



**SPOTLIGHT:**

**The Best Investment is  
Professional Development**

**ALSO INSIDE:**

- Helping Run More Efficient Meetings
- Progress Over Perfection
- Strategic Plans For Your Organization





# The Best Investment Is Professional Development

Andrew Dawson, Manager, Marketing & Advertising at Muncie Power Products

The late Al Rent, who was a fixture at Ball State University, told Andrew Dawson early in his career, “You are only as successful as people allow you to be.” The truism has grown to become somewhat of a motto for the manager of marketing and advertising at Muncie Power Products, a leading manufacturer of power take-offs and hydraulic components.

“I’m not sure I quite understood what Al meant at the time, but that quote has always stuck with me. As I’ve evolved as a professional, that line has come to mean so much to me,” Dawson said. “I have benefitted from the kindness, time and generosity of so many mentors. I would not be where I am today without them, and now that I am in a leadership role, I have the opportunity — really, the obligation — to give others the chance to succeed. What I believe Al meant, was someone has to not only take a chance on you, but they also have to support your development, and give you opportunities.”

For the past seven years, Dawson has overseen a team that manages marketing, communication and advertising initiatives that support sales growth and build brand awareness. Regardless of the industry, marketing is a function that is “always changing,” he said, but one constant has been Dawson’s focus on and commitment to his team.

“There is a difference between a boss and a leader, and I strive to be the latter,” said the Muncie native, who has worked at Muncie Power since 2013. “My number one priority is my team. I work hard to make time for each of them, to listen to them, and to keep them driven and engaged.”



## Need an easy way to develop your people?

At Shafer Leadership Academy, we believe that growing your people is the best way to increase your impact. So find a program that’s right for you. Now is the time to invest in your people. Let’s multiply your success with more effective and enthusiastic leaders.

[Find A Program](#)





Muncie Power Products is a leading manufacturer of power take-offs and provider of fluid power components for the work truck industry.

“Emergence has provided us with a better understanding of how we work and communicate.”

### His team is empowered to engage in professional development

Dawson said he invests in his team through Shafer Leadership Academy’s range of professional development workshops and resources that help all people achieve their potential. Muncie Power has built a relationship with Shafer Leadership during the past decade and became an inaugural SLA member when the academy transitioned to a membership model in 2019. As a member, Muncie Power employees have unlimited access to SLA’s coffee talks, lunch & learns and workshops. Membership also offers discounted access to SLA’s foundational leadership training, Emergence, from which Dawson graduated in 2014.

“Every person on my team has been through Emergence,” he said. “It has provided each of them with a better understanding of how they work and communicate, and that awareness has led to a more productive and engaged team. We have the tools to communicate with each other, and we celebrate each other’s differences rather than seeing them as faults.”

Dawson said SLA programs have created pause for him to reflect about his leadership and communication style. The programs have also reinforced the importance of diverse teams and the benefits of multigenerational teams.

“We all come from different backgrounds, with various life experiences and skillsets to bring to the table. Harnessing these differences leads to rewarding outcomes, but it can be a challenge to know how to work with people who work differently than you do,” said Dawson, who graduated with a bachelor’s in marketing from Ball State. “Shafer taught me to lean into those differences and to take a hard look at how I come across.”

### Communication and confidence are essential

The key to a good team, Dawson said, is communication. He works hard to “create time with people” so they have the space to share their goals, concerns and questions with him. Through those interactions, he learns how each person prefers to connect and share.

Breanna Daugherty has been a member of Dawson’s team since 2019. The marketing communications specialist describes him as honest, caring, genuine, and forward-thinking. He encourages them to take risks, lead projects, and work together to create a safe, welcoming and enjoyable workplace.

“Andrew has always supported me in taking professional development courses, and the confidence of my boss has helped me feel more comfortable to grow and try new things,” she said. “Through SLA’s Emergence class, I learned several leadership skills about communication and building trust that I would not have had without the course or Andrew’s encouragement.”

### Grateful for mentors, past and present

Dawson said he, too, has learned many leadership lessons through SLA programs; however, it’s the relationships he’s built through SLA and his personal life that have inspired him to apply those lessons. Dawson’s parents, Bret Dawson, a production manager at CS Kern, where Andrew worked for six years prior to Muncie Power; and Tyra Dawson, a shift manager at Lifetouch provided a strong foundation to build upon. Dawson is also grateful for the example set by Scott Huntsman, senior executive director of sales and marketing at Muncie Power Products, and people like AI Rent who invested time with him.

