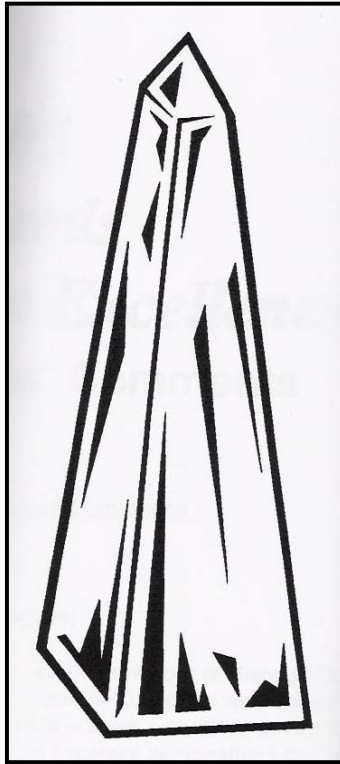


The ESOP Association's

2011 AACE *****
Annual Awards
for Communications Excellence



The ESOP Association sponsors the AACE Program in order to foster ever-improving employee owner communications by way of sharing among association members. One good innovation sparks many more. Be sure to see the AACE Display early during the 2011 Annual Conference, and start collecting your own materials to enter in 2012.

Our honored judges this year are: Mr. Carey Chen, Hypertherm, Inc., Hanover, NJ; Ms. Midori Cronky, Hot Dog on a Stick, Carlsbad, CA; Mr. Paul Horn, WorkPlace Consultants, LLC, Bethesda, MD; Mr. Butch Munson, LeFiell Manufacturing Co., Santa Fe Springs, CA; and Ms. Carolyn Zimmerman, the AACE Chair, Savannah, GA.

Click on the AACE obelisk at www.esopassociation.org for pictures.

This paper prepared by Pat Barnes, AACE Program Manager.

AACE 2011 – And the Winner is. . .

A company may not be a Top Winner more than once each year. They can be Runner Up & Top Winner, or Runner Up in several categories. They cannot win the same top award two years in a row. No such restrictions apply to Runner Up Winners.

Category 1-A, Total Communications Program, 100 or Fewer Employees

Winner: **Cal-Tex Protective Coatings, Inc.** (also Runner Up 6-A, Special Events)
Schertz, Texas, Contact: Jenifer Anderson



Cal-Tex comes out shining with a great program, including ESOP Orientation, interactive training and games, Lunch and Learn, a poster contest and ESOP for I-Pods. There are also ESOP Bucks, and identifying shirts, the most eye-catching being labeled “I Am a Repurchase Obligation”. ESOP Month is woven into this fabric as well. All this is done with

high employee involvement and levels of excitement. Combine this with consistent branding and a good display board, and here’s the winner!

Category 1-B, Total Communications Program, 101 – 500 Employees

Winner: **Flippo Construction Company Inc.**

Forestville, Maryland, Contact: Brandi Garrett



The Flippo Construction Company presents a great, overall, well-rounded program, as evidenced by their Communications Committee, their contact with retired owners, poster contest, payroll stuffers, surveys, CLUE, and Crew Spotlight. Add to this an excellent quarterly newsletter, a Guess the Share Prize, Safety Night, promotional items and Ownership Week. Notable is the “Enjoy the Burn” theme illustrated by aptly labeled cigars, appropriate for their company culture. To their credit, just about everything involves the ESOP.

Runner Up: **Carl Warren & Company**

Las Vegas, Nevada, Contact: Mike Clayson



Carl Warren & Company sends a lot of people to ESOP chapter and national conferences, and it pays off. They start with ESOP appearing on all printed materials. There is a lot of ESOP community participation, altruism, sponsorship, and memorial awards, as well as the important Congressional contacts. The ESOP Committee is very involved. Three of their employee owners spoke at the chapter conference. Note the good newsletter. Carl Warren can boast of an Edmunson Scholarship Award, and being One of Ten Top Work Places in Orange County, California. There’s a Quiz Time “Now Let’s See If You Were Good Listeners”. There are many ESOP games, potlucks, and charts, as well as “Where the Money Went”, “Games People Play”, and holiday cards. Note the TEA link on the intranet, as well as *Caryn’s Corner*. There is good ESOP advertising in many different ways. They are 100% employee owned, and proud of it.

