never directly ask an industry partner for a donation. We accomplish our goals by asking for advice on how to attain goals. We ask if they know of any suppliers that have used equipment or offer education discounts. This helps to understand our needs and opens the door for them to help you if they choose without feeling pressured. Cardinal Manufacturing has approached this by asking industry partners to help make a plan on how to obtain a particular item. Many industry partners will surprise you with new connections, donations, or other assistance that is even more generous than you would have asked for. When you pay it forward first and show ambition and appreciation, you will be surprised with what you receive.

## Advisory Board

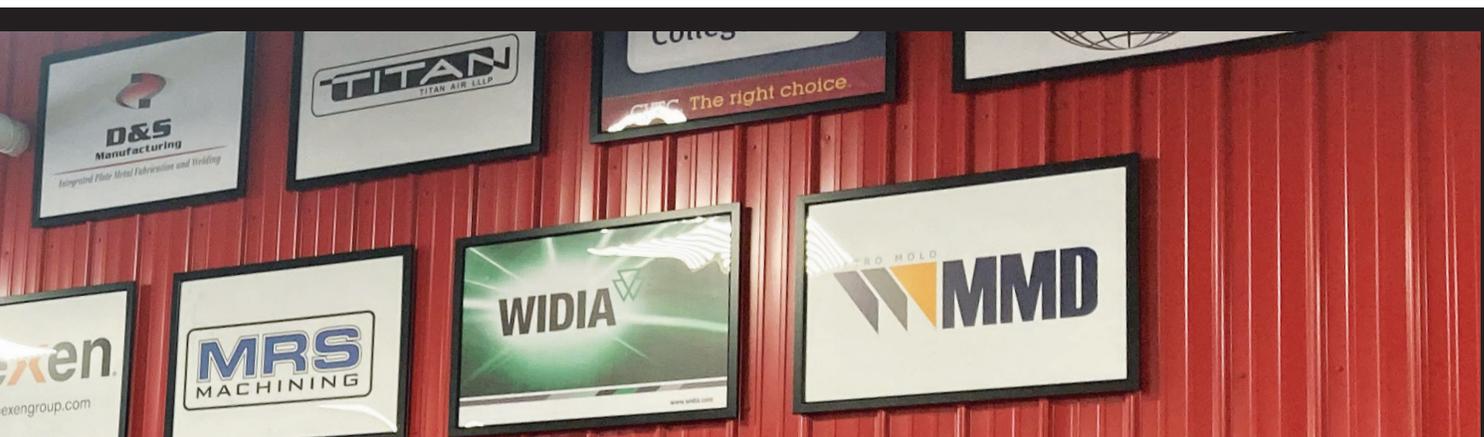
Cardinal Manufacturing has been extremely fortunate to attract valuable partnerships with industry leaders who have been active in advising the organization and assisting in finding customer projects, donations, used equipment or donations of materials, field trips and guest speakers, and connections to other resources working toward the same goals as we are. Advisory partners have helped Cardinal Manufacturing with scholarships, publicity, costs to attend events such as trade shows, etc. Partners provide ideas for products and services, curriculum additions, and more.

Cardinal Manufacturing does not have a formal advisory board at the time of this writing. All of the decision making is done by the teacher in charge of the program with the approval of the school district. Advisors assist Cardinal Manufacturing but have no decision-making authority over the program.

Partners can provide a significant amount of help to your student run business, particularly as the organization grows, and provide a reliable resource to delegate tasks to or to recruit new partners or opportunities to take the organization to the next level. Share your goals and vision for your program with as many people as possible. When you are polite, friendly, energetic, and enthusiastic, others will be excited to work with you.

## Showing Appreciation

Cardinal Manufacturing makes a point of showing gratitude and appreciation for all assistance provided to the program. Donors who have contributed more than \$5000 to Cardinal Manufacturing are recognized on large framed plaques in the space. Others receive thank you letters, recognition on social media, gifts of Cardinal Manufacturing branded merchandise, appreciation meals or treats, and other creative ways our team has found to share our appreciation for the support.



# PARTNERSHIPS

## Customers

One of the most important partnerships Cardinal Manufacturing has developed over the years are those with customers. We have regional businesses who trust Cardinal Manufacturing to manufacture parts they rely on for their operations. Customers provide us with needed work, income, and opportunities to interact on a professional level with a real-life company.

Customers for Cardinal Manufacturing include a range of types of projects from a one-time repair or replacement part machining project to routine regular part design, manufacturing, and order fulfillment. The mix of unique projects paired with manufacturing provide a range of learning opportunities for students.

## Expertise

Another great reason to work with industry partners is because they are the experts and can be very helpful when a challenging project comes into your student run business. Cardinal Manufacturing has had many opportunities to reach out to industry partners to borrow a tool or get advice. One example included a custom project the students were working on as a thank you gift for Green Bay Packer Jeff Janis who would be visiting the operations. The students were struggling with the CAD/CAM software to get everything right and a local machine shop agreed to host our students and provide help with the programming. The students were prepared with reminders on how to show up on time, shake hands, behave, and how to dress (in Cardinal Manufacturing shirts and dress pants). When the meeting took place, the students had a great learning opportunity and came back with a working program allowing the shop to complete the project. The students were excited to deliver the hitch receiver cover to our special guest. Jeff enjoyed the hitch receiver cover and thanked the students.

Industry partners provide relevant information to Cardinal Manufacturing students during visits, presentations, or tours at their facilities. Students are always interested in what is taking place in the “real world” and are open to the advice and direction shared by industry partners. Advice can include anything from reinforcing employability skills, advice on training programs, insights into software or equipment our shops have in common, and more.





A special project for a celebrity visitor designed and manufactured by Cardinal Manufacturing.



Students and advisors attend the IMTS (International Manufacturing Technology Show) when it takes place in Chicago.



Cardinal Manufacturing students had the opportunity to tour Mercury Marine as part of the Titan American Built television show.

