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Fall 2020

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A Word from Our CEO

You are reading the first edition of The Beacon magazine. Thank you! We hope this becomes a valuable ongoing resource for you and your organization. The Beacon will be a quarterly, high quality print/electronic magazine, telling the stories of trusted leaders and organizations.

In 2020, businesses and brands face a fundamental reordering of priorities amid a global pandemic and societal response to systemic racism. In this environment, many employees and consumers are looking for businesses to act. According to a 2020 research project conducted by Edelman:

53% of respondents say 'whether you trust the company that owns the brand or brand that makes the product' is the second most important factor when purchasing a new brand. Trust is second only to price (64%). 74% say a brand's impact on society is a reason why brand trust has become more important.

Readers of The Beacon will learn from stories of building trust with customers, employees, and communities. The Beacon and BBB are here to help you, and those around you, succeed. We will feature timely, relevant issues for business and non-profit leadership, and the role of our brands and organizations in the communities we serve.

BBB Serving Western Michigan is also 4200 Accredited Businesses that agree to live by the BBB Standards of Trust. That is just the beginning. Here are a few of the other things we are up to in 2020:

- 120,000 online Individual Business Profiles and 40,000 Accredited Business Category Lists on average per month to consumers via bbb.org
- 700 "Get a Quote" opportunities to BBB Accredited Businesses on average per month
- Focusing on diversity and inclusion internally and externally, and providing training and programs for businesses to assist in this initiative
- Digitizing educational programs. There are now three versions of Scambusters for use in schools: in-person, live over Zoom and full video hosted online. We have a similar offering of Fighting Financial Fraud for adult audiences, with the goal of having a video version of all programming by the end of 2020.
- Webinars reaching thousands this year have provided vital information for businesses and non-profits during the pandemic
- Janay Brower selected as BBB Trust Award recipient honoring her for accomplishments in leadership trust, and honored at a virtual Trust Award Event in August
- Judging is underway for Torch Awards to honor excellence in business trust-building practices and accomplishments
- Three \$2000 scholarships awarded to high school seniors from Grand Rapids Christian, Niles, and Byron Center for their essays on building trust
- Fielded new Trust Lab research to gain a better understanding of the levels of trust in West Michigan, and specific to Quality Edge the feelings of customers about home improvement products and services

Please call me directly at 616-234-0569 to talk about what is on your mind; I would love to hear from you.

In Trust, Phil Catlett



BBB[®] BEACON

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BBB Vision

An ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other.

BBB Mission

To be the leaders in advancing marketplace trust.



COVID-19



Business Impact Report

Two wars are being waged on COVID-19 - controlling the spread of the virus, and minimizing the economic impact of the pandemic. This two-front battle is critical for many small business owners forced to balance safety and health with keeping businesses open and running.

To provide more insight on the successes in and challenges of this new landscape, Better Business Bureau conducted a pulse survey with nearly 1,000 BBB Accredited Businesses throughout the U.S.

Download the full BBB Impact Report online at: [BBB.org/businessimpact](https://www.bbb.org/businessimpact)



About the research

Data collected for the COVID-19 Business Impact Report include 938 different responses from BBB Accredited Businesses across North America. The margin of error is +/-3% at a 95% confidence level for consolidated findings. 99% of respondents are owners, co-owners, presidents, or CEOs of companies.

Five Ways to Strengthen Your Business

Although the pandemic is far from over, many businesses are focused on how to make the second half of 2020 a success. Attracting customers, building relationships, and supporting the community are the top takeaways for small business owners surveyed by BBB.

No one knows what the future holds, but businesses can get on the right track and be better prepared to meet new customer demands and establish trust. Here are some ideas:

- 1 Create/Update Business Profile** - With over 108 million customer inquiries at BBB.org so far this year, businesses can get in front of more customers by being listed in the BBB Directory. As a BBB Accredited Business, you can optimize your business profile page and have access to the BBB Accreditation Seal, making it easier for customers to find and trust you.
- 2 Communicate with Your Customers** - By being transparent and responsive, businesses can gain a greater understanding of their customers and their needs. BBB Accredited Businesses make a commitment to do both - establishing trust and value in the marketplace.
- 3 Embrace the BBB Standards for Trust** - Trust is a cornerstone of any successful business and at the core of BBB. Differentiate your business from others by embracing BBB's eight standards, and give your customers an added level of trust and confidence before and after purchase.
- 4 Support the Community** - Businesses that reinvest and give back to their communities commit to their customers and their families. Giving can open many doors and is often a critical step in building trust.
- 5 Market Your Accreditation** - The need for trust has never been greater. Get in front of customers by marketing your accreditation and ensuring your business's commitment to building trust. With more than 400,000 BBB Accredited Business across North America, now is a prime time to consider BBB Accreditation for your business.

BBB is committed to providing guidance to all businesses impacted by the pandemic and transitioning to new business models and a changing environment. 🍷



V E S T ATM

S T E E L S I D I N G

At Quality Edge, we love the seemingly never-ending challenge of building. It's in these challenges that we find our inspiration. Our newest product, Vesta, is a steel planking system inspired by the sleek aesthetic and weather-tight performance of shiplap. This bold and brave siding is born to turn heads. With eight interchangeable solid hues and four versatile and variegated woodgrains to choose from, styling options are limitless.



Vesta Steel Siding[®] shown in:
414 Ironstone & 482 Gilded Grain

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MAXIMIZE *your* ACCREDITATION



by **Rocky Khnouf**

*Director of Advertising Sales
& Account Management*

Far too often businesses watch customers leave and hope they take the time to go online and leave a good review. Hope is not a strategy. Instead, use the tools you already have available to guide those happy customers to a place where they can tell the world about your business.

Your BBB can help. Take advantage of the free Review Solution app for Accredited Businesses included with your Accreditation. It's a simple, downloadable mobile app that makes leaving a review on **bbb.org** easy for your customers and helps promote your business.

Here's how:

1. Download the FREE app and assign it a device key
2. Your staff uses the app to send a text to the consumer
3. The consumer receives the text, opens it, writes a review and then submits, all from their phone.
4. After the verification process is complete (usually 3-5 days) the review will be available to the public on your BBB Business Profile.

The BBB Customer Review Difference:

- BBB processes customer reviews in an ethical, fair, unbiased manner and we do it consistently.
- BBB of Western Michigan evaluates every customer review before posting them.
- You can challenge the identity of the reviewer before the review is posted.
- BBB does not post any anonymous reviews.
- Every submitted review is sent to the business before posting to our website
- Protects the identity of the submissions by not posting personally identifiable information.
- Validates the email address of all reviewers.

BBB Serving Western Michigan always works with both parties to help resolve any issues that arise, supporting consumer concerns and advocating for trustworthy businesses.

So, take advantage of this Accreditation benefit, it will only serve to help your business! Please feel free to contact me—Rocky Khnouf—directly at **Rocky@westernmichigan.bbb.org** if you need help. 📞



Ready to get started?

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BBB[®] Wise Giving Alliance Standards *for* Charity Accountability

Fostering Integrity and Building Confidence in Nonprofit Organizations

by Janet Zahn, *BBB Board member and Campaign Director for Kennari Consulting*

Nonprofit organizations play a vital role in our community. So shouldn't they be run with sound and ethical business practices? And shouldn't they be recognized for meeting rigorous standards? While for-profit businesses have long recognized the value of Better Business Bureau (BBB) accreditation, nonprofits are also wise to seek accreditation. Today's donors are sophisticated and regularly seek out third party information on organizations as they consider who to support. They understand that charities are businesses and, as such, should choose ethical business practices. Along with Charity Navigator and Guide Star, the BBB forms a third, recognized source of evaluation available to the donor community. Formed by the Wise Giving Alliance, the BBB has been administering the Charity Review program for more than a decade. It was created to assist donors in making educated giving decisions and to help build public confidence in nonprofits. Organizations must meet a set of 20 standards to gain accreditation and be listed on the BBB website. Accreditation is free for nonprofits, and those that wish to use the BBB Seal on their website or printed materials can license the use for a small fee.

Organizations that gain accreditation have the benefit of being able to promote their achievement in meeting the 20 Standards. Additionally, they are eligible to be recognized through the BBB's Torch Awards. The BBB promotes Torch Award winners with a video highlighting their mission.



The 20 Standards take a close look at how organizations are governed and spend money, truthfulness in fundraising, and transparency. Standards are broken up into the following sections:

Governance & Oversight

Organizations are required to take an inventory of how the board functions to ensure appropriate oversight and freedom from conflicts of interest or self-dealing. These standards involve CEO review, board policies, membership, and meetings.

Measuring Effectiveness

Nonprofits must implement a policy of reviewing mission achievement and planning for how to make improvements as needed. These standards seek to ensure that clear goals and objectives are in place with honest assessment of how effective the organization is in meeting them.

Finances

Charities should spend funds honestly, prudently, and in accordance with statements made in fundraising appeals. These standards ensure that the organization doesn't accumulate and hoard money rather than spending it on the mission, and that the budget is accurate as well as available upon request. This section also recognizes the need for charities to invest in their infrastructure.

Fundraising

Organizations are required to have fundraising appeals to the public that are accurate and honest. These standards ask for annual reporting, privacy policies, and clear disclosure of terms in cause marketing or third-party fundraising.