“I am working to carry on the legacy that was shown to me by so many leaders I knew and the leaders I represent through my board service. People like the Shafers dedicated so much of themselves to the community and continue to do so through their foundation. It’s inspiring, and it’s an honor to have a small part in making a big impact on our community,” Dawson said. “I want to encourage the next generation to continue to use their gifts to benefit others. Imagine the impact we can make if we all give a little for the greater good.”

**Build confident leaders.**

**Explore custom leadership development and training**

Shafer Leadership Academy offers customized sessions of many of our popular workshops and seminars. These custom programs can be delivered virtually, in-person, or hybrid to accommodate your team’s learning requirements.



## Helping Muncie City Council Members Run Efficient Meetings

by Mitch Isaacs

Nora Powell won the Muncie City Council District #2 election in November and was eager to build on her experience as an at-large member from 2012—2019. As the excitement settled, her thoughts turned to preparation.

When Powell was elected to serve the Muncie City Council in November, she knew members would engage in workshops to understand budgeting, ordinances and resolutions.

But, she felt there was more to learn.

“It is just as important for councilpersons to know how to run the meeting itself as it is to learn about the topics we are addressing. And it would be even more beneficial for all to attend the same workshop to ensure continuity,” said Powell, an occupational therapist for Muncie Community Schools.

Powell had participated in a few programs offered by Shafer Leadership Academy, a Muncie nonprofit that provides inclusive

leadership development for individuals, businesses and nonprofits. She called Mitch Isaacs, SLA’s executive director, to see whether it offered a workshop about parliamentary procedure, or a protocol employed by legislative bodies to facilitate meetings.

SLA did not, but Isaacs listened to Powell and told her SLA would create one.

“In less than a day, Mitch secured a facilitator who is incredibly knowledgeable of Robert’s Rules of Order and, more importantly, able to teach it to those who are not.”

Many of Muncie’s nine council members met on a Saturday with Mike Slocum, director of Career Development at Indiana University—Purdue University—Indianapolis (IUPUI). Powell said the two-hour workshop was entertaining, accessible and informative. More importantly, she added, it brought the council together as a team.

“We were able to problem solve together and get to know each other beyond political campaigns. We were able to discuss not only how parliamentary procedure worked but why we wanted to be more confident in our skills as we take office,” she said. “This will help to keep meetings civil, keep them moving and allow all voices to be heard.”

Better yet, Slocum said, following procedure will help the council save time — about 6-8 hours each year, he estimates.

Building on the language analogy, Slocum said that in-person, interactive workshops promote greater mastery, much like immersion leads to better language proficiency. He gave each council member a cheat sheet for quick reference when making motions and more.

Isaacs said council members left the session feeling empowered, and he looks forward to offering this lively and informative session to other municipalities.

## The goal is not perfection, the goal is progress.

by Alicia Van Duyn

Those were the words that one of my psychology professors, Professor Mathieu-Frasier, had put up on the screen the first day of class this past spring semester for her research methods in psychology course. For every paper, large assignment, or presentation I had to complete the rest of that semester, not just in her course, I went back to this note and I used it as motivation to keep trying even when I didn't think what I was turning in was perfect.

I've had educators such as Mrs. Selvey and Mr. Shermeta who have made it their goal to guarantee that their students knew how much their growth meant to them over a few letter grades. Mrs. Selvey has stood in the front of the class before, pointing to each letter of the word FAIL written up on the whiteboard saying that it stands for "First Attempt In Learning" and that your failures are proof that you are trying and you are learning, so don't let them stop you.



This is the thing about leaders: they work to grow others by inspiring them, helping them, and supporting them when they need it the most. But they are not without their own struggles too, they learn to recognize their own limits and understand themselves that perfection is rarely attainable. They know that part of being human is knowing that it's okay to start over and try again as many times as it takes, and that to be successful you do not need to be perfect. Recognizing this and shifting my perspective because of what these individuals and organizations like Shafer, have done for me so early on in my life, have all been influential in shaping me into who I am today. Take it from a perfectionist: it's okay to not be perfect, focus on your progress.