**Cardinal Manufacturing has benefited from the insights of industry partners in countless ways.**

**Their expertise has helped:**

- Refer new customers for Cardinal Manufacturing
- Connect with donations of all kinds
- Provide guest speakers and tours for students
- Promote Cardinal Manufacturing to other potential partners
- Growth opportunities and suggestions for future projects
- Help the instructor acquire new skills and stay up to date with industry developments
- Provide lessons from real-life relevant sources (Nexen 10 Commandments, other words of wisdom)

# PARTNERSHIPS

## Donations

A student run business generates income from the sales of the product or service it sells, but as the organization grows it can attract the attention of groups who have worthwhile donations that can help propel you forward. Cardinal Manufacturing has received many worthwhile donations over the years from useful equipment, use of software licenses, raw materials, monetary donations, marketing services, safety equipment, food or prizes for fundraising events, and so much more.

Over time high quality partnerships with companies provide many advantages to your student run business. Established partners will think of you when they have something of value to dispose of, work they want help with, materials to donate, and more. They win by saving time, getting good press, and a good feeling from donating. Recognizing your partners who have given significantly is a good practice.

### How to take advantage of a donation from an industry partner:

- When an industry partner offers to donate something to your organization, try to go get it as soon as possible.
- Accept the item and be honest about how it will be used.
- Involve students in the pickup process if at all possible.
- Always be excited and grateful for any donated items.
- Formally thank donors.

## Get it ASAP

When someone offers to give you something, go get it right away. Do it that day or as soon as possible. You will be helping them by making it convenient for them and getting the item out of their way. By contrast, if a partner offers you something and you don't pick it up for a month, you are making things inconvenient for them and they will not call you the next time. Your goal is to help them out and make life easier for them so they will call again.

A multi-state power cooperative donated a significant amount of equipment to Cardinal Manufacturing. Through the help from many volunteers the pick up, delivery, and re-sale of some equipment was coordinated quickly for a win-win opportunity.



## Accept the Item

Cardinal Manufacturing receives many donations of items. We have been fortunate to always find a use for anything that is donated. Some items are used in the operations, and some are cleaned up and sold. Some can be used as raffle prizes during our open house event, and others can be utilized for parts or sold for scrap. Consider all the possible uses of the donation. If someone offers to donate a piece of equipment that you cannot use, be honest with them and tell them you cannot use it. Be clear that you would still appreciate the donation as the students could clean, repair, and then either sell it or trade it in on a piece of equipment that can be used in the program. Donors are typically open to this when you are honest with them.

## Involve Students

Donors are always happy to be able to support enthusiastic students. If students can participate in coordinating the pickup or delivery of the item and meet the donor, make it happen. Make sure the students are excited and express appreciation to the donor in person whenever possible. If it is not possible to participate in person, follow up with a photo and handwritten thank you by students.

## Be Grateful

Always be excited and grateful for any donated item. Sometimes the item may seem irrelevant to the student run business, but you never know what you can turn the donation into or what could come next from that donor. Donors who are appreciated are far more likely to continue to support your student run business.

## Formally Thank Donors

Your student run business should be ready to thank and recognize donors at all levels. Cardinal Manufacturing has thanked donors with letters and mailers, delivering donuts or other treats to the donor's place of business, inviting the donor to a special event at Cardinal Manufacturing, and more. Donors have received logos on Cardinal Manufacturing promotional items and t-shirts as well as those giving over \$5,000 are recognized with logo signs hanging on the wall of the shop in a nice display. Very large donations can be recognized in the school newsletter, local newspaper or television news, or other outlets. Cardinal Manufacturing will gift donors with Cardinal Manufacturing logo items such as hats, pens, shirts, stickers, etc.

A major individual donor to our program was honored as a Distinguished Alumni and Cardinal Manufacturing staff attended the presentation.



Students with a donation of tooling that resulted in several thousand dollars worth of valuable resources for our program.



The Haas Foundation has generously sponsored scholarships at Cardinal Manufacturing for years.

# PARTNERSHIPS

## Volunteers

Every community is filled with talented people that are willing to help when they believe in the cause. Finding and partnering with these talented people is essential to the success of the Cardinal Manufacturing program.

Retirees are excellent resources because of their vast experience, available time, flexible schedules, and willingness to volunteer. Many retirees enjoy spending time with the students, sharing their talents, and assisting with the program.

***“Duke is a retired volunteer who comes to the shop a few times a week and is willing to help with anything. He is happy to do shop maintenance, improvement projects, and help teach the students while working with them. Mike is another retired volunteer. He is always only a phone call away and willing to haul or deliver anything for us. One day he drove all the way to Michigan to pick up an automotive hoist that we found a good deal on. He picks up and delivers all our practice welding metal from a local manufacturer. Mike has so many good community contacts that when we are not sure where to find something, we just give Mike a call. We had about 10,000 pounds of steel donated this past spring and were brainstorming how to haul it back to school. We talked to Mike and right away he offered to haul it. Mike contacted a local business owner, Lee, and asked to use Lee’s heavy-duty truck. Lee not only offered the use of his truck but provided a driver, too. Mike volunteered to coordinate the entire pickup and delivery. The donation and delivery of the steel happened because we developed relationships with industry and community partners.”***

Cardinal Manufacturing has had retired masons help remodel concrete block walls. Some retirees help with machine repair, while others have talents in electrical. Some volunteer to haul donated material and machinery. Each of them gives in their own way, using their unique talents.

Parents of the Cardinal Manufacturing students are another source of positive contributions to the program. Parents are a major source of volunteers for the biggest fundraising event of the year, the Cardinal Manufacturing Open House. This event has grown over the years to be a significant source of additional funding for the Cardinal Manufacturing program. Parents are instrumental in helping secure donations for raffles and prizes as well as selling tickets and encouraging other monetary donations for the organization.

## Helping Our School District

There are many benefits to our school district in having a student run business. We do yearly projects with 4K, 1st grade, and 4th grade and are working with teachers to expand to all elementary grade levels. Our Cardinal Manufacturing students give tours and work with grade school students to show



relevance to fractions, decimals, and other STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) projects.

