

Preliminary Conference Agenda

7:30 – 8:30 - Registration and Continental Breakfast - Fairlawn Ballroom

8:30 – 9:30 - Morning General Sessions and Keynotes

Chris Cooper, Ohio Employee Ownership Center

Tracy Till, Butler/Till

Sandra Reid, Davey Tree

9:30 – 9:45 - Networking Break

9:45 – 10:45 - Concurrent Panels One

Employee Owner Education Track: The Basics of Business Financials – This session is a “101” level introduction to the basics of business financials and financial terminology, designed to provide a base-level understanding for interpreting financial information, and impacting business results.

Presenter

Lindsay Shafer, Praxis Consulting Group

Selling Owner Track: Selling Your Business to An Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) – This session will provide business owners with an overview of an ESOP – what and how do they work, why it might be a viable alternative to selling to an outside buyer, and where to go from here.

Presenters

Davin Gustafson, Apple Growth Partners

Matthew Nels, Menke & Associates, Inc.

Women at Top Roles in Great ESOP Companies – Join our keynote speakers as they lead an open discussion on the experiences, opportunities, successes, and challenges of women leaders in employee-owned companies.

Moderator

Cathy Ivancic, Workplace Development - A Blue Ridge Company

Presenters

Tracy Till, Butler/Till

Sandra Reid, Davey Tree

Culture and Communications: Beyond the Retirement (or Capital) Account – What does it mean to be an employee-owned company? Often we focus on the financial benefit or the “mechanics” of how that financial benefit is earned and paid out. Without a doubt these are important! But does being employee-owned mean more? This session will provide a rationale for taking a bigger view of what being employee-owned really means. As with all our culture and communications sessions, we encourage folks to bring their ideas, thoughts, and experiences thinking big!

Presenter

Chris Cooper, Ohio Employee Ownership Center

What You Need to Know Track: ESOP Valuation - This session will provide you with an up-close look at ESOP valuations: what makes an ESOP different from “just” the value of your company; the methods and strategies of how ESOP companies are valued; and how to prepare for your valuation and interpret the valuation report.

Presenters

Brian Bornino and Joseph Borowski, GBQ Capital Advisors

Plan Design and Funding Strategy throughout the ESOP Lifecycle - At every stage of the ESOP lifecycle, there are critical decisions your organization will face impacting the growth and sustainability of your company. While many factors that contribute to sustainability, this session will focus on the technical elements of ESOP plan design and funding strategies. We'll discuss the challenges faced by ESOP companies in each stage of the lifecycle, including haves and have-nots, high repurchase obligation, and how proactive planning can help a company align decision-making with philosophy to achieve long-term objectives.

Moderator

Joel Davis, Principal Financial Group

Presenters

Tina Langlois, Chartwell Financial Advisory, Inc.

Shawn Richard, Palmer Donavin

10:45 – 11:00 - Networking Break

11:00 – 12:00 - Concurrent Panels Two

Employee Owner Education Track: ABCs of ESOPs for ESOP Participants – This session will provide employee owners with a grounding in the basics of ESOPs: what they are; how you participate; how you accumulate value in your ESOP account; what is vesting; and how you receive the value of your ESOP account when you retire.

Presenters

Chris Cooper, Ohio Employee Ownership Center

Eric Zaleski, PCE Investment Bankers

Selling Owner Track: Alternatives to Selling to an ESOP – Whether your business is too small for an ESOP, or you have an interest in other models, this session will outline what alternatives exist, the basics of how they work, and why they might fit for you. Covered will be worker-owned cooperatives and Employee Ownership Trusts (EOTs).

Presenters

TBD

What You Need to Know Track: ESOP Administration - This session will provide you with an up-close look at ESOP Administration: what being an ESOP Plan Administrator means; what you need to do and when you need to do it; and utilizing outside help, like your Third-Party Administrator that can help ease the workload.

Presenters

Avery Chenin, SES ESOP Services

Pete Shuler, Blue Ridge ESOP Associates

What you Need to Know Track: ESOP Boards of Directors and Governance – This session will provide you with an up-close look at ESOP Boards of Directors and governance: what are the principles of effective boards and good governance; Whether ESOP boards are that different from non-employee-owned companies; the value of outside board members; and understanding the roles of the Board, trustee, company leadership, and others within that process.

Presenters

Jim Marra, Private Directors Association

Peter Jones, Tucker Ellis LLP

Worker Cooperative Track: ABCs or Worker Cooperatives for Cooperative Members - This session will provide cooperative members with a grounding in the basics of the worker cooperative structure: what they are; how you become a member; how you accumulate value in your internal capital account; and how you realize that value.

Presenters

Mike Palmieri, Ohio Employee Ownership Center

TBD

Culture and Communications: Communicating Ownership, Strategies and Stories – Hear from two employee-owned companies how they communicate ownership at their companies. Shared will be thoughts on approach and strategy, as well as ideas and events that have worked, and even some that haven't. A fundamental part of this session will be ideas and experiences from participants – so come to the session ready to share!