Congratulations to this Silver ESOP company. Kudos as well for a great presentation.

Category 1-C, Total Communications Program, 501 – 1,000 Employees

Winner: **Glatfelter Insurance Group**
York, Pennsylvania, Contact: Sara Spangler



Glatfelter Insurance Group has a very good ESOP Committee Handbook and Mission Statement. A quarterly newsletter focuses on the committee members. “Under the Cupola” newsletters, surveys, calendar of events, cards (birthday, get well), are all evidence of their concern for their employee owners. Altruism for other is also evident. Excitement goes up a notch when they have to guess “Who’s Your ESOP Buddy?” There is a good ESOP Workbook. Their excellent ESOP terminology explains all about their ESOP, and they use TEA’s “ABC’s of ESOPs “(lessons). A sample question from their

very good Q&A is “How many ESOP companies are majority owned by the ESOP? (The answer is approximately 3,000). Along with all this, there is a sports theme, a Fiesta, and program based on “Minute to Win It”. Congratulations, Glatfelter.

Runner Up: **Holden Industries, Inc.** (also Winner 6-B, Runner Up 4-A, Ed. Materials, Print)
Deerfield, Illinois, Contact: Barbara Barkley



(See information in Category 6-B, Special Events, One Outstanding Event)

Category 1-D, Total Communications Program, Over 1,000 Employees

Winner: **D&H Distributing**

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Contact: Shannon Reedy



P.E.O.P.L.E. count, at D&H Distributing. The employee owners are called Co-Owners and issued O.W.N.E.R. cards, a great way to recognize ownership. There is a poster program, which produces simple but great messages as the voice of ESOPs. There are wonderful internal communications, as well as traditional press releases and web advertising, reiterating the theme “It’s Our People”. Note the amazing wellness program, with punchcards. It’s their belief that “Saving thousands begins with saving pennies.” There is a Milestones Letter, and their annual ESOP meeting was a Town Hall Meeting, another time

The Today Show. There are promotional items, shirts, bags and trade ads as well, all translating into a large ESOP company that communicates very well.

Runner Up: **CCC Group, Inc.** (also Winner 4-B, Ed. Materials, Including Intranets)

San Antonio, Texas, Contact: Sherry Keller



(See information in Category 4-B, Educational Materials, Electronic, Including Intranets)

Category 2, Audio Visual

Winner: **Perry Corporation**

Lima, Ohio, Contact: Sam Dervisevic

This audio visual presentation hits just the right note; it is funny, with a good use of employee owners, a good length, with clever lyrics, and an excellent spoof of the (Gilligan’s) island theme. The presentation is creative, short and sweet, entirely ESOP geared, fun and light. (Available for viewing at the AACE Display).

Runner Up: **Hot Dog on a Stick** (also Winner 5-A)

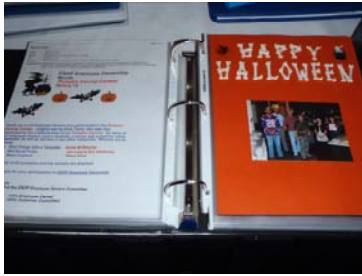
Carlsbad, California, Contact: Midori Cronky

(See Category 5-A, External ESOP Advertising – Print Advertising)

Hot Dog on a Stick’s presentation is the culmination of a contest within the company to come up with the best video to represent their ESOP company. The result is this delightful “mash up” by young, enthusiastic and innovative employee owners, as different locations of HDOS vie to be included. (Available for viewing at the AACE Display).