BBB Serving Western Michigan is dedicated to supporting charities in the region in gaining accreditation. Staff outreach helps encourage applications, and they can offer assistance to organizations as they assemble all the required information. In this way, the BBB is an advocate for building trust and confidence in the nonprofit sector, just as it does for businesses. 🦋

BBB
Torch
Awards
for Ethics
2016 Recipient



MAXIMUM

BBB Accreditation Tips: **Utilizing the BBB® Business Logo**

EFFECT

When it comes to EverDry Waterproofing in Western Michigan, there is no doubt the company is a proud Better Business Bureau accredited business. “Anything that has the EverDry logo has

the BBB logo,” says owner and general manager Rob VanSuilichem. “I credit a good portion of my business to Better Business Bureau Accreditation and that support.”

When he says “everything” he isn’t kidding. Every vehicle, business card, invoice and page on the website features the accredited business logo. The logo is included on every promotional item and display used at events and trade shows. Every employee shirt proudly proclaims that EverDry is a winner of a BBB Torch Award for Ethics, and the BBB Accredited Business logo is prominently displayed all over the company office in Wyoming, MI. “Most people do their homework before they call these days,” says VanSuilichem. “If you don’t take the time to support your reputation you are going to fall behind, no matter your industry.”

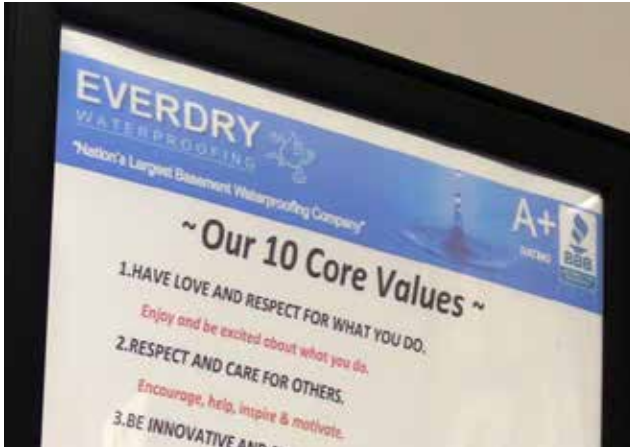


At EverDry, the company has created a set of core values based in part on BBB accreditation standards. Framed posters of those values can be found hanging all around the office. Featured in the top corner of each is the BBB accredited business logo. That same list is presented to customers and prospective employees.

“As part of our interview we talk about the BBB.” The goal, VanSuilichem says, is to make sure employees know they will be responsible for meeting a high set of standards. Standards he ties back to his BBB Accreditation. “It is peace of mind for our customers and our employees; current and new.”

“If you don’t take the time to support your reputation you are going to fall behind, no matter your industry.”

— Rob VanSuilichem



So what does VanSuilichem say to newly accredited businesses who wonder if the time spent incorporating the BBB logo and tools into their business is worth it? “For me, its no different than learning how to

do a waterproofing system or working with a customer. It’s an investment into your business,” he says. “The return on that investment of time is unlimited opportunities.”

Accredited businesses with questions about the resources available from the BBB and how to use BBB accredited business tools can contact Rocky Khnouf at rocky@westernmichigan.bbb.org

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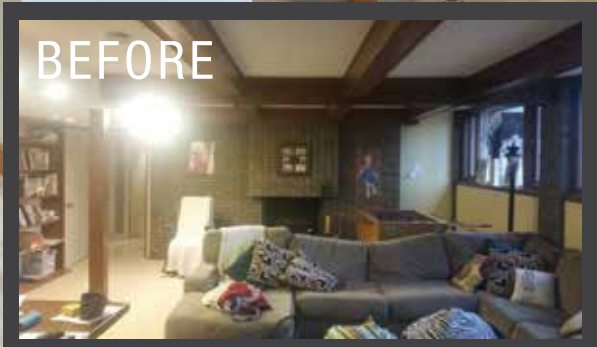
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Battle Creek

Auto Source of West Michigan, Inc., Coopersville

Bessey Tool & Die, Inc., Sparta

Bieri Auto Body, Inc., Lowell

Bouma Brothers Landscape, Byron Center

Carmichael Heating & Air Conditioning
North Muskegon

Chaney Excavating, Inc., Cedar Springs

Coloma Watervliet Area Chamber of Commerce, Coloma

**Cooper - Carlson Heating &
Air Conditioning, Inc.**, Stevensville

Critter Control of Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids

Crystal Automation Systems, Inc., Stanton

Diesel Injection Service, LLC, Grand Rapids

Dykstra Agency, Inc., Grand Rapids

Expert Coating Company, Inc., Grand Rapids

Fleetwood Mechanical Services, Bloomingdale

Four Seasons Spa & Pool Services, Coloma

Fox Pools, LLC, Comstock Park

Frankenmuth Mutual Insurance Company
Frankenmuth

Greenville Truck & Welding, Greenville

Hamill's Floor Covering, Inc., Petoskey

Heartwood Custom Builders, Inc., Honor

Kane Heating & Ventilating Company, Charlotte

Ken Coryell Trucking, Inc., Ionia

Lakeshore Property Management, Inc., Holland

Larry T. Schaefer, Inc., Dewitt

Locey Swim & Spa Company, Portage

Midwest Juice, Grand Rapids

Mt. Pleasant Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc.
Mount Pleasant

Northern Tower Erection Company, Traverse City

Spectrum Tours, Inc., Grand Rapids

The Pool Doctor, LLC, Traverse City

TLC Automotive, Holland

VanKempen Electric, Inc., Walker

Warner Norcross & Judd, LLP, Grand Rapids

Waterscapes Unlimited, Inc., Grawn



THANK YOU for helping to make Western Michigan
a trustworthy place to do business.



BBB[®] ENGAGING *in* NORTHERN MICHIGAN

by **Phil Catlett**, *President of the BBB Serving Western Michigan*

BBB Serving Western Michigan's mission includes building trust for consumers, businesses, and non-profits spread out over 38 counties stretching from Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Branch counties on Michigan's southern border, up to Emmet, Cheboygan, and Presque Isle counties to the north. 350 miles north to south, and up to 120 miles east to west.

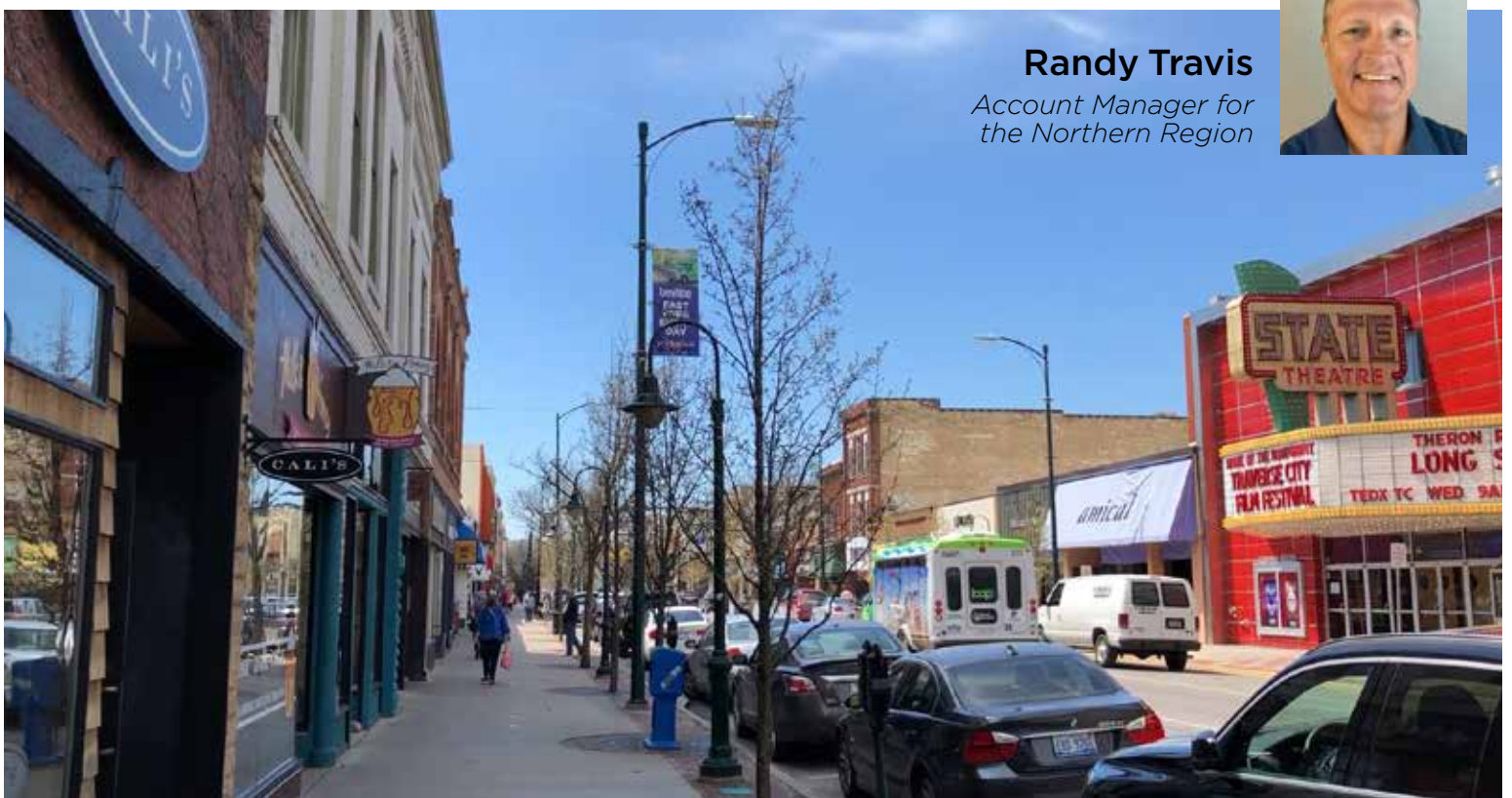
Our staff and board continually seek wisdom and explore initiatives to answer this question: "How do we best serve the 3 million people and the 75,000 businesses and non-profits we exist to help?" We want to, and need to, be local. Doing so is vital, because by truly knowing and understanding our communities and businesses,

