



## this issue

- Dissipate Made the TOP THREE pg. 1
- A Successful Top Gun Initiative pg. 2
- Resources for You pg. 3
- Loctite Education pg. 3
- Self Care is Critical pg. 4

### Upcoming Events

#### New Employee Orientation

Hosted by The Center for Competency Development.

November 25, 2025  
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Presentations are scheduled for 90 minutes and can be attended in person or virtually.

Cost to attend is \$40 per person. Registration is required.

Contact  
jackie.krawczak@kabu.net

### Equipped Live

The next Equipped Live is scheduled for November 17, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Additional details will be emailed in advance of the event.

Equipped Live feedback is always welcome.

Questions to be answered live can be submitted in advance.

Contact  
jackie.krawczak@kabu.net

## Update! Coolest Thing Made in Michigan Competition

InfernoWare's Dissipate has made it to the TOP THREE in the Coolest Thing Made in Michigan Competition!

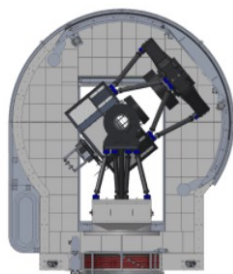
Many of you voted daily through two rounds of voting to help get InfernoWare's product to this point in the competition - Thank You!

The Coolest Thing Made in Michigan will be revealed at an award gala on November 20th in Lansing, MI.

Learn more about InfernoWare: [Home - InfernoWare™ LLC](#)

View the top three coolest things made in MI: <https://micolestthing.org/>.

PF1000 Prime Focus System



Company:  
Observable Space

InfernoWare Dissipate Coating



Company:  
InfernoWare

Pioneer Sugar



Company:  
Michigan Sugar Company

## The Top Gun Initiative: A Valuable Process with Impactful Results

For many, a movie comes to mind when they hear the phrase, “Top Gun”. If we think about why the movie is called, “Top Gun,” we realize it is because the flight training featured in the movie is for the best of the best - the top airmen/women.

After many conversations about action learning, competency development and the need for additional training in the IFMC, Gary Stevens was asked to formulate a strategy to develop Top Guns in the IFMC.

Having had experience with other projects that involved teams made up of representatives from multiple BGM’s, Gary used those experiences to develop a blueprint for a Top Gun initiative, with the ultimate goal of forming a process to develop Top Gun competency in the IFMC. This initial Top Gun team would approach a problem as a one-of-a-kind demonstration of how additional Top Guns could be developed using the same process, regarding other topics and problems.

The area of focus for the first Top Gun initiative was to explore what must be done to help team members of IFMC businesses align inter-IFMC customers to the many BGMs in the IFMC economy so that lost opportunities are minimized and potential opportunities are maximized.

A group of individuals identified by leaders as good fits for this topic and project were invited to participate, and they began to deliberate the problem.

Ultimately the group came up with several recommendations on how to increase awareness of capabilities within the IFMC so more opportunities could be captured from customers. Those ideas are currently being discussed further and shared within the IFMC with the goal of bringing some or all the recommendations to reality.

Gary shared that the resulting recommendations are valuable but equally as valuable was the process the group went through to come up with the recommendations. Through in-depth conversations, they ultimately realized the problem was really two-fold and would require different solutions for each problem.

Mike Furtaw, who assumed a leadership role in the initiative, said he enjoyed the process and instead of setting out to attack the problem straight on like so many of us often do, the team had conversations to fully understand the problem and develop recommended solutions. He enjoyed that the conversation evolved over the course of their meetings and by the end, the group realized that although they do a lot to move their area of business forward, they often forget they may be able to bring about additional opportunities for the IFMC – beyond just their own BGM.

Keith Hartman was also involved in the Top Gun initiative and shared that he enjoyed the process of conversing with people who had different perspectives on the same topic. The process made him more aware of some shortcomings in the IFMC regarding product knowledge of BGMs beyond the one each individual works for. The experience was so valuable that if there was another Top Gun team established to focus on a topic Keith was familiar with, he would be interested in participating.

Also involved in the Top Gun project was Luke Zaborney. Like Mike and Keith, Luke enjoyed the process and learned a lot. He learned more about the importance of refining dashboard metrics, and it led him to thinking more strategically about using data to drive sales efforts.