Category 3-A, Printed Materials, 250 or Fewer Employees

Winner: **Mid South Building Supply, Inc.** (also Runner Up 5-A, External Adv. Print)
Springfield, Virginia, Contact: Steve Earle



One judge's comment about Mid South Building Supply is simply "They have everything". "Everything" includes can't miss truck ads, letterhead touting ownership, company forms with "ESOP", an intranet newsletter, traditional newsletters, games, a Pride of Ownership Contest (turning \$2 bills into \$10 bills), and two binders every month. There are crossword contests,

company financials, emails, chili cookery, an ugly sweater day, and Congressional contact. Congratulations, Mid South, you've done it again!

Runner Up: **The Onyx Group**
Alexandria, Virginia, Contact: Georgia Meckes



The Onyx Group excels at realizing the importance of the little things. No one else has ever entered the idea of putting company announcements on the back of the restroom doors (i.e. "Potty Periodicals"), a humorous and unusual printed material, but effective. (There's also an excellent printed newsletter as well). This is an altruistic company, illustrated by their Back to School Drive, the "Penny Wars", and Walk/Run for Susan G. Komen (which raised \$6,677). They collected sheets for the troops at Fort Bragg, NC, and ran a poster contest to support the infantry regiment from the 4th Brigade. There was the 7th Annual Golf Tourney, and other ESOP celebrations such as the ESOP Month Sneaker Day, the Professional Dress Day, and games such as Spin the Wheel and Laser Tag, and a company picnic. Onyx is an employee owned, compassionate, fun and effective ESOP, a total package.

Category 3-B, Printed Materials, Over 250 Employees

Winner: **Carris Reels, Inc.** (also Runner Up 5-B)
Proctor, Vermont, Contact: Karin McGrath



Carris Reels produces the great and appropriately named “Reel News”, with reports by ESOP Committee Members and trustee materials. (Note the Trustee/ESOP Committee Checklist.) There is a monthly calendar, the Employee Ownership Orientation, and the annual report. With concern for their employee owners, English and Spanish run side by side in the newsletter. Note the web site as well. Congratulations, Carris Reels!

Runner Up: **Woodward Communications, Inc.** (also Winner 7-B)
Dubuque, Iowa, Contact: Dan Marcue



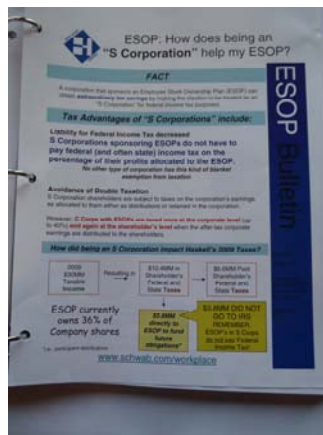
(See information written in Category 7-B, Special Events & Promotions, Series)

Category 4-A, Educational Materials, Print

Winner:

The Haskell Company

Jacksonville, Florida, Contact: Tania Cable



The Haskell Company educates with an excellent newsletter, a quarterly ESOP Bulletin, Lunch and Learn, and an annual publication called "Scope". They promote cost savings suggestions, have a Guess the Share Value program, and have ESOP Breakfasts. They report on Schwab, vesting, allocations, their S-Corp business, and the fact that they are 100% owned. Their education program has to cover four locations, which they do very well. They use a "servant management" attitude to communicate co-ownership and responsibility in this proud ESOP company. Just for kicks, they throw in a game of Jeopardy and a champagne reception.

Congratulations, Haskell.

Runner Up:

Holden Industries, Inc. (also Winner 6-B, Runner Up 1-C)

Deerfield, Illinois, Contact: Barbara Barkley

(See Category 6-B, Special Events & Promotions, One Outstanding Event)



The Holden Industries employee owners do an excellent job of describing ownership in an engagement survey. There is much good detail in the printed educational materials, including a scorecard and newsletter. Holden's materials also include slides, an ESOP Road Show, a Message from the President, and a "homegrown" intranet. This is all augmented by many pictures and a web site, "My ESOP" which includes an ESOP store. For an excellent example of an ESOP-oriented company newsletter, be sure to check out Holden Industries' newsletter. As Holden is made up of four different businesses, it is quite a challenge to draw everyone together into a unified whole. This newsletter appears quarterly and is sent to the home address. Financial data is included in an easy to read format. Results of the survey, the flag contest, and news and awards from all of the companies are included with many photographs. With great design, color and writing Holden stands out both in the

education and print areas.