BBB will succeed. Our office is centrally located, but with a large service area, distance is a concern. There are 880 BBB Accredited Businesses in northern Michigan, with 23% of them located in Grand Traverse County. BBB's Board of Directors recently endorsed hiring a local representative for the Northern portion of our service area to engage more effectively with these businesses, and others seeking accreditation. When this magazine reaches you, our new Account Manager for the Northern Region, Randy Travis, may have already reached out to you! Our hope is that the success of this position will allow BBB to replicate the program in other parts of the service area.

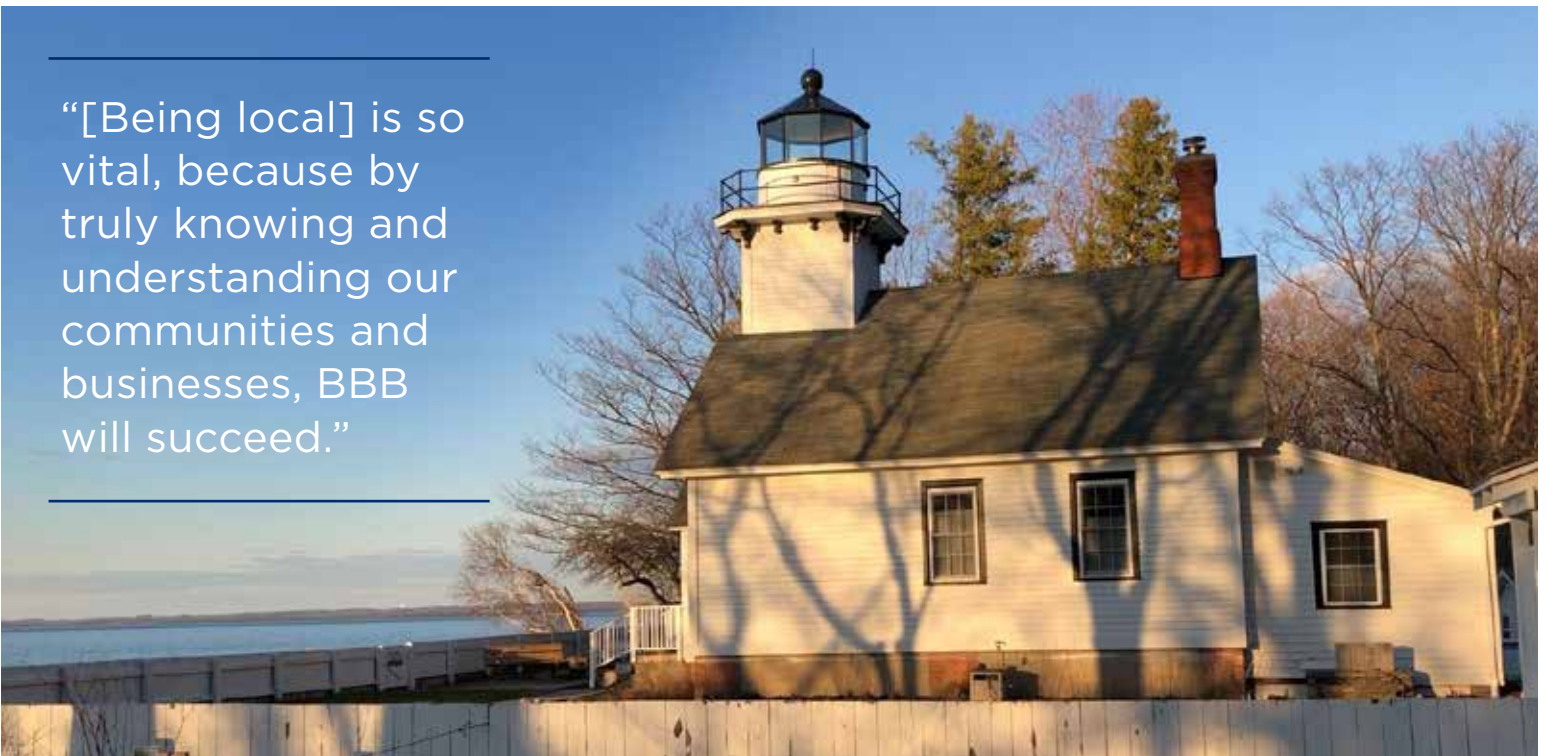


Randy Travis

*Account Manager for
the Northern Region*



“[Being local] is so vital, because by truly knowing and understanding our communities and businesses, BBB will succeed.”



Two businesses in Northern Michigan have earned coveted BBB Torch Awards in recent years, honoring their trust building practices. Stardust Memorials and Team Bob's have shined in their trust building impact internally and externally. That's why we asked them to serve on a Northern Michigan advisory group.

This group of business owners helps BBB understand how we can best serve the region. They include:

- Jeff Armour - Armour Siding Co.**
- Al Bennett - Natural Candy Store**
- Brett Dense - Sage Wealth Planning**
- Stephen Ezell - Selestial Soap,
MemberBox, MyGreenFills**
- Mickey Graham - Traverse City Pit Spitters**
- Kathleen Hyland - Bay View Flooring**
- Danielle LaJoie - Team Bob's**
- Gary Poynter - Selestial Soap**
- Jordan Lindberg - Stardust Memorials
and E Fulfillment**
- Bob O'Hara - Home Builders Association**
- Chris Wood - Team Bob's**

If you have an interest in joining this group, please let us know!

There is a lot more going on in Northern Michigan for BBB. We collaborated with Traverse Connect, Munson Healthcare, and the Grand Traverse County Health Department in the spring of 2020, providing a free webinar where we explained the steps businesses should be taking to ensure they protected our communities as we all got back to work. In the 2019-2020 school year BBB presented our Scambusters presentations at several area schools, including Cadillac High School and Traverse City Christian High School. The program continues this year with a free classroom and online option for schools.

Soon, Northern Michigan will host its own BBB Torch Awards for Ethics presentation, honoring local businesses and nonprofits. This is an exciting time for the Better Business Bureau, and we are thrilled to connect with Northern Michigan businesses.

If you would like to get involved, or have suggestions for us, please reach out to me by email at phil@westernmichigan.bbb.org.



Meet the 2020 Trust Award Winner **JANAY BROWER**

by **Tiffany Ewigleben**
Digital Marketing Coordinator



Brower is the founder of Public Thread, a community-based upcycling company that takes scrap and surplus textiles and turns them into accessories, bags and other products. Located in Grand Rapids, Public Thread is a company founded on the value of honoring the people who make, wear and use their products. Upholding a triple bottom line, they are dedicated to caring for each other, reducing their environmental impact, and building a successful business that pays living wages to all their employees.

“We need to showcase that business is about doing things the right way, to care about people, to care about the earth and to care about each other in the process...”

— *Janay Brower*

The Better Business Bureau Serving Western Michigan had the distinct pleasure of honoring Mrs. Janay Brower with the third annual BBB Trust Award at a virtual celebration held August 13th, 2020.

The BBB Serving Western Michigan presents this award to honor a business or nonprofit leader that exemplifies honesty, integrity, transparency, and creates an impact - in their community and at their organization. All of these are factors that contribute to creating a trustworthy marketplace. Brower embodies all these characteristics, and is a driven and passionate advocate for making her community a better and more equitable place to live, work and thrive.

PUBLIC
Thread

Janay’s journey to starting Public Thread in 2016 was inspired by her personal and professional experiences. Growing up in Grand Rapids and then moving to a suburb outside of the city during high school made her aware of the significant differences and inequalities between locations that are only a few miles apart. Her world view shifted towards justice work, and after college, she spent 13 years in the public and nonprofit sectors on community-level systems change. She has worked in

youth development and after school programming for K-12, housing, homelessness, affordable housing, and creating effective system responses for the basic and essential needs of children and families in the city of Grand Rapids.

Public Thread operates from the perspective of the triple bottom line - people, the planet and profit are parts of a whole and are all equally important when measuring the success of the business. Paying a living wage to talented individuals who have often underutilized skills, re-sourcing and up-cycling textiles locally which keeps them from ending up in a landfill, and collaborations with local businesses and designers on product design, and production of their sewn products are all part of the sustainable focus of her company.



going to do that work in the right way. Janay is that. There couldn't be a better person for a Trust Award in my mind."