Cardinal Manufacturing also saves the school money by building items for the school district in various departments and for various organizations for no charge. We work with the school maintenance department to build the parts they need instead of them having to purchase new parts. One example of this was a time when an air handler bearing went out and destroyed the shaft. The school maintenance called to get a price on a new one and found out the cost was over \$600 and shipping would take one week. Cardinal Manufacturing had the metal in stock, and we were able to build the part the same day and get the unit up and running with the maintenance team. Another project Cardinal Manufacturing built for the good of the school is a tandem axle trailer that is used by many departments throughout the school. The forklift Cardinal Manufacturing received through a donation is used by all departments to load and unload supplies. Cardinal Manufacturing has supported clubs and athletics by building items for them including the football goalposts, a track and field timer's stand, softball shed, weight room stand, stainless steel kitchen serving tables, and benches near the school office. Cardinal Manufacturing finds many ways to support the School District.

## Helping the Community

Most of the work completed by Cardinal Manufacturing is done for area companies or the communities themselves. These projects are typically custom manufacturing projects that are a win-win for all involved. Some of the community projects include:

- Fixed the local bank's stainless steel night deposit box
- Built a dock for the local lake
- Made parts for the grocery store meat stuffer
- Fixed parts for the local locker plant smoker
- Made a railing for the hardware store
- Created signage for local parks and local golf course
- Made plant holders that mount to all the streetlights
- Made custom parts for the local auto body shop and auto mechanic shop that are no longer available otherwise
- Built loading docks for a local packaging company
- Built small yard sheds for sale to area residents and businesses
- Built cabins and deer hunting stands for sale to community members

This is all a service to the community, while providing high-quality projects for the students to work on that brings in revenue to support the technical education program.



Volunteers played key roles during our recent shop renovation.



Volunteers provide valuable assistance to Cardinal Manufacturing throughout the year.

# THE TEACHER EXPERIENCE

In a mature student run business program the teacher sees many benefits. The biggest reward for any teacher is seeing the advancement of your students. There is a sense of pride in seeing your students succeed that fuels the fire of any dedicated teacher. The amazing outcomes of students who have participated in the program are the absolute best. Getting to those outcomes by using this model makes the work fun, natural, and rewarding.

## Program Respect

Students, other educators, administrators, and community members develop respect for your program. They know what to expect and it becomes something people want to participate in. Incoming students know there are standards and that they will be expected to behave and perform to participate and be part of the many positive opportunities and outcomes of the program. Respect helps reinforce good behavior standards for students and all who interact with the program.

## Organic Lesson Planning

In real life the opportunity to apply knowledge presents itself in every situation. Lesson planning and reinforcement of skills and ideas happens naturally each day at Cardinal Manufacturing. While a lesson plan is in place, the setting of the student run business, as opposed to a typical classroom, can provide an alternative learning environment that is more appealing to students and their learning. For example, Cardinal Manufacturing doesn't have to schedule repeat formal lessons on how to make a professional phone call, operate a mill, or design a part in CAD, because students naturally have the opportunity nearly every day through routine activities of the student run business.

## Opportunity to Help All Students Shine

In any business it takes a wide range of talents to work together as a team to make the organization successful. As the instructor, it is very rewarding to have the opportunity to help each one discover subjects, topics, and productive activities in which they want to participate. Accuracy and mastery of skills are important just as they are in every other classroom situation. Student roles in Cardinal Manufacturing vary and the daily work in the business and in the classroom provide non-stop opportunities to immediately apply the lessons and skills they have been learning. Students who may not excel at traditional textbook and written testing find that they are very skilled at designing parts, working with a precision machine, having the confidence to place orders and work directly with customers, solve problems, and any number of other daily challenges that present themselves in Cardinal Manufacturing.

In school we know students have a wide range of abilities. As the instructor it is very rewarding to have the opportunity to help each one discover subjects, topics, and productive activities that they are excited about. Students in the Cardinal Manufacturing program are required to research a wide range of topics beyond traditional academics to help them identify ideas they may be interested in for continual learning for a lifetime.

In addition to the intellectual sparks that the instructors see, it is also very rewarding to see the confidence that builds in the Cardinal Manufacturing student employees over time as they participate in this program. They learn professional life skills and master them after being required to practice them each day.

All students are special and unique. To help them reach their full potential, we must work with each of them. Most students do not fully understand what amazing talents they have and often sell themselves short. I have had several students over the years that have been labeled as troublemakers and were told that they were not going to amount to anything. These students were full of potential, were amazingly talented, and intelligent. If students do not believe they can do it, then they will not be able to. When a teacher can get students to believe in themselves and have confidence that they will be successful, then anything is possible. Students should dream big and set high goals for themselves. We teach that all you need is a dream and if you write that dream down with a date it becomes a goal. A goal can be broken down into steps and then you have a plan. A plan backed by action makes your dreams a reality. It will take hard work and dedication but in today's world students can become anything they want. It will not be handed to them, but if they make a plan and work at it, they surely can achieve any goals.

All students have the potential to do amazing things. One problem is that some students do not fit well into the game of school and following the rules. If the assignment doesn't make sense to them, they simply will not do it. Schools tend to try to educate everyone in the class the same way. Good teachers try to use different teaching strategies, but there is only so much they can do. Many students are much more likely to be engaged and excited to learn if the projects are real and affect someone and/or serve a purpose. By using the student run business model to teach, all projects are real, with real customers, real money, and real problems being solved. Once a student gets engaged working in this environment, then learning math becomes necessary to figure out a shop project which gives math meaning and makes it worth learning. When a student has to write an article for a magazine about our student run business, English becomes relevant. All of the subjects that are taught at school are extremely important. If the student does not feel that the subject is important to their life then they will be less engaged or motivated to learn it. It is very important to fully explain to the student why they should learn topics. If the teacher can fully explain and help the student understand that this is knowledge that they will use and benefit from, the student can see the relevance of investing the time and effort into learning. Some students struggle with reading, writing, and core subjects but are very mechanically inclined and have great aptitudes for hands-on projects.



Students have fun during a photo shoot.



Special opportunities such as fishing trips are outside events that students can take advantage of.