Category 4-B, Educational Materials, Electronic, Including ESOP Intranet

Winner: **CCC Group, Inc.** (also Runner Up 1-D, Total Communications Program)
San Antonio, Texas, Contact: Sherry Keller



CCC Group has an extensive communications program, especially excelling in educational materials, including their intranet. Employee owners can look for answers, by accessing FAQs. They include ESOP financial information, historical data and ESOP videos. Look for the *ESOP Connection*. There are details, links, and ESOP account balances. Backing this is a phone Hot Line, a newsletter column and payroll stuffers. They don't neglect the basics, with ownership information in the letterhead and business cards. Congratulations, to this excellent ESOP company, CCC Group, Inc.

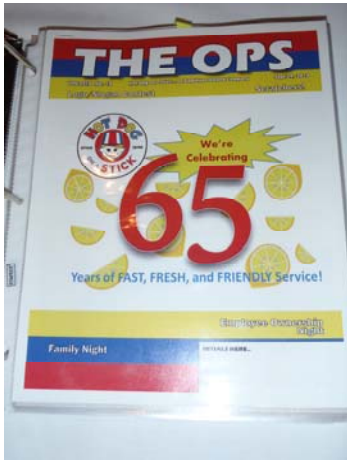
Runner Up: **Caltrol, Inc.** (also Winner 6-A)
Las Vegas, Nevada, Contact: William W. Flader



(See written information in Category 6-A, Special Events and Promotions, One Outstanding Event)

Category 5-A, External ESOP Advertising – Print Advertising

Winner: **Hot Dog on a Stick** (also Runner Up, Category 2, A/V)
Carlsbad, California, Contact: Midori Cronky



It being Hot Dog on a Stick's 65th Anniversary, they have spared no effort to celebrate and advertise. They have complimentary cards for customers and friends, (Hot Deals). Note their lemonade cup, the ESOP hat pin and the reusable bags. It's not all show, however, their seven committee members have helped to steer production of The Ops, the calendar, the ESOP

Puzzle, The ESOP Plan and a letter to new owners. HDOS' Intranet Operating Manual backs up with solid information in the ESOP Section, (see "Where U At?") There is EO Family Night, the Right/Left Game, the Annual Management Meeting, Project 13, and the Video Contest (See Category 2, A/V). Top it off with testimonials, and an outstanding ESOP company which employs a very young and mobile demographic, HDOS, emerges the winner. Congratulations, Hot Dog on a Stick!

Runner Up: **Mid South Building Supply, Inc.** (also Winner 3-A, Printed Materials)
Springfield, Virginia, Contact: Steve Earle



(See information written in Category 3-A, Printed Materials)

Category 5B, External ESOP Advertising – Web Sites

Winner:

Van Meter Industrial

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Contact: Cindy Avey



Check out www.vanmeterindustrial.com for a great example of an ESOP company web site. The company is reflected as much more than simply supplies and services. There are different employee owners explaining solutions, showing their involvement in the company and concern, as owners, for the customer. In the background, when a new hire has reached their 6th month anniversary, the company throws an “I’m In!” meeting, so it’s official that they are an important part of this company. Congratulations, Van Meter Industrial!

Runner Up:

Carris Reels, Inc.

(also Winner, 3-B)

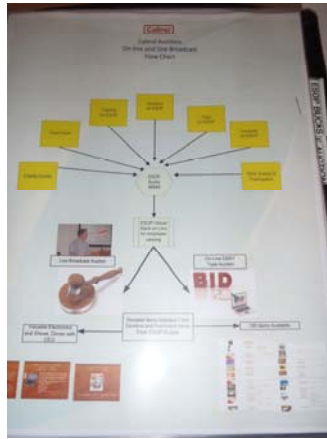
Proctor, Vermont, Contact: Karin McGrath



(See information in Category 3-B, Printed Materials. Check out this web site at www.carris.com.)

