

Highlights

Rapid Financial Results; Lasting Cultural Change

Contrary to the macro trends in the automotive industry, sales at Argent have continued to grow by double-digit percentages since 2011, thanks in part to playing the Great Game of Business.

Not that playing the game didn't get off to a somewhat inauspicious start. When the decision was made to open the books, the associates at Argent were admittedly a little gun-shy about what to expect. Worse, several associates fell asleep during the first company huddle. That led Fred Perenic, the company's owner, to create a position of Master of Ceremonies to try and spice those huddles up by making them fun and entertaining. Once people were paying attention, they were able to walk them through the operating costs of the business – which opened a lot of people's eyes to the financial health of the company.

Open-book management is now part of every new employee's orientation, and the company conducts monthly training sessions to help cement core values like learning to think like an owner on a daily basis. While the company continues to enjoy improved financial results, opening the books also impacted how engaged and dedicated associates were in their work.. "The difference in the company's culture is like night and day since we opened the books," says Bekah Keehn, the company's open book management coordinator. "Our employees are truly a large extended family that support one another through both good and bad times."

A great example of that dynamic is how associates banded together to create a committee called Argent Cares, which supports their community with food drives, blood drives, and Christmas present collections. Many more support such organizations as Wounded Warriors, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, Heart 2 Hart Detroit, and the Humane Society.

Those results have gotten the company some attention: Argent International won Crain's Cool Places to Work in Michigan in both 2014 and 2016.



Organizational Background

Argent International is a veteran-owned business that specializes in designing, fabricating, and distributing a wide variety of custom adhesive and die-cut solutions, primarily for customers in the automotive industry.

“Everyone thinks like an owner. It’s exciting to watch and listen to my peers bring forth thoughtful suggestions that have the genuine interest of employees and company at heart.”

~ Ryan Stefanski, IT Manager

Playing the Game Together

One of the aspects of the Great Game of Business that the team at Argent excels at is playing MiniGames. One example is called their “Jidoka Challenge.” During everyday work, if a team member finds a jidoka (or mistake) they are praised and awarded with a lottery ticket. They also get their picture posted on the team’s praise board.

Another successful MiniGame the team played was called “Rejection Bingo,” which was designed to keep the team focused on quality in a fun way. It worked as follows: every team member was given his or her own Bingo card. Then, each weekday that the team received no customer complaints, or identified zero product rejections in-house, they would draw a Bingo number. The first 15 people to win Bingo then won prizes.

“I’m excited by how playing the Great Game of Business has made everyone want the company to succeed, by participating in ways to reduce costs and increase the bottom line.”

~ Kim Chesney, Senior Accountant

What’s Next?

The team at Argent is firing on all cylinders, but they also know they can go deeper with playing the Great Game of Business – especially in working to connect all of their team members. That can be difficult, especially for anyone who works the third shift that stretches from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. These five team members don’t always get the chance to attend the all-company huddle. To overcome that constraint, the shift supervisor attends the big huddle at least once a month, while Keehn, who coordinates the game for Argent, emails the supervisor a copy of the company’s scorecard which they can then use for their shift huddle.

“Open-book management has provided a platform that has engaged employees at all levels. It has showed everyone that they have a stake in the outcome.”

~ Paul Weinrauch, Process Manager