# THE TEACHER EXPERIENCE

## The Most Fun Way to Teach

The student run business has provided immeasurable positive experiences for all involved and makes each day a lot of fun. That does not mean that everything runs smoothly each day, but that all parties involved realize that it is a privilege to be a part of Cardinal Manufacturing. One of the soft skills we work on daily is being positive. For example, we don't have problems in Cardinal Manufacturing, we have "inconveniences." Working through life's inevitable inconveniences with creativity and positivity keeps the environment fun and teaches valuable life lessons to the student employees.

Because students are continually working together on one big group project for the duration of their time in Cardinal Manufacturing, there is a lot of communication and teambuilding going on with the student employees. Each year some different idea has brought the students together ranging from unique greetings to racing to be the first to tell others "Good morning" each day, and other fun positive connections that give students a sense of belonging, friendship, and pride.

The Cardinal Manufacturing Team works to spread the culture of respect, professionalism, and friendliness throughout the entire school. Our staff routinely walk the halls each morning greeting students by name. Some days we stand by the door and shake hands as they enter. We ask about their hobbies, personal interests and what is going on in their lives and are always there to mentor, coach, and help.

### A Fun Example—The First to Say "Good Morning"

Kelsey was new to Cardinal Manufacturing and was taking an independent studies class with us the first hour all year. Our instructor, Tyson, said "Good morning, Kelsey" to her like he would to any student every morning. One day he commented that he was winning in the game of who could say good morning first. This went on for weeks and became an 8:00 a.m. competition to see who could say good morning first. Pretty soon Tyson would be hiding behind a corner to get a win, or Kelsey would sneak up behind him, or Kelsey would just yell good morning before she even rounded the corner. This carried on for months and even the school maintenance staff got in on the fun and would say good morning to Kelsey when they saw her. It was a fun way for all of us to start our day. On graduation day our team received a text message from Kelsey which included a short video. Kelsey greeted us with one last "Good Morning," and with that she took the final win in the game.

Our belief is that all students need an attachment to school and a place they belong that they can call their own. For some students, this is the football team, band, or other organizations. For some students, they aren't interested in any other organization other than the shop. Having a student run business is like creating a varsity level shop program that allows students to be part of something they are interested in. A team whereby they receive t-shirts and hooded sweatshirts just like the sports teams. By having an attachment to school, students are more engaged, have better attendance, and have improved graduation rates. Some students have said that they would not even come to school if it wasn't for the Cardinal Manufacturing program.

This model is a natural relationship builder with local, state and national industry partners. Once you start doing small jobs for companies, you start to build a relationship with them. Pretty soon the teacher and students are on a first name basis with local shop owners. They are visiting often to pick up parts, and students are visiting

their shops to drop off parts. Next, some of the students end up working in the local shops and before you know it you have developed a strong partnership. As your student run business is doing work for several shops, the partnerships start to develop locally, then stretch to statewide, next nationally. With so many connections in place, someone is always offering an opportunity and wanting to help build your program. We have been on the winning end of so many generous donations. Once businesses know you and know what you need, many are willing to help. Cardinal Manufacturing has had hundreds of thousands of dollars donated in the form of used equipment, travel expense for trade show trips and other events, material donations, free advice, industry tours, job shadowing experiences, monetary donations, and so much more. Everyone is willing to help when they feel their money and time is being well used and is beneficial to the students.

There will be many variables in creating and nurturing a student run business. It is important to remain flexible and to be able to adapt to new situations. Machines will break down at the most inconvenient times, mistakes will be made, and deadlines will be challenging. We used to see these tough times as problems. Thanks to Ethan, a former student, we no longer have any problems in our student run business. We simply have inconveniences. This has been a really good way to teach students and teachers to stay calm, relax, and use our problem-solving skills to work through any situations while still having smiles on our faces. This is now an inside joke that when something breaks or a mistake is made someone will surely say “Hhmmph, that is inconvenient!” Then everyone will smile and start the process of problem-solving in a positive manner.

One great thing about running a student run business in high school is that the teacher does not have to create lessons to try to teach all these life lessons. All of these lessons happen organically; they are real so students stay engaged and take things much more seriously. When anything is not going as I would like in class, I stop what we are doing, bring everyone together and calmly address the problem. High school should be a safe place to make mistakes. We never yell or degrade the students, but simply explain in a calm manner how we need to behave and why. We then have a discussion and keep an open dialogue so students feel comfortable asking any questions. I encourage the students to try again and we go back to work. Over the years this method has been extremely effective. Students sometimes ask me “Why are you smiling when you are lecturing us and not happy with what we have done?” I tell them that I am not mad at them, smiling helps me stay cool and to keep everyone calm, and that I’m explaining what needs to happen and why it needs to happen. It’s important to reinforce that it’s the actions that I didn’t like, but I really like them and share that I believe they have amazing potential. We also reinforce that we don’t want to see a few small actions hold anyone back. Giving as much praise as possible while constructively criticizing some of their actions is important. The students started referring to these talks as “Good Person Speeches” abbreviating it to a GPS. Sometimes they come in smiling knowing they are in for a long GPS. Students, of course, would rather be in the shop working than listening to me lecture them, so it seems like over time attitudes change and conform to what we are asking for either because they truly understand the message, or they simply don’t want another GPS.

Cardinal Manufacturing staff take advantage of opportunities to make learning fun from donning their “Jump Around” overalls for a special day at school, to posing with large measuring devices, and in a unique hot rod donation to the program.





www.nexengroup.com

## Ten Commandments for Career Success

- I. **Be Positive**      Attitude is everything
- II. **Show Up**      On time, every day, reliably
- III. **Work Hard**      Earn your keep, get something done
- IV. **Get Along**      Play together nice in the sandbox
- V. **Pay it Forward**      Do more than is expected today, and you will receive more than you expected
- VI. **Be Flexible**      Willingly take on different tasks
- VII. **Figure It Out**      Be a problem solver, not a problem complainer
- VIII. **Join the Club**      Be proud to be a part of your organization
- IX. **No Whining**      Communicate positively and well, don't be high maintenance
- X. **Keep Learning**      If you don't keep up, you will become obsolete





# CHAPTER 3

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & REFERENCE MATERIAL

Find answers to some of the questions those new to the program often ask.  
If you are looking for details on operations, please visit our website for the guides.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Cardinal Manufacturing has had the opportunity to work with many school districts over the years and provide insights on how to get started with a student run business. We have been glad to share what has worked for us and provide some insights that might help you get from the start up stage to an established student run business. This chapter covers some questions asked about the student run business and some common inconveniences experienced by the student run business.

