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Seminar presentations aim to provide educational opportunities to attendees

by Lori McGinnis Black

The Nebraska Products Show offers many opportunities to visitors beyond interactions with vendors. A variety of business seminars are available to provide educational opportunities on subjects relating to business and industry.

At least five hour-long seminars are planned each of the two days of the show, said Bob Mancuso Jr. of Mid-America Expositions and the director of the show.

"We try to provide a wide array of topics," Mancuso said.

Luncheon and breakfast sessions will provide additional education, he said.

The speaker during the breakfast on Thursday, Oct. 9 is Allan Howick, past president of the Institute of Supply Management, on the topic of "Buyers and Sellers – Getting Together for Success." Jerry Jasinowski, business commentator and former president of the National Association of Manufacturers, is the opening luncheon speaker on Wednesday Oct. 8.

"There are a lot of opportunities for education in different aspects from all the different seminars, the opening luncheon and the Thursday breakfast," Mancuso said.

In addition to the seminars, the show will feature pavilions, which will be specified areas targeting the subjects of jobs and careers and health and wellness.

Lisa Tschauner of Open for Business said she plans a seminar that she hopes will trigger listeners to evaluate their current customer experience.

"In this presentation, participants will examine what customers expect from them and why it is very important to create a feel-



Kelly Grace, vice president of sales at Volano Solutions.

good experience for clients in order to ensure repeat business," she said.

Jim Barger, a certified business coach with ActionCoach, will discuss increasing profits.

Most business owners make mistakes when trying to grow profits, he said.

Listeners will learn about the various loan programs available through the U.S. Small Business Administration in a session taught by Michael Foutch, economic development specialist with the Nebraska District Office of SBA.

Compliance reviews and field inspections will be the topic presented by Kelly Grace, vice president of sales with Volano Solutions.

Any business stakeholder who deals with customers on a regular basis will benefit from Tschauner's session, she said. The session will address how to identify ways to make customers feel valued, which will in turn result in customer loyalty.

The session will explore some of the economic reasons business owners and managers must focus on customer service over the next five years to ensure sustainability and success, she said.

Barger will discuss what he sees as the five ways to grow business profits and discuss how most business owners make the mistake of focusing on more customers, more revenues and costs.

In his session on five ways to drive profits, Barger will share more than 350 ways to improve the five areas that must be focused on to drive profits.

"Business owners and managers will benefit from this seminar

and they will leave with actionable strategies they can implement immediately," Barger said.

The SBA offers a wide range of loan programs for small businesses, and Foutch plans to teach about what a guaranteed loan from the SBA means, what projects are eligible for approval and what lenders look for in a successful applicant.

"Often, the application can seem daunting," he said. "We'll also offer a couple of quick and encouraging testimonials from small businesses that have gone through the process and come out more successful on the other side."

One of the biggest reasons businesses fail is lack of adequate financing, he said. Whether a small business is in the preliminary planning stages or is an established business, entrepreneurs will leave the session with real-world knowledge of SBA guaranteed financing that could help improve cash flow, Foutch said.

Grace will discuss best practices in compliance reviews and how to maximize return on investment on field inspections through technology and communication.

"My presentation will be good for any organization that has a dedicated field operations team tasked with ensuring that standards are maintained at all of their locations," he said.

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