Presenters

Julie Brooks, Janotta & Herner

Christine Gorey, Columbia Chemical Corporation

12:00 – 1:15 - Lunch & Ohio Employee Ownership Awards

1:00 – 1:30 - Networking Break

1:30 – 2:30 - Concurrent Sessions Three

ESOP Legal and Administration Update – This session will provide an overview of new court cases, DoL and IRS administrative rulings, and an overview of the impact of the SECURE 2.0 Act on ESOPs and other benefit plans.

Presenters

Mary Giganti, Waldheger Coyne LPA

Florence Zabarsky, Zabarsky and Associates, Inc.

Selling Owner Track: From Feasibility to Financing – If you have explored selling to an ESOP, and now want to know how “the deal gets done” then this session is for you. Covered will be determining feasibility of a sale to an ESOP; putting together the right team of advisors; how to construct the financing plan; and what each step along the way will look like.

Presenters

Dan Bender, Westfield Bank

Shawn Ely, Lazear Capital Partners

Culture and Communications Track: Launching or Re-Launching Your Ownership Communication and Engagement – Roundtable - Creating a strong culture of ownership can be a challenge. Getting everyone rowing in the same direction begins with clear and frequent employee communication and engagement. Whether you are a new employee-owned company just starting out, or a mature one hitting the reset button, this session will provide principles and examples of successful communication and engagement to build the foundation of a strong ownership culture - from the bottom-up. This session is structured as a roundtable – so come to session ready to share your ideas, thoughts and experiences!

Facilitator

Jim Bado Workplace Development - A Blue Ridge Company

Built to Last: Building Organizational Strength in Your Employee-Owned Company - What makes for a resilient employee-owned company? Making (and managing) cash is important, clearly, but just as important is a strong organizational structure (and culture) that drives performance over the long-term. This session will provide strategies and practices for developing and supporting leadership - and leadership succession strategies; aligning the corporate and employee ownership philosophies so they work together and not against each other; connecting the ownership culture with the organizational structure; and more.

Presenters

Melissa Book, Kraft Fluid Systems, Inc.

Tim Jamison, Prairie Capital Advisors

Worker Cooperatives Track: Roundtable, Part 1 - Technical Challenges and Opportunities in Worker Cooperatives – Join us and your peers for the first of two open ended discussions about worker cooperatives. In this session we will broadly discuss boards, governance, and access to capital. The agenda will be developed by you so bring your ideas, experiences, and stories.

Moderator

TBD

Meeting ESOP Challenges: A Case Study - When difficult situations arise, will your ESOP (and your company) rise to the challenge? Will your governance, procedures, and processes pass the test (and a potential audit)? This session will present a real-life case study of a company that faced a series of threats where utilizing qualified service providers and a system for governance was able to maximize the outcome and protect the ESOP plan, and participants.

Presenters

Andrew Kulesza, Fifth Third Bank

Nick Sypniewski, Comstock Advisors, Inc.

2:30 – 2:50 - Afternoon Coffee Break - Sponsored by the Menke Group

2:50 – 3:50 - Concurrent Sessions Four

Stories from the Field: ESOP Boards of Directors - This session will provide an opportunity to learn from and discuss best practices with two presenters with a wide experience being a board member in both employee- and non-employee-owned companies. This session will be structured to have as much conversation as presentation, so come ready to ask questions, share your experiences, and connect with your peers.

Presenters

Bob Nicolay, Private Directors Association

Mariann Fuller, Columbia Chemical Corporation

Worker Cooperatives Track: Roundtable, Part 2 - Communicating Ownership and Building a Healthy Workplace Culture - Join us and your peers for the second discussion around worker cooperatives. In this session we will discuss ways to communicate what ownership means in a worker cooperative and ways to build a strong workplace culture.

Moderator

TBD

New Government Programs and Incentives for Employee-Owned Companies – Making sense of all the new government programs that exist for small business, and employee-owned companies, can be tough. Figuring out how to access them can be just as tough. This session will bring in experts from across the state, and country, to provide guidance on how to do so. Covered will be credit programs, federal procurement programs that give preference to employee-owned companies, and more.

Moderator

Steve Storkan, Employee Ownership Expansion Network

Presenters

Helene Papczun, APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC) at Ohio University

TBD

Culture and Communications Track: (re)Designing a Better Communication Committee - A well-functioning communication committee has long been a best practice for employee-owned companies. But what does a well-functioning committee look like? What if your committee has become dysfunctional? Whether you are setting up your committee for the first time, starting over, or somewhere in-between, this session will provide principles and practices for effective committees, and outline how to evaluate and adjust as needed.

Presenters

Bina Smith, Palmer Donavin

Chris Cooper, Ohio Employee Ownership Center

Culture, Inclusion, and Belonging at Your ESOP Company - Research shows that employee-owned companies outperform traditional companies on numerous indicators, and more diverse companies do the same. But what is it exactly that is going on? Merely having an ESOP or a diverse workforce is not the answer – it's about the workplace culture you create and maintain. This session will explore how inclusion and belonging can be the building blocks for a vibrant ownership culture. In short, this session will spark your thinking and provide a road map to a more engaged ESOP culture.

Presenters

Lindsay Shafer & Nelson Parrish, Praxis Consulting Group

3:50 – 5:00 - Closing Reception - (Patio Weather Permitting)

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