## **?** How do you manage your program?

Running a student run business is a partnership between the teacher and school administration along with many other parties. One individual, typically the teacher, needs to be the managing executive of the program facilitating everything while being supported and assisted by others. While the managing executive may seek input from advisors or other parties, it is up to the managing executive to make the decisions and uphold the standards of the student run business.

The instructor is responsible for keeping order, setting the standards, and helping the students manage themselves. At times it may seem like overcommunication, but reinforcing the positive messages, role playing, practicing, and reviewing instructions down to the smallest detail are effective.

## **?** How do you have patience during the early stages?

It is very important to remember that all your goals will not be realized in one year. Businesses start small and grow each year. Student run businesses are no different. Keep brainstorming new ideas, making plans, and implementing those plans. In time you will see your company develop into a highly functional business in which students are learning at a high level while making money and providing a service to the community. All of this will be fun, students will be engaged, and your program will be in demand. Even though the student run business is only one class, it positively affects our entire technical education department. Be sure to document your early stages and review your progress at least annually to remind all parties how far the organization has come.

## **?** How do you recruit students to the program?

When implementing a student run business, it is important to create a plan to develop a pipeline of talented students who are prepared to step in and take their turn at running the business. We start in middle school with developing positive attitudes and building technical skills. Throughout high school, our students can choose from a variety of classes to help prepare them to apply for our Cardinal Manufacturing program. Cardinal Manufacturing is primarily made up of seniors, but we do accept a few of our top-performing juniors every year. This helps to ensure we do not have 100% turnover. It allows the program to have a few experienced students re-enroll in the class which keeps us strong year-round. Most years a talented junior machinist will move into the office and take the position of production manager during their senior year. This is an ideal situation when a student has had time to fully understand the business, then moves into management. We explain all the benefits and opportunities that being part of Cardinal Manufacturing has to offer to our younger students and in all technical education classes.

We built our student run business to be in demand and valued so that students will work to earn the opportunity to be a part of the program. This creates better discipline and higher achievement for the underclassmen and motivates them to do well. Younger students hear about the fun projects, profit-sharing checks, scholarships,

travel, clothing, tools, events attended, and career opportunities that come with being part of the Cardinal Manufacturing program and they want to be part of it.

## **❓ How do you prevent behavior issues?**

We often have visiting districts that are amazed by the good behavior and professionalism of our students. Students in our district aren't different from those in any other district, but students are conditioned from early grades on that participating in Cardinal Manufacturing is a privilege that must be earned. We have found that having standards has attracted students to apply who are interested in learning and getting something out of the program in exchange for putting in their hard work. We revisit "The Nexen 10 Commandments for Career Success" daily if not multiple times each day.

Students from early grades on have exposure to Cardinal Manufacturing. Our program works with elementary-aged students on annual projects such as simple bird feeders. Once students are in sixth grade they have the opportunity for a quarter-long course in technical education. Students at that age learn more about the program and all the benefits of participating. Once students are excited to be part of Cardinal Manufacturing, we have a carrot in front of them motivating them to work hard and focus on improved behaviors. Students learn they will have to apply and go through an interview process to be accepted into the program. Through exposure in earlier grades students learn that both technical skills and employability skills are important to the program. We have seen a dramatic positive culture change in the technical education department and much improved student behavior due to having an in-demand student run business in place. This is a positive for the school administration with less students being sent to the office for discipline. We have even used the technical education department with some students as a reward for positive behavior in other areas of the school to motivate them to make good choices. We mentor and coach them to be hard working, polite, friendly responsible students in all their classes.

## **❓ Do you have consequences for students?**

Anything you want to be good at takes practice. All we can ask is that students keep trying to improve and in time they will. This doesn't mean there should be no consequences for their actions. They need to have some consequences to help them make the right decisions next time, but I always discipline with a smile on my face. I am not angry at the student; I just disapprove of their actions. If you smile while disciplining, everyone stays calm, and you can explain to the class what the problem is and why we cannot do whatever the action was. Once they fully understand, they can make the necessary corrections. If a student truly believes that I am only interested in helping them be successful and that I care about them, they won't be angry at me for disciplining them. I only want to build them up and empower them. I never, ever want them to feel degraded. When this is all explained during the discipline process it goes well and everyone can leave with a smile on their face.

## **❓ How do you address problems?**

You do have to choose which battles you want to fight. Sometimes I might not really like something, but if it's not really hurting anything and it means a lot to the students, then I let it go. For example, last year the shop radio was an ongoing battle because the students kept turning the volume up to the point that it sounded unprofessional when customers would visit and caused a problem in daily communications with students, too. We had some discussion on why we needed to keep it at a lower volume. I was not getting the results I wanted, so eventually I removed the radio from the shop. We simply took the radio out after school, took it home and when someone asked the next day, we told them that their radio had broken and that we were working on getting it fixed with a smile on our face. They knew the radio worked just fine but this was a nicer way to tell them without creating any controversy or arguing. This was not a popular move with the students, but they did see my point. For months they lobbied to get the radio back. Eventually, we came to an agreement that we would bring the radio back if everyone agreed only the teaching staff would touch it. This has been working well for us.

Discussing items with the students rather than just telling them makes a huge difference. When students are allowed to explain their point of view, it can be easier to find a compromise to solve a problem.

A teacher can change an attitude or help a student understand why it is easier to do the right thing showing them life will be easier because of those choices. When anything is not going as I would like in class, I stop what we are doing, bring everyone together and calmly address the problem. We are happy to take any amount of time necessary to teach these lessons and will bring the entire class back into the room for a long discussion when needed. High school should be a safe place to make mistakes. Our teaching team does not yell or degrade the students. We simply explain in a calm manner how we need to behave and why. We then have a discussion and keep an open dialogue in which students feel comfortable asking any questions. We encourage the students to try again, and we go back to work. Over the years this method has been extremely effective.