Category 6-A, Special Events & Promotions, 1 Outstg. Event, 250 or Fewer

Winner: **Caltrol, Inc.** (also Runner Up, 4-B)
Las Vegas, Nevada, Contact: William W. Flader



Caltrol, Inc. produces ESOP Bucks with which to bid in a live auction. Note the ESOPs for I-Pads, using ESOP Bucks for an E-Bay auction. Combine this with a good ESOP Committee, orientation training, their website, intranet, newsletters (*ESOP Express*), Lunch Learning, Unity Walks, Charity Drives, and an egg hunt, and Caltrol nestles one special event into a well-woven fabric of very creative ESOP communications.

Runner Up: **Cal-Tex Protective Coatings, Inc.** (also Winner 1-A)
Schertz, Texas, Contact: Jenifer Anderson



(See information in Category 1-A, Total Communications Program)

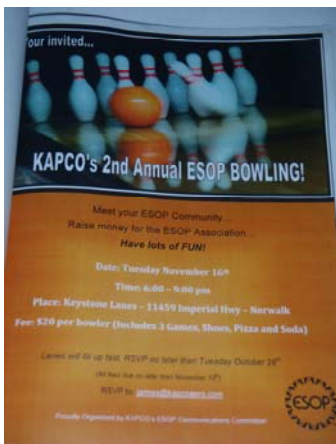
Category 6-B, Special Events & Promotions, 1 Outstg. Event, Over 250 Empl.

Winner: **Holden Industries, Inc.** (also Runner Up in 1-C and 4-A)
Deerfield, Illinois, Contact: Barbara Barkley



Holden Industries is a relatively new ESOP, in their third year in 2010. They needed a company flag, and wanted to express their pride and winning attitude for Employee Ownership Month with the theme “With Flying Colours”. This phrase was originally used to describe a fleet returning to port with their flags, or colours, flying from their masts, signifying their victory at sea. The winning design has a blue background with a compass symbol and “Holden Industries, Employee Owned, 100%, and Proud to show it”. As “ESOP On Course” is another of their themes, the compass symbol/logo is most fitting. This and other good designs are displayed in their large notebook.

Runner Up: **KAPCO**
Brea, California, Contact: Jamie Saltos



The KAPCO people made a bowling event into a Bowling Event by inviting five other ESOP companies to compete and raise money for the ESOP Ownership Foundation. There was a raffle for prizes, lots of friendly competition and many contacts established for the benefit of all the companies involved. This is a well-rounded company, and this event was a part of their programs for multi locations and events, including a Beat the Heat Sundae Bar, a charity drive, Chips and Dip, a Country Lunch, root beer floats, a baking contest, Spirit Pie Day, ESOP Bingo, a Chili Cook Off, and a Support Our Troops with care packages program. Last but not least, there are also quarterly luncheons and a monthly social. Way to go, KAPCO!

Category 7-A, Special Events, Promotions, Series, 250 or Fewer Employees

Winner:

ComSonics Inc.

Harrisonburg, Virginia, Contact: Kaystyle Madden



“Be Bold, Catch the Wave” is the overall theme for a myriad of special events for their ESOP’s 35th anniversary. This theme applies to the innovative attitude of the company regarding their ESOP, as well as pride in being on the cutting edge of product development. ComSonics certainly knows how to use their assets. A giant banner for “ESOP Company of the Year” was signed by all employee owners and prominently

displayed. Their “Hang 10 in 2010” Passport Program required participation in at least ten activities during the year (validated by stickers in each person’s passport) in order to attend the big event. There were usually ESOP questions asked to qualify to

participate in such things as the paper airplane flight contest, (to become a registered pilot) and the Egg Drop Contest. (Build a cage of straws for a raw egg and drop it from 6+ feet. The number of straws available depended on how many ESOP questions were answered correctly.) There was also a 20 Question Quiz about the SPD, an ESOP Essay Contest and a very active ESOP Month. Note the excellent ESOP “Owners Inside” booklet. There are many support items, such as beach balls, an Owner’s Manual with a key, cups and more. Every month at ComSonics is ESOP Month, a worthy goal accomplished!