"Janay is not only honest herself, but also creates accountability in our community to be honest and transparent about the systemic issues that face us, especially people of color," says Rep. Rachel Hood. "She seeks out data and uses that data to enhance transparency into issues that would not otherwise be noticed or fully understood. As a result, and often with a lot of time and energy donated by this tenacious leader, her efforts have had immense impact on

Speaking after being presented the award, Brower was a little choked up about the honor. "It does mean a lot, after nearly 20 years of work in the community. This is definitely not something I would have expected, or anticipated or needed. I do this work because the people in this community really matter," she said.

"Her efforts have had immense impact on our toughest, most complex societal issues. The integrity that Janay brings to her work is unmatched."

— Rachel Hood, State Representative

"We need to showcase that business is about doing things the right way, to care about people, to care about the earth and to care about each other in the process and to have fun, hopefully, while doing it." Janay explained.

our toughest, most complex societal issues. The integrity that Janay brings to her work is unmatched. I have watched her look honestly at the failures of our systems, and fight for fixes against all odds."

To show support for this exemplary leader and the work she does in the community, you can visit the website of Public Thread at: <https://publicthread.co/>. 📌

Brower started Public Thread because she cares about the community and about the world around her. She is a force for change, a fierce advocate for social justice, and truly deserving of the Trust Award. Her colleagues think so too.

Daniel Williams, 2019 Trust Award winner and President of WMCAT, shared "For this type of award you talk about authenticity, you talk about staying true to who you are and what you value and working every single day to make that work. [You talk about having] this vision for something, this vision for a company that is



A 50 Year Track Record of TRUST

2020 IS A MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY for two Western Michigan businesses, as they celebrate 50 years of Better Business Bureau Accreditation. Fifth Third Bank and WOOD TV 8 both became accredited businesses in 1970. Both businesses were honored at the BBB Trust Award Celebration in August. Before that ceremony, the BBB sat down with leaders for both businesses to discuss the companies' service to the community and a decades-long dedication to trust. The following conversations have been lightly edited for clarity and length.



5/3 Bank: Trust is Not Built Overnight A conversation with Tom Welch

Regional President for Fifth Third Bank West Michigan

BBB: Fifth Third has been an Accredited Business for 50 years. Why was pursuing this accreditation so important back then?

Welch: When you think about Fifth Third, we feel our purpose is to strengthen families and build a stronger community. In order to do that, you have to have built trust with the community. That trust is not built overnight. It comes from daily transactions over many, many years building that trust. Similarly, accreditation from the Better Business Bureau is not earned overnight. It is a result of many, many years of doing the right thing. The seal of approval from the Better Business Bureau has stood the test of time. It means the same today as it did 50 years ago.

BBB: 50 years is a long time. How has the bank changed over this time period?

Welch: I haven't been around for 50 years, but maybe 30. During this period, we have experienced some big challenges not seen since 1929. 1990 was the real estate crisis and the recession. You had the greed in the stock market of the 90s, Y2K and the dot-com bubble, 9/11, the great recession of 2008, and now we're in a pandemic. I think what that has done is really give us a much clearer picture of who we are and who we need to be for the community. That is, an institution that the community can trust to get through all of those challenges, weather the storms, be ready to listen to them and truly provide smart solutions for all of their financial needs.

BBB: What does it mean to Fifth Third Bank to be recognized as a Trustworthy organization?

Welch: To be a trustworthy organization is something we are proud of, and the Better Business Bureau seal of approval is really a validation of that. It allows us to highlight and honor one of the bank's core values, which is "act with integrity". That means tell the truth. That means to be transparent in everything we do. That means do the right thing. That is what we've been doing here for 167 years. It's what our employees are committed to doing every single morning when they get up. The validation of this through the Better Business Bureau shows that we can achieve our vision, which is to be the one bank people most value and trust.

BBB: What does it mean that Fifth Third has been able to uphold these standards for 50 years?

Welch: It means we've been consistent. That's one of the biggest pieces, I think, of trust. You can be trustworthy for a day. You can be trustworthy for a week. You can even be trustworthy for a year. But can you do it for 50 years? Can you do it with as large an organization as we have? If you can do that, I think that shows your commitment to it. That is part of the fabric of who you are within the community and it can be trusted. 📌



WOOD TV: Maintaining Trust is Critical

A conversation with Julie Brinks

*Vice President and General Manager of Nexstar Broadcast Group for West Michigan
(including WOOD TV, WOTV and WXSP)*

BBB: You are celebrating 50 years of BBB Accreditation this year. What does that honor mean to WOOD TV?

Brinks: It's definitely an honor to be recognized by the Better Business Bureau for 50 years of accreditation. That's not an easy thing for a business to achieve. Being able to display the ideals of the Better Business Bureau and the expectations for accreditation of integrity, business conduct, and customer service, those are really wonderful things to aspire to and achieve.

BBB: 50 years is a long time. Tell us about WOOD TV and that relationship with the BBB.

Brinks: We have a really strong relationship with the Better Business Bureau. And it's actually twofold because our business is a bit twofold. We have an advertising business which is how we make our income and operate as a business in the community. We are a local TV broadcast and digital advertising partner with businesses of all shapes and sizes in our area. We also have a long-standing reputation as a leading news organization serving West Michigan. And so the public sees our news organization every day putting the stories and information out there as well as the work we do with our community outreach. In our relationship with the Better Business Bureau, their accreditation validates that we are a great partner for businesses in the region. The BBB is also a vital partner with our news operation, and that partnership ensures that critical news and information to protect consumers is known and broadcast to our community. I'm very proud of all of the employees that work at WOOD TV, from the news anchors & reporters that everybody sees on the air every day, to the staff members supporting those efforts. We have 35 team members on our news, sports and weather staff that people would recognize from being on-air. We have another 120 employees behind the scenes doing a lot of work each and every day; from engineering and IT, to business administration, to our sales and marketing executives, working with our over 3000 clients and organizations in the region. We have a deep level of expertise within that staff.

BBB: In light of the new world we live in with COVID-19, what have been some challenges and highlights of delivering the news today?

Brinks: I believe that our role in the local community is even more critical than ever during these kinds of days. As broadcasters, we're considered an essential worker group. As such, we are responsible for emergency communications and are authorized to operate by the Federal Communications Commission in that capacity. That has really put upon us a lot of responsibility to ensure that we're there every single day, delivering information that's accurate and timely to our community, while keeping our teams in a safe environment inside the station, and out in the field. That's certainly been challenging in the last several months, and the team has risen to that challenge with excellence.

BBB: What is the most exciting aspect of being part of the WOOD TV family?

Brinks: I think the most exciting thing for us over the last six months or so is the advancement of our digital initiatives here at the station. We've expanded the team members that are devoted exclusively to our digital channels and we are delivering more content than ever on our weather app. and on our website. As a consequence of those efforts, our audiences have grown significantly both on-air and on-line. We have some exciting projects coming soon that will provide much more live streaming of content on the web. Technology and delivery systems constantly change, and that means more ways to distribute our content and reach more people with news and information that is relevant to their daily lives.

BBB: What are some of the things that have been important over the years to maintain trust and engagement with your viewers?

Brinks: Maintaining trust with our viewers is absolutely critical. And a lot of what we need to focus on is ensuring that we have taken enough time to get into the depth of the story and to ensure that we have looked at all aspects of that story for accuracy and perspective. And so really that's a part of building trust in our news operation, when people know that they can tune into us and go to our website to get the full story and get all aspects of that story. That's really critical for building and maintaining trust. 📺

2020 BBB[®] TRUST SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



by **Troy Baker**, *BBB Educational Foundation Director*

THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU SERVING WESTERN MICHIGAN awarded three \$2,000 scholarships to members of the class of 2020 to attend the college of their choice this fall. With the generous support of Meijer and Fifth Third Bank, the BBB solicited applications from students across the bureau's 38-county service area. As part of the application, students each wrote an essay about the importance of honesty, transparency, integrity and impact and how they exemplify these traits. A committee of BBB board members and business leaders evaluated the more than 100 applications and selected three recipients. These students were each presented their checks in July, and were celebrated at the BBB Trust Award ceremony in August.

Maeli Rogers *Niles High School*

When her classes went virtual during the last quarter of the semester, Maeli Rogers, 2020 graduate of Niles High School, went above and beyond her peers. Due to the sudden shift to virtual classes amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, Niles High School announced that students would receive the same grade in the last quarter as they did in the previous quarter.

While many of her peers let their schoolwork go, Rogers took it upon herself to work just as hard as she did in the previous semesters. "Throughout every other semester I put so much effort into my schoolwork so I could get the grades that I wanted, so to just get an A by doing nothing was not an option for me," she said.

"The choices we make, regardless of their short term effects, make up who we are as individuals."

— *Maeli Rogers*

Integrity and trust are qualities that Rogers values. She describes integrity as "doing the right thing even when no one is looking." In her essay she wrote, "...the choices we make, regardless of their short term effects, make up who we are as individuals." Rogers sees trust as a necessary tool for groups to collaborate with one another.



In addition to her studies, Rogers was on her school's Cross Country team and was enrolled in Professional Health Careers Academy. In Professional Health Careers Academy, students have the opportunity to job-shadow with health professionals. At the end of the school year, Rogers put together a video of herself and her classmates thanking the healthcare professionals.

In her spare time, Rogers enjoys crafting and music, playing the piano and recorder. Rogers will be attending the University of Michigan this fall.