### **? How do you balance work and fun in a student run business?**

When starting a student run business it is important for the teacher and all the students involved to be having fun while working and learning. This may mean bringing in a radio, having a Mountain Dew, having a cookout or pizza party, or just joking around some. It's fun when the students and the teacher can respectfully incorporate humor throughout the day. We ensure not to let our joking around waste time or make us inefficient, but there is a place for humor in every work setting. This leads to another valuable lesson; we have our fun but then get right back to work. Some students need this to be explained. This is when the teacher needs to bring the students back into the classroom and have a discussion allowing the students to understand why this is not acceptable and how the industry will not permit this. Running a student run business allows for all these scenarios to come up and provides perfect teachable moments.

### **? How do you prepare students for tours, trade shows, and events?**

When taking students off-site it is important to have a thorough plan to prepare students, just as a coach prepares a game plan reinforced with practice. We discuss dress code and behavior. We prepare materials to take with us. We work on understanding our audience. For bigger events and travel we go a step further. We practice questions to ask and rehearse conversations. We review the show exhibitor list and make assignments in advance. We tell the students that they must know their audience and what is appropriate for the setting. For the most part, they are talking to exhibitors who are trying to sell a product. The exhibitors want to talk to



owners of shops and managers first but are happy to spend time with students if they feel their time will help. The exhibitors love it when a couple of well-dressed students walk up to them, shake hands, and ask intelligent questions about their products. We tell the students not to take or ask for any of the free items unless they are offered to you.

### **? What do you do when you host a customer at Cardinal Manufacturing?**

Students must be coached down to the smallest detail of how to prepare for any visit to your student run business. Have students walk to the door (yes, we have to tell them not to run), introduce themselves and shake the visitor's hand. Have the student offer the visitor a water, coffee, or other available refreshments.

### **? How do you connect with parents of students in your program?**

Sharing accomplishments with parents is a great positive reinforcement of good behavior. A few years ago, we decided to assign a student manager to collect parents' cell phone numbers. We use the numbers to occasionally text a picture and a short message to parents when a student is working on a project and doing a great job. All parents love receiving a photo of their student with a message that says they are doing great in school today. The task is delegated to a student manager. In this case students communicate with students, organize the numbers, and create a reference document. The students see the real life impact this assignment has on the day-to-day operations of Cardinal Manufacturing and how accuracy and completeness are critical, as opposed to completing a worksheet for a grade. In addition, the communication with parents helps start the "what did you work on at school today" discussion at home and gives students an opportunity to explain their accomplishments.

### **? Do you run the business in the summer?**

Cardinal Manufacturing has customers throughout the year, and we run the business year-round including the summer. Our summer hours include eight hours per day on Mondays and Tuesdays with approximately 10 students. That is about the equivalent of five days per week for 1 1/2 hours per day during the school year with approximately 22 students. Summertime work is a perfect opportunity to train new students and to have more one-on-one time with each student. Usually, we have a few of our graduated seniors work with some students who have just been accepted into the program for the upcoming school year. This allows for the outgoing students to help train the incoming students. As teachers plan to start up a student run business, they'll want to decide if they will be open in the summer, and if so, it is important to discuss this with the school administration. One main discussion item is the option of an extended contract to compensate the teacher for that time.



## ? How much money does your program make?

Like any business, the first few years will be tough, and profits will be low, but slowly you will begin to see profits grow. In our first year, we had gross revenue of \$11,000, but 17 years later we continue to exceed \$100,000 in gross revenue every year. This allows the program to grow and students to work in a well-equipped shop. Many schools our size receives a \$10,000 annual budget to use to try and run the entire technical education program.

## ? Do you get grants?

We still apply for grants and are always excited to receive one, but we are no longer dependent on them. We have a steady cash flow to keep the shop going without grants. I have heard of some technical education programs that get a grant to buy a new piece of equipment and when the grant money runs out, the equipment can no longer be used since they do not have the budget for all the consumables, materials, and tooling needed to operate it. We always save money in our student run business account in case we have equipment maintenance or any other shop expenses. This model solves the funding problem many schools face. Your local area may offer start up grants or other funding options. Check with your municipality, area charitable foundations, economic development groups, or trade groups for available grants if you wish.

## ? How do you form all the relationships and partnerships with your community?

Word of mouth travels fast and we have built great relationships and been referred to additional partners by our existing partners. Start by working hard at school, having fun, and being polite and friendly to every student and person you meet. Then, pay it forward! Help everyone you can and build a reputation of being a student run business that's there to help. Start building your successful business and share everything you are doing. Some people will offer to help initially, and as the business grows, many more will jump on board. Share all the good things you are doing on social media and give well-deserved credit to any volunteers, partners, or donors. Work towards getting the student run business information in the school newspaper, the local papers, and local TV stations as much and as often as possible. Invite your local politicians to visit so they can learn about your program. Always tell your students to invite their parents and grandparents in and give tours to everyone who is interested. Hold events open to the public so everyone can see what is happening.

## ? How have you built such strong relationships with your partners?

The short answer is that we have worked hard to find opportunities to give to them and have received so much more in return. We start every new relationship by asking what we can do for this new contact.

If you are starting out, we recommend calling or emailing and setting up meetings. Ask industry partners if you (not a class field trip) can tour their company. Receiving a tour will help you learn about each individual business and about the career opportunities that are in your local community. Ask how you can best prepare your students to work at their company. Be prepared to share what your program is teaching and what your plans and goals are for our program. The first step is to develop a relationship and learn everything you can about their business without asking for anything in return. Invite the company to tour your location so they can learn about your space, equipment, facility, and needs. Prepare your students for these visits. You may ask companies for advice, if they would be willing to host students for a tour at their site, or if there is something the students could do to help them. **Do not ask for monetary or equipment donations.**

Cardinal Manufacturing has received an amazing amount of support from partners over the years. Companies have paid for student travel, lodging, and admission to national trade shows, provided branded clothing, software subscriptions, equipment, monetary donations, services of all kinds, connections, and so

much more. This has happened largely due to receiving of generosity after paying it forward, having a plan, and continually sharing our goals and plans. Generous partners have always stepped forward to help us accelerate and achieve our goals.

