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**IB Event Calendar**

<b>&lt; May 2011 &gt;</b>						
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- Sat, May 7**  
[Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation's 12th Annual Spring Gala](#)
- Mon, May 9**  
[Magnetiquette Dinner: Etiquette and Networking](#)
- Tue, May 10**  
[GMA SHRM Human Capital Conference](#)

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**Executive Profiles**



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"I had to lay off some workers. They didn't deserve it, and I felt terrible. So I bought another company and rolled it into Dane so I could get my 13 people back to work." – Troy Berg

**Troy Berg, Dane Manufacturing**  
**May 1, 2011**

*As reported in the pages of In Business magazine.*

I'm here because of the love of two women," Troy Berg freely admits – his wife, Michelle, and mother, Sharon – whom he insists don't get enough credit. Both helped the 46-year-old president of [Dane Manufacturing](#) purchase the company he has owned since 2001. Since then, he's spent the last 10 years carving a legacy of his own.

When Berg acquired the 94-year-old sheet metal fabrication company, it was generating \$1.3 million in sales. "We take metal, cut it to shape, and bend it into three dimensions for boxes, cabinets, components, and sub-assemblies," he explained. It is the perfect environment for a mechanical engineer who, as a child, was fascinated with Tonka trucks and often dismantled whatever he could to learn how things worked. His dad, Louis, once a Madison banker, recognized Berg's mechanical ability early on. "I was the third of four sons, but Dad taught me how to mow the lawn first," Berg said with pride. That early instruction led to his later fascinations with "anything that moved," including minibikes, go-carts, motorcycles, and cars.

Berg's parents divorced early in his life. His mother, a real estate agent, taught Berg the fine arts of baking, cooking, and sewing. She also taught her sons early lessons in working hard and saving money. "If you wanted something in my house, you had to find a way to pay for it," he said. Berg earned his keep first with a newspaper route at age 10, and earned his first real paycheck as a bagger at Tom Metcalfe's Hilldale grocery store.

After receiving his master's degree in manufacturing systems engineering from UW-Madison, Berg did everything from building cars at [Mitsubishi](#) in Illinois to starting his own company, KADesign, LLC, in 1997. KADesign merged with Dane Manufacturing in 2003.

Under his leadership, Dane Manufacturing has flourished, but the past few years also took their toll. "Not everyone has been fortunate to make it through the Great Recession," Berg lamented. "When we came through, I had to lay off some workers. They didn't deserve it, and I felt terrible. So I bought another company (The Rockford Co.) and rolled it into Dane so I could get my 13 people back to work." Twelve still remain.

Acquisition has always been a part of Berg's growth strategy, even in tough times. He purchased companies in 2008 (Precision Fab), 2009 (The Rockford Co.), and within the last six months acquired two more Illinois companies, Austin Westran and Viking Metal Cabinet Co. He now spends three days a week in Illinois, and two days here tending over his flock (his companies now cumulatively produce \$22.5 million in sales).

Berg's glass is half-full. "Manufacturing is leading the economy out of the recession," he said. "Some are still licking their wounds, but most would say we're in robust times right now."

When he's in town, little else seems more important than Michelle, their three children, and enjoying life in Madison and on its lakes. But it's clear he misses his other family as well – his employees.

"I'm a lot like a farmer," Berg said. "I work really long hours and I'm gone a lot. But my hope is that as the

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businesses grow, stabilize, and mature, some of my day-to-day can ratchet back so I can be more in touch with my people."

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