Runner Up:

Vista Technology Services, Inc.

Herndon, Virginia, Contact: Katie Klumpp



VistaTSI has a six person committee and two widely separated locations. They manage to pull everyone together with creativity, good planning and enthusiasm. There is a new game called “Cost is Correct” to guess the cost of various company expenditures, based on a TV show. Even the audience gets a prize. The committee decided to use part of their budget to establish an ESOP break room, and had a contest to name it. The WiiSOP Room is in an unused office with a TV screen from storage, and is ideal for fellow shareholders to relax for a few minutes. The CEO and COO kicked it off with a WiiSOP bowling battle. There was also ESOP Month Messaging, kicked off with one EO’s original song, “The ESOP Boogie” available on

You tube. (www.youtube/watch?v=cCxo06, or try ESOP Paradise) with links to other companies’ ESOP videos as well. The email messages were fun and informative. These are all innovative activities, well executed. Congratulations, VistaTSI!

Category 7-B, Special Events, Promotions, Series, Over 250 Employees

Winner:

Woodward Communications, Inc. (also runner up 3-B, Printed Mat.)
Dubuque, Iowa, Contact: Dan Marcue

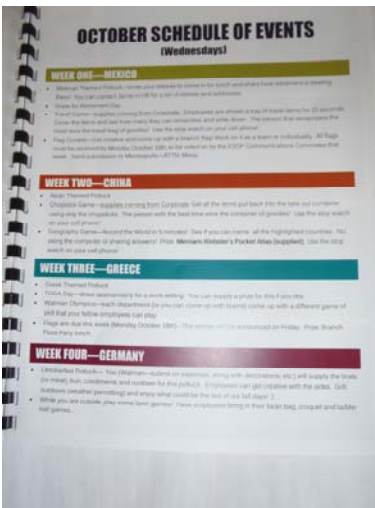


One of Woodward Communications' really special events was their poster contest, where the winner received \$300 and a paid day off. There are many activities here, including an ESOP Puzzle Word Search, a food drive, an ESOP crossword puzzle, an ESOP Month Calendar of Events and an Employee Owner Lunch. Another unusual and very special event was the Kid's Coloring Contest for children 12 and under – "my (mom, dad, grandma, etc.) is a CEO", which sparked family participation (and explanations!). Woodward backs this up with ice cream, an excellent, colorful newsletter, full page ads, the annual report and pins. These

activities provide a nice balance of excellence for employee owners, their families and the community. Congratulations, Woodward Communications!

Runner Up:

Walman Optical
Minneapolis, Minnesota, Contact: Jennifer Morton



Walman Optical has many locations and a big outlook. Their theme for this series is global, employee ownership around the world (Mexico, China, Greece, and Germany). For these four countries, a departmental pot luck (or carry out) was planned. For Mexico, there was a travel item memory game, played while the participants were "Dressed for Retirement". For China there was a geography quiz and chopsticks game. Greece brought up Toga Day, and a stamp in a passport was given for completing the Olympic Games (bowling, a toss game, etc. They were given 15 minutes to play all the games they could). The fifth day was company-wide, with brats and sausages provided for an "Octoberfest". From the New Visions Employee Owner Suggestion Program, "A Day in the Life" emerged. One owner "shadows" another, learning more about the functions of the company, and how each employee owner's job might impact others. At the Annual ESOP Meeting, a program of actual stories of retirees and others, (no names) called "Real People, Real Money" brings home

just how real it is for Walman Optical's employee owners.