

## Upcoming Events

### New Employee Orientation

Hosted by The Center for Competency Development.

February 17, 2026

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

These 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 February 16, 2026, 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



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## Center for Competency Development Upcoming Training

The Center for Competency Development has big plans for training in 2026. The Center kicked off the year with a three-part sales training series with Sales Concepts.

Also on the calendar includes a Leadership Experience for new/up-coming leaders. Details are in the photo (due to high demand of this training, additional cohorts have been added, therefore, dates may vary).

Watch your email and UKG Talk to learn details about the following training:

**Workplace Violence:** What do you do when someone threatens violence at the workplace or engages in violence? To whom do you report concerns? This workshop will bring in a topic expert to teach how to be prepared for violence in the workplace.

**Print Reading (Basic):** This course has been offered in the past and is a great introduction course for anyone looking to better understand the basics of print reading (especially sales and manufacturing team members new to the industry).

**SolidWorks Training:** The Center is working on partnering with a vendor that specializes in SolidWorks to help train on specific topics like weldments and large assemblies. This will be designed for employees in the engineering/design field but others may find it of value as well.

**Rollers/Brakes/Clutches/Pulleys/Motors:** This training will cover basic information on these topics, with the goal of helping attendees better understand the uses, applications and best practices for each option.

**Quality Communication:** This workshop will be for anyone, at any level, and will cover generational differences in communication, and best practices of organizations that communicate effectively, internally.

Questions can be directed to Jackie Krawczak or Jeff Jackson.



Center for Competency Development

110 West Chatham St., P.O. Box 832 | Alpena, Michigan 49707

a partner of EGN EGN Economic Generator Network

## LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE FOR NEW LEADERS

A virtual series for up-and-coming or new leaders that will fast-track the learning curve to success.

SIX VIRTUAL SESSIONS AS PART OF ONE SERIES  
Every other Wednesday, 7:30 - 9 a.m. - starting February 25th and ending on May 6th  
Space is limited to nine participants per cohort

### Accelerate Learning

New leaders are challenged by the transition from task-based work to people-based work, leading to a significant learning curve. This series will accelerate learning by helping new leaders:

- Avoid common and often costly mistakes
- Develop an effective culture
- Discover undervalued and overlooked competencies for successful leadership
- Explore effective cultures and learn how to create a culture that consistently and effectively delivers the IFMC Mission/Vision/Values.

### Areas of Focus

This series focuses on fundamental areas to jumpstart the journey to leadership.

- Leadership versus Management
- Emotionally intelligent leaders
- Communication for leaders
- Time management
- Intentionally developing a desired culture
- Holding effective meetings

\$900 per attendee for the six-week series

Register by contacting Jackie Krawczak  
email: jackie.krawczak@kabu.net  
phone: 989.358.6175

### THE SERIES AT A GLANCE

Topics include:

- The IFMC Mission/Vision/Values
- Leadership vs. Management
- Creating a Desired Culture
- Communication
- Emotionally Intelligent Leadership
- Coaching and Mentoring Your Team
- Conflict Management
- Time Management
- Holding Effective Meetings

There will be assignments after each session that attendees are expected to engage in and practice.

### PRESENTER BIO

**Jackie Krawczak**  
Jackie Krawczak, LLC focuses on cultivating effective leadership and cultures in organizations. Drawing from a rich background in leadership experience, Jackie is dedicated to empowering her clients to strengthen their internal leaders and foster cultures that drive impactful results.



With a multifaceted approach that encompasses speaking, engagements, coaching, and writing, Jackie's expertise lies in providing insights that resonate with a diverse audience. Through collaboration and strategic guidance, Jackie contributes to shaping dynamic, resilient organizational cultures.

## The Ice-Eradicator®: The History of How it Came to Be

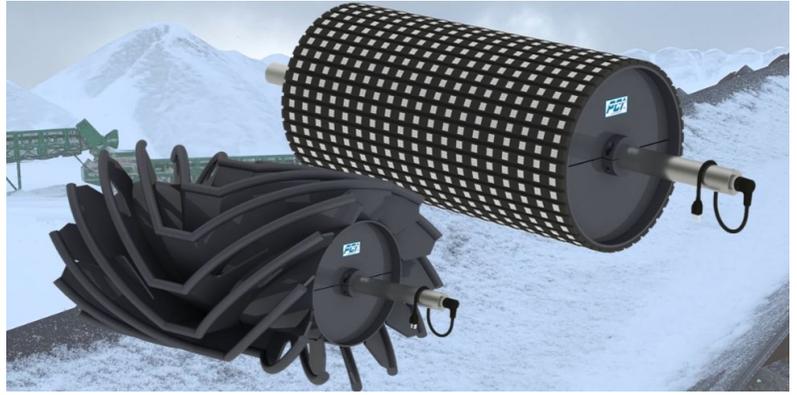
Every new product has a story about how it came into existence. More often than not, the stories don't go directly from idea to reality, but instead have lots of twists and turns in the process. The Ice-Eradicator® is no different.

