

MDNA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEW WITH CRAIG L. WARD

Craig L. Ward, General Manager of F.P. Miller Co., has been with the company for over 27 years. He is a very active member of the MDNA on the local and national level. Even after 27 years, Craig still loves going to work every day and doing the deals.

What was your first Job with the company and how did you get it?

Ward –I was married and my wife, Miss Penny, was 9 months pregnant. I played softball with a customer of F.P. Miller Co. and he knew I needed a job. He contacted F.P. Miller Co. on my behalf and convinced them to hire me. I knew nothing about machinery, so they had me do the manual time sheets and sweep the floor!

What is the biggest challenge for your company in the next 5 years?

Ward –Succession! I work for a family owned business and the challenge that now faces the family is succession. Our workforce at F.P. Miller Co. is aging. They need to figure out how the company will look in 15 years. To use a softball analogy, they need a “bench”.

Why and when did you join the MDNA?

Ward –F.P. Miller Co. as a company has been a member since the 1960’s. I became a member in 1989 when the company thought I could represent them well. I went to every Detroit chapter meeting and introduced myself to everyone. I enjoy the friendship and networking.

What do you do in your spare time?

Ward –I am the School Board President and am also on three County Boards. Miss Penny and I run a local kids Basketball camp every Saturday. I spend a lot of my time with my three children, Cara, 27 (born a month after joining F.P. Miller Co.), Mac, 24 (who was just married this summer) and Austin, 17, (In high school, 7th in his class and will graduate with 11 Varsity letters!)

What is the best advice you have ever received?

Ward –Alan Blank’s advice to me was, “Always do the right thing. It takes decades to build a reputation and minutes to destroy it.”

What’s the most interesting or exciting deal you have ever done?

Ward –Well I bought a piece of machinery from an MDNA dealer for 40k and sold it the next day for 140K but I probably shouldn’t say that! My favorite deal was when I became the general manager, I decided to put a lot of time and effort into building up our sales and reconditioning of Blanchard machinery. We have found that the Blanchard segment is a steady income stream. It also separates us from other dealers and is recession proof. At this time that segment of our business is about fifty percent of our income!

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Member Spotlight is a feature in the Biweekly and the MDNA News and is open to all MDNA members. Click here for the [Spotlight questionnaire](#) fill it out and email it to the MDNA Public Relations Committee Chairperson, [Melissa Schroeder Engelhart](#).