Getting to the point of being on a first name basis can take time as that comes as you establish a relationship and can take a year or more. Even though Cardinal Manufacturing has mature partner relationships, we never call any industry partners and ask for donations. Many times we have asked an industry partner how they think we could get this particular item and ask them if they'll help make a plan. Most of the time our partners help by making connections for us, procuring the help we need, or contributing in some way to the cost of the item we are looking for. Continue to be very polite, friendly, and appreciative. Work hard at building strong relationship, pay it forward first, and you will be surprised with what you receive. Do what you can at the beginning that does not cost much money to show your ambition and others will join in and support the student run business.

Always carry your business cards, and a pen and paper, so when you meet people you can get their contact information. We always send follow-up emails thanking them and letting them know it was nice to meet them. Create a list of contacts and what business they are in for future reference. When you call them for advice or assistance, don't expect it to be free. I do at times ask if they offer any educational discounts. I can't reiterate enough, that it is very important to not ask for anything for free. When someone assists you, be sure to show your appreciation.

### **? How have you secured so many donations?**

Cardinal Manufacturing has secured donations through the generosity of many partners who have learned about the plans and goals of the organization and have offered to participate. We do not request any specific contribution from any organization. We make a point of making our wish list, goals, and plans known and go out of our way to see how we can serve our partners. This strategy has provided valuable resources that have helped Cardinal Manufacturing grow.

### **? How did you capture the attention of big donors or celebrities?**

If you have ever heard the saying, "It's not what you know but who you know," then you understand how Cardinal Manufacturing has developed exceptional opportunities. Investing into our partner relationships has led to introductions to other partners and provided credibility to our organization. We have made requests for some celebrities to appear at our events and have been fortunate that our track record of past success has helped earn a "yes" from these individuals.

### **? How can we recruit the right teacher to help our district start up this kind of program?**

Any teacher can implement a student run business with support. The right candidate needs to be excited about the subject they teach, optimistic, positive, and willing to work collaboratively with many partners. The district must support a student run business and realize that starting takes time, effort, and resources.

### **? Why are goal setting and goal sharing important?**

It is important to always have a long-range plan for your student run business, and we recommend at least an updated five-year vision. Your partners and others will want to learn more about your business including history, current situation, and your goals for the future. If you can articulate your goals clearly and quickly, you will be surprised at the partners who step forward to help achieve those goals. For example, Cardinal Manufacturing was presenting to a company in a neighboring state about the program. This company was interested in

partnering with their local high school to implement a similar model. In my presentations, I always share how the program started, how our student run business has evolved, and where we plan to head in the future. I mentioned in this presentation that when we had enough funds, we were really hoping to purchase a new high-quality band saw, as this was a bottle-neck area in our shop. By the end of the day, they surprised me with a \$7,000 check and told me to go buy that much needed band saw. We never want to be out begging for donations, but we do want to share with people our vision and what we hope to accomplish. Some choose to donate money, others donate old equipment, give advice, or volunteer time. It's amazing to experience the support a student run business receives. We hope you, too, will be amazed with your successes.

### ❓ Why is it important to DREAM BIG?

When talking to students about their future or the future of your student run business, dream big. Dream so big that it is hard to believe that it could ever be possible! But in time it will. Better to set unreasonable goals and come close to reaching them than to set low goals and accomplish them. Our student run business continues to grow and expand each year because we have big dreams. We are not afraid to knock down block walls in school or to buy some paint and paint all week. If the teachers are excited, then the students are excited with them. We are not afraid to reach out to anyone. A long time ago a contact suggested, "You should have the president of the USA visit here." That seemed like an unrealistic goal to have the president visit a small rural school in the middle of Wisconsin. Now we have not completely reached that goal yet, but we did get invited to go to the White House where we were recognized by President Obama.

START SMALL. GROW FAST!  
**DREAM BIG! HAVE FUN!**  
YOU WILL BE AMAZED WITH YOUR SUCCESSES!

# REFERENCE MATERIAL

## The 10 Commandments for Career Success

After talking with thousands of employers over the past two decades it has become very clear to me what employers are looking for in a good employee. We were fortunate early on to connect with Dan Conroy of the Nexen Group of Webster, Wisconsin. During his career he developed a list of exactly what qualities were needed for a person to be successful in his company. The list consisted of ten traits and thus began the Nexen 10 Commandments for Career Success. These commandments were created by a very credible 40-year veteran businessman and continue to be supported by everyone I've spoken to across the nation. I make it clear to the students that I did not make this up. I am just passing along to them what I am hearing from employers is so important.

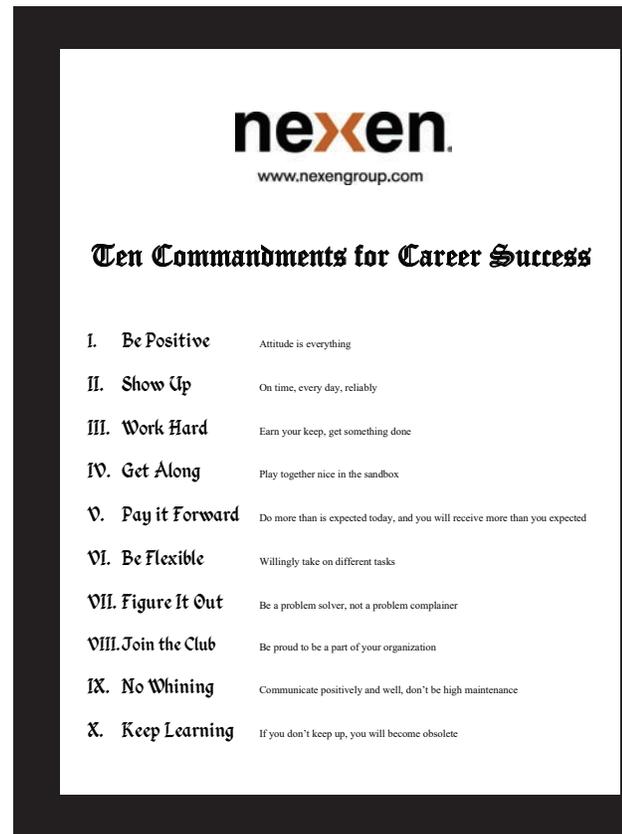
We share the commandments with all classes and discuss that they should reflect on which ones they are good at and which ones that they need to work on. Once a student can identify which they are weak in, we work together to try to improve. Being part of a student run business is the perfect opportunity to practice and learn employability skills. High school is a very safe place to make mistakes and receive constructive feedback on how to improve. Many former students have come back over the years and told me that these skills have been some of their greatest takeaways from being in Cardinal Manufacturing.