Danielle Fedrigo *Grand Rapids Christian High School*

In her last semester at Grand Rapids Christian High School, Danielle Fedrigo had the opportunity to participate in a classroom internship. During her internship, Fedrigo assisted a teacher in a freshman class for speech, composition, and literary genres. Fedrigo has a passion for teaching others and she says teaching this class was one of her favorite memories from high school.

“Through transparency, honesty, and integrity we’re able to build trust, which allows us to have an impact...”

— Danielle Fedrigo

“I’ve always loved school myself and I’ve had many teachers that have impacted my life, and so the chance to do that for other people is amazing to me,” she says. Fedrigo is excited to continue growing her teaching skills in the future at the University of Rochester, where she will be studying English and American Sign Language and Secondary Education.

Fedrigo says that trust and integrity are vital in teaching. “If you don’t have trust with someone,



it’s almost impossible, I think, for them to learn well when you’re working together...through transparency, honesty, and integrity we’re able to build trust, which allows us to have (an) impact and allows them to learn,” she says.

Her passion for American Sign Language (ASL) began five years ago when she first took an ASL class in school. In the future, Fedrigo would like to use her ASL skills to interpret or teach others. She chose the University of Rochester due to their well-respected ASL program and connection to the deaf community.

Brooke Johnson *Byron Center High School*

For Brooke Johnson, a 2020 graduate of Byron Center High School, trust and integrity are crucial. For the past eight years she has served in the children’s ministry at her church. She mentors a group of kindergarten girls each Sunday, working with them on faith and values.

“They know they can depend on me,” she says. “It’s rewarding to know that I’m able to make an impact on other peoples’ lives and that they trust me to do that.”

Along with being someone who can be trusted, Johnson says it is important to her that she is honest about her passions and values. Her love of science and math has led her to pursue an engineering



“It’s rewarding to know that I’m able to make an impact on other peoples’ lives and that they trust me to do that.”

— Brooke Johnson

degree in college. With that goal set, Johnson writes in her essay that it was suggested she form a Society of Women Engineers club at her high school. “I knew it would look good on college applications, but, stepping back, I knew it wasn’t where my passions lie,” she writes. “To take this role would be insincere and out of line with what resonates within me. I’m glad I’ve learned this early in life, because it will keep me from following paths that aren’t fulfilling to me.”

For her, trust and ethics are more than just the impression made on others, they are also a big part of how you see yourself.

“It’s hard to be proud of what you accomplish if you’re not doing things sincerely.”

Outside the classroom, Johnson played soccer for Byron Center. She plans to attend Purdue University to study engineering.

TAKING IT ONLINE

by Troy Baker

BBB Educational Foundation Director

With large gatherings off-limits, organizations embrace virtual fundraisers and awards

It was going to be a beautiful event. 150 people, dinner and a bar. The MC was booked, negotiations were underway with a keynote speaker. The schedule included awards and speeches, videos and a fundraising push. The Better Business Bureau Trust Award was first presented during an open house two years ago celebrating the new offices of the BBB Serving Western Michigan. Last year the event moved inside the building, with a short ceremony and about 40 invited guests. This year we were going big.



Then COVID-19 changed it all. Like a lot of nonprofit organizations, the Better Business Bureau Educational Foundation was forced to change the way it does events. For months we had made plans to honor a community leader and others, and hopefully tie in some fundraising for the nonprofit arm of the BBB. But how do you do that when you can't have more than a handful of people in a room together? It is a question being asked by nonprofits and other organizations here in Western Michigan and all across the country. Restrictions due to COVID-19 have had a major impact on how we all do our work, and how nonprofits hold the events that fund their operations. For most organizations the answer is simple, even though the execution may not be; embrace technology.

One Night of Hope Becomes Three

Every year the Night of Hope Auction is the biggest fundraiser for Wings of Hope Hospice in Allegan. Featuring a gymnasium full of donated items and food, 500 people gather to support this nonprofit organization and take part in a live auction, silent auction and raffle. "The auction itself is our single biggest fundraising event," says Theresa Lynn, the organization's Executive Director. In March it became clear the May 16th event was not going to be able to be held as normal. Lynn's staff began researching online auction platforms, and made the change. The one-night in-person event turned into a three-day online auction. "I'd call it a success," Lynn says. The event didn't raise as much money as it had in the past, but some of the shortfall was offset by lower expenses. "Communication is critical," she says. The online format wasn't just new to Wings of Hope, it was new to the majority of the organization's donor base as well. The organization did a lot of work to make the process easy, but also educate donors on what to expect, and how to navigate the modified event.

Wings of Hope Hospice

Bidding begins Thursday, May 14 and goes through Saturday, May 16 at 10pm

SAVE THE DATE

Night of HOPE

Online Auction

269-686-8659
Details on Registration and Bidding at
www.wingsofhopehospice.com



Celebrating Trust in a Virtual World

As for the BBB Trust Award Celebration, the ballroom full of people was exchanged for a live internet stream from the BBB office. Three award recipients, an MC and a limited BBB staff streamed the event live, mixing video presentations with live acceptance speeches from a podium. BBB leaned on a staffer's former TV production experience and contracted out some of the video production. The online audience wasn't as large as it would have been in person, but the event has the benefit of living online, where others who couldn't view it live can go back and watch on their own schedule. With sponsorships and limited expenses, the event saw money left over to support the BBB Educational Foundation. Live streaming was one of those things the BBB had discussed, but never took the steps to implement. COVID-19 forced the BBB to make the move. After the success of the Trust Award stream, the BBB intends to stream future events as well, even after pandemic restrictions are lifted. 📺

After the success of the Trust Award stream, the BBB intends to stream future events as well.

Charity Art Auction Goes Online

Exalta Health in Grand Rapids had a similar issue. The organization's annual ArtFeast event features food, live artists; and an auction of works created by a mix of artists, businesses and community leaders and local celebrities. Held in June, it had to move online as well. Instead of an evening event lasting a couple hours, the online auction ran the entire day. The live artists joined by video to answer questions and interact with bidders. From advertising to step-by-step video tutorials, Exalta did a lot of work to educate the public and participants about how the new format will look and run. "Build up the purpose and be very clear how it works," says Exalta Health President Ed Postma. "Find something relevant that people will get involved in, and try to find some celebrity help." The Exalta event didn't raise as much as it did in 2019, but the online event also cost less to run.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN GOING ONLINE

It is clear that organizations will continue to feel their way through how to hold events in an uncertain climate, navigating rules and regulations and the public's comfort for in-person events. The following advice comes from those who have already held online events:

1. Be clear about the goal of your event.
2. Accept that it will be different, and be willing to temper expectations as possible.
3. Embrace technology.
4. Find your in-house experts. Often staff members have untapped experience or expertise.
5. Do your research on the platforms and programs that will make your event work.
6. Communication with all stakeholders is key. This includes why the event is important, the organization's goals and needs, and exactly how the event will work.

Above all, be honest with yourself and your audience. Most organizations don't have large budgets and experience with online events. One of the fastest ways to build trust is by showing vulnerability. With proper communication, your audience will understand and overlook some small setbacks.

INVEST WISELY +

Understand the Risk in Your Portfolio During a Pandemic *by Ryan Diepstra*

Two weeks into the year 2020, there was a lot to be optimistic about. The United States and China entered a “phase one” trade agreement as the world’s two biggest economies began to rein in a more than 18-month trade war. Stock markets reacted positively over the world as tensions eased and optimism increased. On February 7, the Labor Department announced that the United States gained 225,000 nonfarm payrolls with a 3.6% unemployment rate. Markets continued to show strength and on February 19, the S&P 500 rose to record highs. It marked yet another strong day over the course of a remarkable 401% return since the March 9, 2009 low.

Then, we all woke up on Monday, February 24 with the Dow Jones Industrial Average futures down more than 900 points. Authorities in Italy announced closures in the north side of the country as the fear of the coronavirus spreading outside of China amplified. This fear was quickly turning into a reality as the coronavirus was rapidly becoming the most searched for word on Google. As data continued to compile, it was confirmed that the virus was already spreading across the United States and around the world. Global markets began to recognize what potential closures would do to the world’s largest economy. Fast forward 22 trading days later, and the markets were down almost 11,000 points and over 35% from the high, which was the fastest drop in the history of the markets!

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⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/378105/new-years-resolution/>

The Wall Street Journal reported¹ that 31% of investors at Fidelity between the ages of 65-69 sold all their stocks between February 20 and May 15. These investors likely sold at inopportune times in this range. Why would nearly a third of investors do such a thing? The answer is complex and unique for each respective individual, but I would suggest fear and emotion had a lot to do with this decision.

Three of my favorite quotes with timeless insight about investing are:

“The most important quality for an investor is temperament, not intellect.”

– WARREN BUFFETT

“The four most dangerous words in investing: ‘this time it’s different.’”

– SIR JOHN TEMPLETON

“In the financial markets, hindsight is forever 20/20, but foresight is legally blind. And thus, for most investors, market timing is a practical and emotional impossibility.”

– BENJAMIN GRAHAM

Unfortunately, average investors do not take these quotes to heart. The news media pounces on any negative news and social media exacerbates the reports. The recipe of fear and emotion may ultimately cause investors with well-balanced portfolios to make the worst financial mistake of their lives. These types of mistakes consistently lead to lower annual returns. In fact, a study² done by Dalbar Inc., a company which studies customer performance based on investor behavior, shows that the average investor earns less than average returns based on this type of behavior.