In 2018, Nick Kowalski (current VP of Operations/Impact Team K) returned from a customer visit and shared that more than one person had asked him on that trip for a heated pulley.

That wasn't something they had thought about before, but it made sense for customers who were operating in a cold climate and had to continually stop their conveyors to clear ice or snow.

Brian Konieczny (current VP of Operations/Impact Team K) and Nick went to work trying to develop a solution to this customer problem.

Because they were looking at this problem with the idea that you cannot plug something in that rotates, they created a prototype using a double walled pulley with fluid inside that flowed past louvers, which would create heat through friction. After testing their first prototype they realized they could not generate enough heat to melt ice and snow with this method.



They went back to pondering how they could plug something in that rotates and that's when Brian and Nick found a possible solution in an unexpected place.

Brian and Nick have both been mentors for FIRST Robotics teams. They both work with the team from Posen, MI schools. The team wanted to use their robot in a parade to throw candy for the spectators. The team wanted to incorporate a turret that would rotate and throw candy 360 degrees.

To make that happen, the students used a slip ring. When Brian and Nick saw the slip ring work for the candy bot they thought it was also a possible solution to the heated pulley problem.

They built a prototype using a slip ring but by the time they had created this second prototype, the weather had started to turn to spring temperatures so they couldn't test the roller outdoors. Because of their relationship with Posen schools, they were able to test the second prototype inside of a walk-in freezer at the schools, taking shifts checking the equipment and tracking data. They realized that the product did indeed melt the snow and ice effectively and efficiently.

Although they still had work to do to improve the product, it was at this point that they applied for a patent.

In March of 2020, they were getting ready to display the heated pulley at an expo in Las Vegas. The problem was that their patent application still hadn't been accepted. They had their display set up but hidden from view and waited anxiously for news that their patent was accepted. Thankfully, the patent application was accepted just in time, and they found themselves in the hotel lobby where the expo was held, signing and faxing papers less than an hour before the show started, to ensure product protection.

The product was very well received, and expo participants were impressed and curious (especially curious were ones from warm climates). But then, COVID struck. The expo was shut down early and they all went home.

Product sales did not skyrocket as they had expected after the expo. Perhaps because of covid, or perhaps other reasons. At first, they were disappointed, but they realized it gave them time to further develop the product. This included adding a thermostat and a pressure relief valve, and having a new slip ring developed that did not include Mercury for use in the Canadian market.

The biggest customer of the Ice-Eradicator® is De Beers for their largest diamond mine in Canada. De Beers representatives said they paid for their first installment of Ice-Eradicator® Pulleys in just ten days because of the significant decrease in labor and time shut down.

This is Nick and Brian's third patent together. Learn more about the Ice-Eradicator® at [Ice-Eradicator® - PCI, ProCal Innovations, LLC](#)

## Leadership Brags - Happy Retirement!

Congratulations to Phil Zaborney on his retirement! Phil was initially hired as a welder for a part-time position getting a large aluminum pallet project out the door. That was in 1986. At completion of that pallet job, Phil was laid off on a Friday, only to be called back to work on Monday, just a few days later.

Phil has been adding tremendous value to the IFMC ever since. He spent several years working in manufacturing, but then moved into positions for various BGMs including engineering, sales, and leadership roles. Phil said there was never a dull moment during his career with IFMC businesses and that he appreciates all of the opportunities he was given. In retirement Phil does not have any specific plans but knows he will mess around on his acreage, complete a long list of projects, and spend time with his family and grandkids. Phil was inducted into the ESI Hall of Fame in 2024. His contributions to the IFMC will absolutely be missed.



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June of 1977 is when Glen Kowalski began his successful career with ESI Clients. He was inducted into the ESI Hall of Fame in 2024. After devoting nearly five decades to his career with the IFMC, Glen has decided it is time to retire.



Glen's dedication has shaped the foundation of Omni Metalcraft. He has been a steady, reliable, and unwavering presence — the kind of person that every organization hopes to be fortunate enough to have.

Pat Hantz, a long-time coworker of Glen's, shared, "Glen's hard work has never been just about completing tasks; it has been about building something lasting. Glen has been instrumental in Omni Metalcraft's growth, excelling not only in his skills but also the skills of others through ingenuity, integrity, consistency, and quiet leadership. Through every challenge and every success, he has remained steady, thoughtful, and committed to doing things the right way. I attribute much of what I have learned throughout my career to Glen and his valuable input."

Beyond Glen's professional contributions, he has been a genuinely good person — someone who treats others with respect, offers support without being asked, and leads by example in ways that leave a lasting impact.

As Glen steps into retirement, we honor not just the years he has given, but the legacy he leaves behind. His influence will continue to be felt in the work we do, the standards we uphold, and the culture he helped shape.

We extend our deepest gratitude and warmest wishes for a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement. He will be missed.

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