### **Commandment 1: *Be Positive. Attitude is everything.***

Everyone likes to be around people with a good attitude and it is contagious. An easy first step is to say good morning to everyone with a smile on your face and mean it. I like to take a lap around the school at a fast pace and say good morning to people using their first name to make it more meaningful. We all have struggles and challenges in our lives that we need to deal with but not dwell on. If everyone works together, school or work can be a fun place. It is amazing how one person can make a difference. As a teacher, try to be that person for your students and encourage them to be that person for other groups they belong to. A good attitude and a smile cost you nothing but can really help you and others.

### **Commandment 2: *Show Up. On time, every day, reliably.***

It is very difficult to be good at anything if you do not show up. Employers want employees to show up 15 minutes early so that when the shift starts, they are ready to start working. That way employees have time to put away their lunch, visit with your co-workers and be ready to get to work on time.



See full document on page 36 or at [www.studentrunbusiness.com](http://www.studentrunbusiness.com).

### **Commandment 3: *Work Hard. Earn your keep, get something done.***

Once you have gotten yourself to work or school with a great attitude you are off to a great start. The next step is to stay on task and to work as hard as you can for your entire shift. Most students will show up, be polite and friendly but struggle sometimes with focusing and staying on task. There are so many things that can sidetrack people at work. Our goal is to stay focused and on track all day every day. I try to share tips and tricks with the students to constantly make them more efficient. Running a student run business allows me to observe them working and then to give them feedback on how they can improve.

### **Commandment 4: *Get Along. Play together nice in the sandbox.***

Getting along with classmates and coworkers can make everyone's job enjoyable and much more productive. We tell students they do not have to be best friends with their classmates or coworkers, but they do have to be able to work with them. When we all communicate respectfully, are polite, and are open to others' perspectives, we have an enjoyable work environment.

### **Commandment 5: *Pay it Forward.***

***Do more than is expected today and you will receive more than you expected.***

Help everyone with no expectation of any kind of payment or future compensation. Most of the time there are plenty of ways to help others that don't cost much or take long. It is always rewarding and feels good to help others with your talents. We see the concept of pay it forward regularly and we are fortunate to receive so much more than we could have ever expected for the students and program. We help them, they help us. That's where everyone wins!

Dan Conroy, at right, author of the Nexen Ten Commandments, volunteers at an event with Cardinal Manufacturing.



### **Commandment 6: *Be Flexible. Willingly take on different tasks.***

Life is constantly changing at a fast pace and people need to remain flexible and ready to adapt to changing conditions. This can apply to home life, jobs, school, and certainly in a student run business. We all have roles we play, but on a moment's notice you may need to take on new positions of responsibility. Many companies believe in cross training their employees for this very reason. They want everyone to be able to do a variety of jobs so that in a pinch they can easily be moved around. This also helps people from getting bored by doing the same thing every day, and as an individual, it expands your skillset making you more valuable. In all businesses, workloads change in different departments and if we can assist in all areas the team will be stronger. In summary, we all need to pitch in and do whatever it takes for the good of the group.

### **Commandment 7: *Figure it Out. Be a problem solver, not a problem complainer.***

Problem-solving is a skill and it takes practice. A person starts by solving small problems and eventually gains enough confidence in their problem-solving skills to feel that there is no problem too big to solve. When students first start taking technical education courses, we teach students step by step how to do something and demonstrate the project many times. This is natural because it is all new to them. Over time these skills build. Once students have confidence in their skills and problem-solving ability, they can do anything. In today's world, you do not need to know everything; you need to know how to solve problems. The process is the same no matter what the problem is. We teach students to work through a progression of questions.

- What is the problem?
- Can I find the solution using the internet?
- Does my teacher know?
- Does anyone in our community know?
- Can I find a retired person to help?
- Do I have a solution?
- Does anyone in this class know how to?
- Does anyone in this school building know?
- Do we have any industry partners that could help?
- Should I reach out to vendors that specialize in this?

### **Commandment 8: *Join the Club. Be proud to be a part of your organization.***

Whatever organization or group you belong to you should be proud of it and do whatever you can to continually improve. Do what you can for the good of the team, and when everyone pitches in and does a little it reduces the burden of the work. Be proud to be part of the organization.

### **Commandment 9: *No Whining. Communicate positively and well, don't be high maintenance.***

No one likes to be around someone who whines and complains all the time. When there is a problem, let's solve it. Good advice for young workers is to take on every undesirable task you can and complete it well without whining. You will earn respect from the management team and your coworkers. When you see a job that no one wants to do, volunteer to do it and do it well as a challenge. Soon you will be seen as very valuable.

### **Commandment 10: *Keep Learning. If you don't keep up, you will become obsolete.***

The world is changing at a fast pace and if you think that you have learned enough and know what you need to know, then you will become outdated and obsolete very quickly. A person needs to continually learn new skills. A person should take advantage of every opportunity to learn something new, especially when it is free. Once you get into the work world, take any training that is offered to you. If a company is willing to pay you to go to training, new knowledge and new skills just make you more valuable and in-demand.



TODAY IS A GOOD DAY  
FOR A GOOD DAY.  
**SHOW UP! WORK HARD!**  
**MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

*Published in 2022 by*  
**CARDINAL MANUFACTURING**  
Eleva-Strum School District

W23597 US Highway 10 | Strum, WI 54770  
[www.StudentRunBusiness.com](http://www.StudentRunBusiness.com) | [www.CardinalMfg.org](http://www.CardinalMfg.org)