CENTENNIAL SECURITIES

For example, in the last two decades ending 12/31/15, the S&P 500 Index averaged an annual return of 9.85% while the average equity fund investor earned only 5.19%. While that may not seem like much of a difference, let's translate this into real dollars. Say you're 45 years old and have \$200,000 invested, save \$10,000 per year and plan on retiring in 20 years. At age 65, the portfolio would be worth \$1,872,360 based on a return of 9.85%. If we use the 5.19% figure, the same portfolio would be worth \$887,576 which is a difference of nearly a million dollars!

J.P. Morgan studied³ the time, diversification, and volatility of returns from 1950 to 2019 and the results showed that one-year returns in the S&P 500 have varied from -39% to +47% and

Staying invested clearly matters. Time in the market surpasses timing the market.

Staying invested clearly matters. Time in the market surpasses timing the market. So why do average investors continue to underperform?

(1) We live in a do-it-yourself (DIY) world and the internet is a complete database of how to build or repair just about anything. Don't believe me? Think of your to-do list at home. There is probably a YouTube video with clear instructions on every one of your projects. Why does this matter? Because average investors think they can build or repair their savings and retirement portfolios using the same database. Unfortunately, no matter how great of advice the internet provides, fear and emotion will continue to get in the way.

(2) Average investors have a hard time creating and sticking to a plan and ultimately give up. This sounds just like New Years' Resolutions goals, doesn't it? According to Statista⁴, a statistics portal, the #1 resolution for 2018 was to save more money. Unfortunately, more than 92% of resolutions fail by February. Having a trusted and reliable source to hold you accountable decreases the failure rate significantly.

When was the last time your financial advisor reviewed your investments to see if they align with your risk tolerance? What would a stress test look like against your current portfolio to assess the potential impact of economic scenarios? For example, what could happen to each of your investments if we had another recession, oil crash, inflation, etc.? If you own Mutual Funds or ETFs, do you understand which sectors you're invested in and if you're top heavy in a certain area?

Working with a trusted financial advisor can help guide you through this pandemic and market volatility in order to minimize or eliminate emotional investment decisions, as well as ensure you stay on course and remain accountable for achieving your long term financial goals. 🎯



Ryan Diepstra is a Principal and Senior Vice President at Centennial Securities, where his team will create a fully customized plan to suit your financial needs at any stage of life. To learn more, please visit www.centennialsec.com, email ryan@centennialsec.com

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BBB[®] Scambusters

by Troy Baker

BBB Educational Foundation Director

Teaching the Next Generation to be Savvy Consumers

“We have someone coming in today to speak with the class.” Thinking back to high school, those words from my teacher almost always came with dread. Guest speakers were rarely interesting. Instead, they were someone to tune-out and ignore while you got a day off from the usual school work. While a lot has changed since I was in high school, the student’s view on guest speakers remains pretty much the same. That is why the Better Business Bureau’s Scambusters program has been met with such enthusiasm from teachers. Set as a game, it teaches a valuable lesson while creating an interactive and competitive classroom environment. Instead of sitting and listening to a speaker, students are taking part in a contest. That active engagement allows the students to interact with the lessons and be invested in getting the answers correct. But even when students get an answer wrong, they are learning a valuable lesson.

How Does It Work?

Students in the class are divided into teams and presented a scenario. It can be an email, a social media post, a website offer or maybe a call or text message. The task: as a team, students must decide if the scenario is real or a scam. After deliberating, each team shares their answer and finds out if they are correct. The presenter then shares tips to help students distinguish between real and fake offers. Teams that get the answer correct roll a large foam die for points. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.



“Loved it! We would love to have Scambusters again to keep our students informed of what is happening at that level. It’s sad to know it happens, but we are extremely grateful to partner with you in this way.”

— Tyler VanSchepen

Superintendent Traverse City Christian Schools

It’s Harder Than It Sounds

“Who thinks scams are easy to spot?” the presenter asks every class. Invariably at least one hand goes up. A confident student who is sure they won’t have any problems with this contest. It is this student who usually falls for the most scams by the end of the hour. And they are not alone. Since the Western Michigan debut of the game in December 2018, no class has been perfect. Someone in the class always falls for at least one scam. Some examples often fool multiple teams or even the entire class. That is the point of the program. Scambusters uses real examples of scams that are affecting people in our community. And these students are prime targets. Many people think senior citizens are the primary target for scammers. But data from both the BBB and Federal Trade commission show young people are the most likely to fall victim to a scam. Lessons learned now can help prevent the loss of money in the future.

More Than Just Avoiding Scams

These lessons do more than just warn students about individual scams. Over the course of each hour-long presentation, you can see students become more discerning. They develop a healthy skepticism. It is this attitude that will serve them well as consumers. Cautious consumers will do more research in an effort to avoid being ripped off. This leads them to seek out trustworthy businesses with a strong track record of ethical business practices and customer service. This is good for them, and the marketplace as a whole. Scambusters helps lay a foundation for a generation of consumers who look for businesses that demonstrate the values advanced by the Better Business Bureau for more than 100 years. 📌

Growing Your Business *through* Diversity

by Troy Baker and Kiley Christian

“How do I get more business?” It’s a common question for business owners. Often it leads organizations to look at marketing or sales programs. But do you really look at who is on your team? The organizational makeup of your business, and the policies that support your staff, probably play a bigger role in business growth than you realize. The BBB recently spoke with two members of our board of directors about how building a more diverse and inclusive organization isn’t just good policy, it’s good business.

Diversity Can Expand Your Opportunities

“Diversity in the workplace will bring creativity and innovation,” says Bing Goei, a Kent County entrepreneur and member of the Better Business Bureau Serving Western Michigan Board of Directors.



Born in Indonesia, Goei moved to West Michigan at age 11. In 2001 he purchased Eastern Floral, a company started by the man who helped bring his family to the United States. “We made an intentional commitment to review our hiring process,” Goei says about the business. By better reflecting the community, Eastern

Floral has found new ways to serve its customers. “Because Eastern Floral has a Native American designer on its staff, we were able to fill a funeral order using (the family’s) stones and feathers in a respectful and culturally meaningful way,” says Goei. He also points to a strong number of Hispanic staff members who help fill orders for Spanish speaking customers. This multicultural workforce has also led to changes in the products offered. “Eastern Floral has diversified its gift lines so that it reflects the different tastes of our communities,” Goei explains. That diverse workforce, and the range of experience it provides, has helped Eastern Floral reach new customers and better serve its existing clients.



A Broader Market Means More Customers

Jessica Ann Tyson agrees that a diverse workforce can bring new opportunities for businesses. “Diversity builds your company’s reputation with a broader market, which equals more sales because you will have a more diverse market to cater to,” she says. Tyson has started multiple businesses in Grand Rapids, including The Candied Yam restaurant and the JA PR Group. She also serves on the BBB’s Board of Directors.

“Diversity builds your company’s reputation with a broader market, which equals more sales because you will have a more diverse market to cater to.”

— Jessica Ann Tyson

“Business leaders should keep in mind that a diverse environment fosters creative thinkers, leading to innovating business practices,” says Tyson. Diversity can also help your business connect with customers, and better understand and adapt to changing attitudes and events. “Your staff should also represent your clientele/customer base, as they can best relate and keep the business relevant,” Tyson says.

Change: It’s Already Here

Goei is quick to share statistics showing the racial and ethnic makeup of America is changing. He is adamant that businesses must adapt. Census data

“Consumers shop where they feel valued. No consumer wants to shop where they feel isolated and not wanted.”

— Bing Goei

continually shows the percentage of people who identify as white is declining, and the population identifying as non-white; including Black, Hispanic and Asian, continues to grow. These changes are especially evident in the younger generation. A recent Brookings Institute analysis of Census data finds; “In 2019, for the first time, more than half of the nation’s population under age 16 identified as a racial or ethnic minority.” This younger generation is more diverse than ever, and they will quickly become your customers, if they aren’t already. “As markets change due to demographic and cultural shifts, businesses will need staff that are able to adjust to those changes,” says Goei. National numbers are great, but what about Michigan? That same census data shows the transition in Michigan is slower than the national average, but the state is seeing the same demographic shift and has been for the past 20 years. Tyson believes businesses need to reflect this change in order to better serve their customers. “Having a diverse workplace makes for a creative and inclusive environment, meeting the challenging needs of the changing and growing culture,” she says. “Bottom line,” says Goei, “every business must adjust its business model to reflect the changing markets.”

The Time to Talk About Diversity is Now

Both Goei and Tyson have been long-time advocates for diversity and inclusion initiatives. They stress that for businesses that haven’t addressed these issues, the time to have a conversation is now. “Ultimately, the primary responsibility of management and staff is to ensure the sustainability and growth of the business,” says Goei. Both he and Tyson say it is a critical part of leading a business in 2020 and beyond. “Leaders make hard calls, that’s why we lead,” Tyson says. “It’s important to have these conversations BEFORE there’s a need to have the conversation; so that you can be prepared and make the best decisions.” They point out that customers and employees are paying attention. People want to know that they are welcome. For minority groups that are used to feeling isolated, seeing staff that looks like them can have an impact. “Consumers shop where they feel valued,” says Goei. “No consumer wants to shop where they feel isolated and not wanted.” Like any investment in your business, creating a diverse and inclusive business will likely take time and energy. But it is an investment that will pay off if done right.