## Operating Without a Strategic Plan?

Unlock the full potential of your organization with our Strategic Planning expertise! Operating without a clear strategic plan can hinder growth and success. Let us guide you through the process of crafting a strategy tailored to your unique goals.

At Shafer Leadership Academy, we believe that strategic planning is the cornerstone of effective leadership.



Contact us today to discover how we can elevate your organization to new heights!

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## Upcoming Events

Shafer Leadership sessions are led by facilitators who guide participants to learn in community together around a leadership development topic.

Facilitation is different than lecturing, webinar, or presentation style format.

### January

THU  
11

#### From Inbox Chaos To Control: Email Management

In this session, we will discuss tools that can automate message processing, and tricks we can use to manage our e-mails more efficiently.

Virtual Early Riser



Janet Jackson

### February

THU  
08

#### Communicate With Impact

In this session, Ariana will show participants how to apply the Neuroscience of Conversation to communicate with impact.

Virtual Early Riser



Ariana Friedlander, MPA

TUE  
16

#### Reframing How We Solve Problems

This session will provide you with a method of problem solving that will lead to stronger solutions that you never saw coming.

In-Person Lunch & Learn



Earl Breon

WED  
14

#### Communicate Like A Human In The Age Of AI

Participants will learn how to effectively apply the latest research in neuroscience to upgrade their internal operating system.

Virtual Workshop



Ariana Friedlander, MPA

THU  
15

WED  
24

#### Reframing Failure

Participants will develop new interpretations of failure as well as establish a practice of self-compassion and self-forgiveness.

Virtual Workshop



Emily Morash

TUE  
20

#### Practicing Positivity

Practicing positivity means being able to see what is working, to celebrate success, and to offer up encouragement.

In-Person Lunch & Learn



Adam Bouse

THU  
25

TUE  
31

#### How to Cultivate Empathy

Explore mindsets and strategies to cultivate empathy, even when empathy is hard to reach.

Coffee Talk



Eva Grouling Snider

TUE  
27

#### UnCommon Leadership for the New Reality

Three principles that drive greater awareness, engagement, and psychological safety.

Off the Shelf



Chase Batt



**EARLY RISER**

A VIRTUAL JUMP START



**LUNCH & LEARN**

MID-DAY PROGRAMS FOR THE BUSY PROFESSIONAL



**COFFEE TALK**

A GREAT WAY TO START YOUR DAY



**WORKSHOP**

TIME TO DIVE DEEPER



# Register Today for Free!

[www.shaferleadership.com/calendar/](http://www.shaferleadership.com/calendar/)

## March

THU  
**07** **Learning To Co-Exist  
With Your Inner Ageist**

Join us and learn how to challenge and shed inherited ageist beliefs and unleash the pro-aging advocate within.

**Virtual Early Riser**



**Guadalupe Hirt**

TUE  
**12** **Fighting The “Sunday Scaries”**

Each participant will dig in with their own feelings to determine what is causing their feelings on Sunday evenings before going back to work.

**In-Person Lunch & Learn**



**Laura Mickler**

FRI  
**15** **Crucial Conversations**

During this program we will take some time to understand ourselves first and then focus on others to determine a win-win solution for all.

**In-Person Workshop**



**Tisha Gierhart**

WED  
**20** **Living & Working  
With Passion & Purpose**

Rather than looking for external cues to force performance and motivation, Halle helps participants look inward to uncover what truly inspires them!

**Virtual Workshop**



**Halle Simpson**

THU  
**21**



# ALL ABOARD

BOARD LEADERSHIP IN MOTION

**Saturday April 15th**

**10:00 am - 1:00 pm**

**YWCA Central Indiana - Muncie**

All Aboard: Board Leadership in Motion is a three-hour workshop ideal for individuals who have a desire to serve on a not-for-profit board but want to learn more about what serving as a board member entails, and how to find the potential board opportunity that suits their interests and skill sets.

### Participant Takeaways

- An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a nonprofit board member
- How to determine board opportunities that match interests, skills, & desired level of commitment
- Guidance on how to be an effective board member
- Insight on how to find potential board member opportunities
- Descriptions of board member opportunities currently available in the area

Learn more or register at: [shaferleadership.com/all-aboard](http://shaferleadership.com/all-aboard)

## Our Mission

Shafer Leadership Academy provides inclusive leadership development so that people, organizations and communities reach their full potential.

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