Luke said that overall, the Top Gun experience was energizing, and that it pushed him to think beyond his immediate role and consider a broader impact.

Some of the recommendations that came from this initial Top Gun initiative include:

Development of an action learning program

Development of a personalized AI assistance for sales

Further exploration of AI tools and functionality

Exploration of a Lead Shopper program

Possible incentives for successful cross BGM referrals

Refinement of dashboard metrics

Top Gun...continued on page three

Although it is yet to be seen what will come of the recommendations, the process itself was valuable and those involved are much appreciated for their deliberation, conversation and participation in the process.

The first Top Gun group was made up of the following:

Mike Furtaw, ProCal Innovations LLC	Keith Hartman, Uni-Craft Corp.
Jim Klarich, Resources for You LLC	Alicia Kleiber, OMC OEM Division LLC
Brian Konieczny, Impact Team K LLC	Wayne Morgan, Resources for You LLC
Dan Schultz, OMC Integrator 2 Division LLC	Kim Stevens, Amos Mfg. Inc.
Julie VandePutte, Innova-Tech Solutions Corp.	Luke Zaborney, Sur-Tech Mfg. LLC

For more information about the Top Gun initiative, contact Gary Stevens (989-358-6254 / [gstevens@kabu.net](mailto:gstevens@kabu.net)).

## Resources For You: A Two-Part Series

Resources For You (R4U) is likely a business you've heard of around the IFMC - but what exactly do they do? Learn more about their capabilities in this two-part series.

### Quote Follow-Up: A Key to Conversion

Are you seeing 100% follow-up on your quotes? If not, reach out to R4U for assistance. Timely and consistent follow-up is one of the most effective ways to convert interest into orders. If you need help streamlining your process or promoting legacy quick-ship offerings, R4U can assist, helping ensure no opportunity slips through the cracks.

### Legacy Offerings Still Drive Results

Don't underestimate the power of your legacy quick-ship products. These tried-and-true solutions continue to meet customer needs with speed and reliability. If you haven't promoted them recently, now's a great time to reintroduce them to your accounts. R4U can help you craft messaging and visuals that highlight their value—making it easier to follow up and close the loop.

### Follow-Up is a Team Sport

Quote follow-up doesn't have to be a solo effort. Whether you're juggling multiple leads or need help tracking down product specs, the R4U team can support you. Let them help you build a follow-up cadence that works—complete with reminders, templates, and even customer-specific insights. Together, R4U and your BGM can turn quotes into wins.

### From Quote to Commitment

Every quote is a conversation starter. But without timely follow-up, it's easy for interest to fade. If you're seeing delays in customer responses or struggling to get traction, R4U can help you strategize. R4U can help identify the best timing, messaging, and tools to move from quote to commitment with confidence.

Interested in learning more about R4U? Connect with them by contacting Wayne Morgan at [wayne@r-4u.com](mailto:wayne@r-4u.com)/989.358.7089.

## Recent Training - Loctite Updates and Uses

A classroom filled with employees of ESI client companies recently participated in a presentation coordinated by BDI Representative Kevin Galloway, and was all about Loctite products and best practices. Attendees heard from presenters Kate Calero, Regional Sales Manager, and Jason Thouin, Territory Sales Engineer on topics like what products to use in different scenarios, product preparation for best results, and new Loctite products.

Participants watched several demonstrations of products in action and had some hands-on practice in Loctite application. The presentation was free for attendees and included lunch.





# Your Health Matters

A message from USI, ESI's health insurance broker.



## Practicing Self-Care



We often feel obligated to say "yes" when someone asks for our time or energy. But saying "no" is OK, especially when you feel overwhelmed. Setting healthy boundaries helps avoid burnout, anxiety, and stress.

Take care of yourself with these tips:

- Be authentic and avoid self-criticism.
- Stay focused by minimizing distractions.
- Build relationships with supportive people.
- Prioritize sleep to recharge.
- Manage your time effectively.
- Create a positive workspace with inspiring visuals.
- Practice gratitude by accepting compliments.
- Relax and recharge with enjoyable activities.

Self-care is not selfish. Prioritizing rest, relaxation, nourishment, and physical activity allows you to give more to others.

**SOURCES:**

<https://www.usi.com/employee-benefits>

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