HOW DO WE BEST SERVE YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS?

By Phil Catlett

A renewed national focus on social justice and diversity has led organizations across the country to assess their programs and policies, and your Better Business Bureau Serving Western Michigan (BBB) is no different. BBB has worked towards building a trustworthy marketplace for over a century, and we are dedicated to making sure we represent the diverse collection of businesses we serve.

We are examining how we operate as an organization. Is the BBB demonstrating the values we ask others to exemplify? Are we providing the right programming and resources to support better businesses, particularly relating to diversity and inclusion? These conversations are taking place in a deliberate way to ensure the answers we reach are representative of our community and our accredited businesses. To that end, we have engaged with our staff, creating a committee of team members from various backgrounds to advise the leadership team. This group is exploring best practices, and evaluating BBB policies and programming. Internally, we seek to foster an environment for our staff that is diverse, inclusive and welcoming of different backgrounds and viewpoints. As a membership organization, we want to build policies and programs that represent and support your business. We have engaged with our board of directors, seeking their advice and leadership on these issues, and begun discussions with other community organizations.

In the end our goal is three-fold. First, make sure the internal culture at the Better Business Bureau Serving Western Michigan is inclusive and reflects our community. Second, ensure the services and support we offer are relevant and meet the needs of our accredited businesses. And third, be proactive in initiatives that grow the number of businesses across Western Michigan that uphold the BBB values and standards that have been a benchmark of Better Business Bureau Accreditation for more than 100 years.

Your BBB accreditation gives you a stake in these decisions. We invite you to participate and join us in these discussions. You can share your thoughts by responding to the surveys sent by BBB, as those answers help guide us on the programming we provide. You can also reach out to BBB staff with your input or suggestions. By working together, we can make a better and more effective Better Business Bureau. 🍌



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BBB® TORCH AWARDS

Celebrate **Business Ethics**

by **Troy Baker**, *BBB Educational Foundation Director*

We all have our go-to businesses. Places that at some point did something special to earn your trust and loyalty. A shoe store that pointed out a sale you didn't see, a mechanic who was honest about the car repairs you needed and the ones that could wait, or a roofer who quickly patched a leak and then refused to take payment. Our community is full of amazing businesses that work every day to do the right thing. They work to serve their customers, while supporting their employees and their families. It seems like every week we hear about the scammers and rip-off artists. We don't hear enough about good companies that approach each customer with honesty and respect. The Better Business Bureau Torch Award for Ethics is one of the ways we can celebrate those local businesses and nonprofit groups that have earned our loyalty and respect.



“It’s significant. It says this is an organization that cares and is taking care of what it is supposed to,” says Ed Postma, President of Exalta Health in Grand Rapids. Exalta Health was a 2019 Torch Award recipient in a nonprofit category. “It tells people that you don’t have to worry about how your donor dollars are being used.”

The BBB traditionally honors winners at an event in Grand Rapids in November. However, in addition to the Grand Rapids celebration, this year BBB has divided its 38-county service area and will hold a second event in Traverse City to celebrate winners from Northern Michigan.

“[The Torch Award] is significant. It says this is an organization that cares and is taking care of what it is supposed to.”

— Ed Postma, President, Exalta Health

“We were honored to be last year’s recipient of this award and take a great deal of pride in being a company with a strong commitment to ethical practices,” says Danielle LaJoie, Vice President of Service and Administration at Team Bob’s in Traverse City. Team Bob’s was a 2019 Torch Award recipient. “We feel having this competition concentrated in our area will help to inform consumers of the many extraordinary and ethical local businesses in Northern Michigan.”

BBB Torch Awards serve as a way to recognize businesses and nonprofits for their work with customers, employees and the community. But just going through the process can have an added benefit. “The application process for the Torch Award of Ethics is a great opportunity for any company to work through, specifically by providing a chance to self-reflect and realign themselves with their core company values,” says LaJoie. “This process allowed our leadership team to strengthen our commitment to ethical practices within our company, the industry, and our community.”

The application deadline for 2020 submissions is September 18th. Winners will be celebrated in November. Look for their stories in the next edition of the BBB Beacon. 📖



WELCOME *to the* Newest Members of our BBB® Accredited Business Family

APRIL 2020

Bin There Dump That
Grand Rapids/Ada

Bluewater Hayes, Inc., Rockford

**Boelcke Heating, Air
Conditioning, and Plumbing**
Stevensville

Brigham Funeral Chapel
Lakeview

Butler Toweson & Payseno, PLLC
Parchment

Cerva Imprints, LLC, Grand Rapids

Cotner Law Offices, Grand Haven

D & L Construction, Elmira

Demonic Gaming, Muskegon

DeVine Mechanical, Alto

**Donald H. Dickerson,
Attorney at Law**, Marshall

Earth Fathers, LLC, Marshall

Elite Asphalt Maintenance, LLC
West Olive

Glass Traditions, LLC, Sturgis

**Gowens Good Cleaning Services,
LLC**, Kalamazoo

Greer Law Office, PC, Fremont

Harbor Financial Group, LLC
Grand Rapids

Hines Automotive Repair, LLC
Bellevue

Holstege Construction, LLC
Zeeland

In Time Events, Gaylord

**Kellogg Architecture Building &
Remodeling, LLC**, Climax

Kent County Plumbing
Grand Rapids

Kuiper Kraemer, PC, Grand Rapids

**Lake Michigan Construction
Company**, Rockford

Laker Prosthetics, LLC
Grand Rapids

LeafFilter of Michigan
Traverse City

Michigan Lakes Team, Inc.
Edwardsburg

**Mosquito Squad of West
Michigan Lakeshore**, Holland

**Nailed It Roofing & Remodel,
LLC**, Muskegon

New Life Seamless Gutters
Onaway

Select Finishes, Belding

Serenity Landscaping, LLC
Schoolcraft

**Specialized Plumbing Services,
Inc.**, Zeeland

Steege & Glista, PC, Oshtemo

Toburen Law PLC, Grand Rapids

Tree West Tree Service, LLC
Bangor

Waud & Lamb PLLC, Petoskey

Wood & Associates, PLLC
Lansing

MAY 2020

A A A Renovations, Vicksburg

AC Homesmi, LLC, Grand Rapids

Authentic Manufacturing
Grand Haven

B & R Auto Service, Inc.
Kentwood

Barron Title Agency, LLC
Charlevoix

**Big Mike's Tree Service &
Excavating, LLC**, Berrien Springs

**Birds Be Scared Window
Cleaning**, Kalkaska

Bluebridge Weddings & Events
Grawn

Cole Nissan, LLC
Kalamazoo

Cook Brothers Excavating, Inc.
Portland

**Curtis Shade Trees &
Landscaping**, Manistee

D Squared Contractors, LLC
Kalamazoo

Doak Law Firm, PC, Boyne City

FaciliSafety, Caledonia

Gator's Lawn Care Services
Grand Rapids

Greater Hopes, Inc., Wyoming

Group Vertical, LLC, Grand Rapids

Heavenly Guardian's Home Care
White Cloud

Holl Home Services, LLC, Marshall

Jonesy's, South Haven

Kerr Law Firm, PLLC, Mt. Pleasant

KMS Designs, Portage

Ladas and Hoopes, PLC
Muskegon

Lakeshore Home Buyer
Grand Haven

Law Office of Cathy Ann Raidna
Grand Rapids

Law Offices of David Leonardson
Gaylord

Messinger Law, PC, Spring Lake

Mr. Appliance of Mount Pleasant
Mount Pleasant

New Generation, Battle Creek

On The Spot Janitorial, LLC
Ludington

Prolific Gold Visuals
Grand Rapids

Regans Home Exteriors, Orleans

Renewed Homes, Grand Haven

Safeguard Pest Solutions, LLC
Muskegon

**Sanford Addiction Treatment
Centers**, Grand Rapids

Scale Campaign, Wyoming

Shine of Holland, Zeeland

Spectacular Lives, LLC
Grand Ledge

Start Painting, Kingsley

Stubborn Rebel Farms, Inc.
Cedar Lake

The Wealthy Street Law Firm
Grand Rapids

Timber Tops Tree Service, LLC
Farwell

Traverse Connect, Traverse City

Valerie Van Dellen Housekeeping
Grand Rapids

**Valley Vision Construction and
Development, LLC**, Kalamazoo

Willey & Chamberlain
Grand Rapids

**Williams Building Moving &
Raising, LLC**, Ashley

JUNE 2020

AAA Canoe Rental, LLC, Rockford

Acosta Multiple Service, LLC
Grand Rapids

All Pro Lawn & Snow, LLC
Alanson

**American Landscape & Lawn
Care**, Newaygo

Apple Valley Construction, LLC
Petoskey

Athena Benefit Agency, Cadillac

B M Dumpsters, LLC
Grand Rapids

Barry C. Schroder PC
Grand Rapids

Big Men Construction, LLC
Wyoming

CeilBlue, LLC, Grand Rapids

**Christiansen's Michigan
Cremation & Funeral Care**
Greenville

Classic Engineering, LLC
Grand Rapids

Classic Labs, LLC, Grand Rapids

Cutting Edge Builders, Inc.
Grand Rapids

D-Troj Painting, LLC, Ludington

DK Trees, Allendale

Eagle Technologies Group
Bridgman

Grand Rapids Tech, Grand Rapids

Hidden Vineyard Wedding Barn
Berrien Springs

Horizon Roofing, LLC, Holland

Houghtaling Wasiura, Muskegon

JH Lawn Care, LLC, Richland

K & A Elite Painting, LLC, Ovid

Lakeview Painting, Cheboygan

Mackinaw City Popcorn Factory
Mackinaw City

Mad Scientist Mushrooms, LLC
Ada

MediQuest, Grand Rapids

Micro Kickboard, Grand Rapids

Modena Services, Muskegon

Netlink Business Solutions
Traverse City

Oh So Clean, Grand Rapids

**Overhead Door Company of
Battle Creek**, Springfield

**Overhead Door Company of
Kalamazoo, Inc.**, Kalamazoo

Perma-Green, Inc., Holland

Progress Chemical, Inc.
Grandville

**Quality Lawncare, Landscaping,
& Snowplowing**, Jenison

**Quality Sandblasting Welding
and Fabrication**, Niles

Reddy Asphalt, Cadillac

Redhawk Electric, Cedar Springs

Reed City Group, LLC, Reed City

Renewal Property Services
Grandville

Rest In Peace Farms, Holland

Rombaugh's Auto Sales
Battle Creek

**Sales Consultants of
Grand Rapids, Inc.**, Grand Rapids

**Third Coast Property
Maintenance**, Suttons Bay

**Tim's Commercial Building
Maintenance**, Cadillac

Trading Chaos for Joy, LLC
Battle Creek

Turf Jockeys LLC, Eaton Rapids

Woodchip Campground
Byron Center

JULY 2020

Amanda Rogers, Realtor, Ada

Area Wide Movers, Manistee

**Artistic Exteriors Complete
Home Remodeling**, Muskegon

Avalon Insurance Group
Grandville

B & L Outdoor Services, LLC
Hastings

The Belmont Doula, Belmont

Bernard Schaefer Attorney and Counselor, Grand Rapids

Bert Marvin Flooring Installations
Newaygo

Boeve Properties, LLC, Grandville

Bridge Street Electric, Inc.
Grand Rapids

C of Treasures, Bellevue

Chamberlain Painting & Home Services, Alanson

Charles Forest Products, LLC
Luther

Cherry Creek Mortgage
Battle Creek

Chris Good, Realtor, Best Homes of Michigan, Belmont

Collins Bookkeeping Solutions, LLC, Holland

Creatively Done, Grand Rapids

CSC Logistics Company, Newaygo

CSC Transportation, LLC
Newaygo

CSM Services, Hudsonville

Don Hatfield Heating & Cooling
New Buffalo

ELT LLC, Bailey

ETO Magnetic Corp.
Grand Rapids

Express Lavish Painting and Services, LLC, Grand Rapids

First Contracting, Inc., Ovid

Freedom Yard Drains
Grand Ledge

Grand Rapids Coins, LLC
Grandville

Great Lakes Home Improvement Company, LLC, Bellevue

Harfert Electric, LLC, Onaway

Holiday Inn Grand Rapids Downtown, Grand Rapids

Holly's Critter Care, Lowell

Inspired Graphics, Grand Rapids

Jeremiah Gruchow, Realtor
Grand Rapids

Jones Farm Meats, Saranac

Karen Gill, Realtor, ReMax Sun Guest, Grand Rapids

Keya's Secret Closet, LLC
Wyoming

Knapp Orthodontics PC
Byron Center

Lakeshore Delivery Partners, LLC
Hamilton

Lakeshore Integrations, Holland

Leading by DESIGN, Zeeland

Martin Design & Fabrication, Inc.
Byron Center

Mohre Soft Water - Aquasystems
Lansing

The Northfork Estate
Eaton Rapids

Oasis Lawn Care and Landscape, LLC, Dowagiac

Parallel Illustration, Grand Rapids

Pine Hill Lawn & Garden Services
Deltou

Premier Powerwashing Services
Lowell

Prestige Concrete Construction
Rockford

Purposed Press Media, Holland

Ridge Lawn Care, LLC, Muskegon

Ridgeline Mechanical, Kent City

Risner's Roofing, Lowell

Scott's Computer Services
Grand Ledge

Seeley Auto Sales, Inc.
Saint Louis

Sellen Repair, Springfield

Slowinski Property Maintenance
Indian River

SMS Drywall, Pierson

Sylvanus Landscaping, Muskegon

The Web Guys, Ada

Webber Insurance Agency
Benzonia

Wilkins Solutions, LLC, Reed City



FRESH FACES

FaciliSafety, Caledonia, MI

FaciliSafety designs, manufactures, and supplies health and safety products. While its parent company, MarketLab Inc., has long focused on the medical sector, FaciliSafety has expanded the availability of these products to companies dealing in manufacturing, professional services and education. With the impact of COVID-19, this area of need has seen a significant increase. FaciliSafety operates with the motto that health is the new safety.

First Contracting Inc., Ovid, MI

First Contracting Inc. is a general contractor specializing in multi-family renovations. Along with highrises and apartment complexes, the company partners with business owners and other organizations to revitalize communities by working with downtown development programs across Michigan and in several other midwest states.

Rombaugh's Auto Sales, Battle Creek, MI

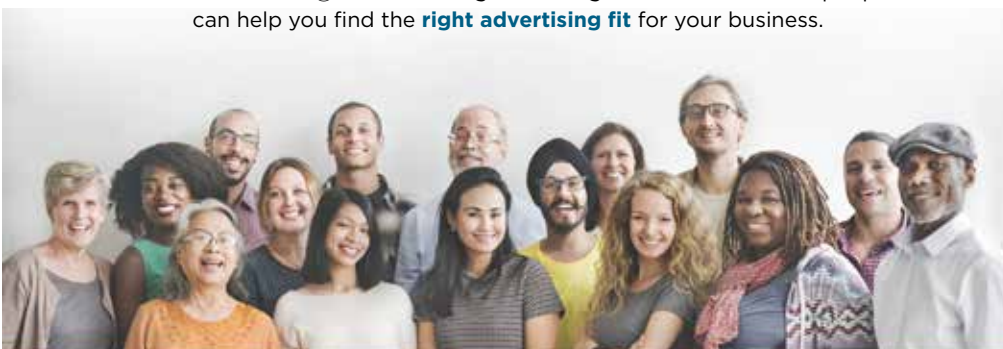
Rombaugh's Auto Sales is a family owned and operated auto dealership and they've been in the auto business since 1979. They specialize in used trucks and unique classic cars. Rombaugh's offers affordable vehicles for any budget and they will make deliveries and inspections anywhere within a 150 mile radius of Battle Creek.

Blue Bridge Weddings & Events, Traverse City, MI

Located in Northern Michigan, Blue Bridge Weddings and Events offers a rustic yet elegant venue for events. Throughout their beautiful 10 acre property, Blue Bridge has unique indoor and outdoor spaces. They offer in-house event planning services such as DJ, florist, bartenders, and decor to help guests with every part of the planning process. Blue Bridge is dedicated to integrity and trust. They strive to go above and beyond for their guests.

ENGAGE & CONNECT ADVERTISE WITH US!

BBB Beacon offers businesses an invitation to **connect** with one another, a warm opportunity to **collaborate**, and a **smart, effective** way to share your message. Through **regular, targeted** advertising, BBB Beacon will help your business **reach the right people** and **grow**. We trust that each business will find their outreach fit through **quarterly ads, advertorials, enhanced listings, or special advertising sections**. Email beacon@westernmichigan.bbb.org to connect with the people who can help you find the **right advertising fit** for your business.



Reach more than **4100 businesses** throughout **38 counties** in the Lower Peninsula from the Indiana border to near our State's capital and north to the Mackinac Bridge.

Contact us for more information, multiple options and discount opportunities available.
beacon@wm.bbb.org

Your BBB® and How It Works for You



Your **BBB**® **LEADERSHIP**

Our President Phil Catlett, and the entire staff, are honored to serve you and the consumers of Western Michigan. We report directly to a Board of Directors made up of business and nonprofit leaders from across our 38-county service area. Board members are elected by accredited businesses and serve up to two 3-year terms. Their guidance and oversight helps your BBB better serve you and the community.

We are always looking to add voices to the BBB board of directors and committees that advise the organization. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Phil Catlett at phil@westernmichigan.bbb.org

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and receive a
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As many businesses turn toward rebuilding and recovery following the economic shutdown, many companies are hiring back furloughed employees, as well as looking for new hires.

To help them fill positions quickly and cost effectively, BBB has partnered with Indeed, a [BBB Accredited Business](#) based in Austin, Texas, to offer a \$200 “Sponsored Job” credit to new accounts in North America.

According to Indeed, employers can post jobs for free but Sponsored Job ads receive optimal visibility, delivering more quality applicants to your job. The partnership with BBB is one of the largest credits ever offered by Indeed and is only available through the partnership website.

Companies can claim the credit and learn more about this partnership at [Indeed.com/partner/bbb](https://www.indeed.com/partner/bbb) (terms and conditions apply*).

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