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*From the CEO's Pen* by Jack Llewellyn, Chamber CEO

## An Annual Tradition that Rewards Excellence & Celebrates Community!

Reserve Your Tickets by April 19th!

For more than 40 years, the Durango Chamber of Commerce has been honoring our community leaders and businesses during the Chamber's annual awards ceremony, and it's been my pleasure to be part of this great celebration as the emcee for the past 14 years. On May 3, we'll be hosting our annual Durango Rocks Awards Ceremony to recognize leaders, businesses and organizations because without them, our town would not be what it is today.

The reason we are so passionate about producing the Durango Rocks Awards event is because it's a perfect opportunity to not only acknowledge those who have made a substantial impact in our area, but it's also a chance to bring people together and build a sense of community pride.

Durango has proven time and time again how resilient our leaders and businesses are. Our awards night gives the Chamber the ability to reward excellence and highlight the efforts of those who may not always receive the spotlight. We want our businesses, organizations, and leaders to know that they are appreciated for their efforts, and we want to share this with the overall community.

During this event, we celebrate rising stars who are forging new ground, innovative companies that have grown into an iconic local brand, organizations that are making an impact on our community, and leaders who transform their passions into reality. All of these awards have a common theme – they are presented to those who provide vast benefits to support our community and economy.

Being nominated is an honor in its own right, and the award selection process is not taken lightly. We have a committee made up of community leaders, and they review all the nominations before making very deliberate decisions on finalists and recipients. All of those who are named as finalists should be congratulated, and those who receive the award should be celebrated as they rose to the very top.

Durango would not be what it is today if it weren't for these individuals and businesses – they make up the fabric of our community and contribute to our quality of life. They are the driving force behind the vibrancy of this place we call home, providing leadership and support to our employees and families.

We invite you to come together to celebrate our local businesses and community on May 3 at 5pm at the Fort Lewis College Community Concert Hall when we recognize those who have made a difference in our lives here in Durango. This year, we're partnering with iAM Music to kick off the event with student band, Cruz & the Castaways, featuring a variety of music from pop, to soul, to funk. We're excited to honor last year's recipients along with this year's winners during the event since we hosted a virtual awards presentation in 2021.

Buy your tickets by April 19th to save with early bird pricing. Simply visit [DurangoBusiness.org](http://DurangoBusiness.org) to reserve your seat and join us and build community unity by celebrating those who are inspiring, empowering and resilient, and embody the true spirit of Durango.



### 2022

#### CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

##### Staff

Jack Llewellyn, Chief Executive Officer  
Kim Oyler, Chief Operations Officer  
Jennifer Dickens, Communications Coordinator  
Hannah Minkler, Office Assistant  
  
2301 Main Avenue | Durango, CO 81301  
970.247.0312 | Fax 970.385.7884  
[www.durangobusiness.org](http://www.durangobusiness.org)  
[chamber@durangobusiness.org](mailto:chamber@durangobusiness.org)

##### Board Members

Vaughn Morris, *Boys and Girls Club*  
Brian Lundstrom, *Sky Ute Casino Resort*  
Diana Murray, *ASAP Accounting & Payroll*  
Charles Spence, *Maynes Bradford Shipp's Sheftel*  
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Dr. Karen Cheser, *9-R School District*  
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Melissa Youssef, *City of Durango Representative*  
Janae Hunderman, *Leadership La Plata Representative*  
*CO Workforce Dev. Council & the CO Dept. of Ed.*  
Deana Tomac, *Diplomat Representative*  
*Junction Creek Health & Rehab Center*  
Rebekah Click, *YPOD Representative*  
*Durango Motor Company*

## Register Now for April 27 Lunch & Learn on Developing Leadership Skills

Join Suzanne Phare with Real Ideal Coaching on Wednesday, Apr. 27 for Lunch & Learn. Suzanne will offer Leadership Coaching during this session held at TBK Bank. Empower your best self to attain goals and reach your full potential by attending this session. [Register here.](#)



Real Ideal  
COACHING

## Calendar

**Upcoming Programs & Events!** Click [here](#) for information.

**Apr. 14** at 5:15pm Ribbon Cutting at Phoenix Physical Therapy

**Apr. 20** Leadership La Plata Alumni Wine Tasting Event  
Apr. 21 from 5-7pm Business After Hours at Spine Colorado, 1 Mercado St, Suite 200

**Apr. 27** from 12- 1pm Lunch & Learn at TBK Bank on Leadership Coaching with Suzanne Phare

**Apr. 29** at 12:15pm Ribbon Cutting at Farha Roofing

**May 3** from 8-9am Coffee Creations with Kaiut Yoga Durango

**May 3** at 5pm Durango Rocks Awards Ceremony at the Concert Hall

## March Coffee Connections – Understanding Opioids

Thank you to Kate Hartzell with Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center for providing valuable information on opioid use in our region during the Chamber's Tuesday Talk/ Coffee Connections on March 1. For more information or to reach Kate, visit [SWCAHEC.org](#).



## Chamber Highlights

- As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, the Chamber is switching to in-person workshops and learning sessions. We're excited to see everyone's face, so please join us! Our programs are listed on our [calendar of events](#) on our website.
- Host Coffee Connections! Formerly Coffee at Carvers, we are hitting the road and asking different businesses to host Coffee Connections, which is held on the first Tuesday of the month from 8am to 9am and are free to Chamber members. It's a great opportunity to tell the group about your business and you can even offer a tour after the session (optional). You'll need a space that can fit 20-30 people and we ask that you provide coffee for attendees. If you are interested in hosting Coffee Connections, please contact Kim Oyler at [kim@durangobusiness.org](mailto:kim@durangobusiness.org).
- The Chamber's Conference Room is available for rent. Check out the Chamber's facilities for your next meeting. The facilities include two TV monitors with full connectivity, camera & audio for video conferencing, and WiFi. For more information, visit [DurangoBusiness.org](http://DurangoBusiness.org).
- Want to share your expertise with business leaders in Durango? Contact the Chamber if you want to be a presenter during a Lunch & Learn Workshop or Coffee Connections learning session. Send an email along with the topic you're proficient in to [Kim@durangobusiness.org](mailto:Kim@durangobusiness.org).

## March Lunch & Learn with Psyche Digital Marketing!



Thank you to Kelsey Parks and Kate Ishay for providing valuable tips on creating a connection between your business's brand and your website in order to optimize your company's marketing strategies. To view the workshop, check out the [Chamber's YouTube Channel](#). For more information & a free website audit, visit [PsycheDigitalMarketing.com](http://PsycheDigitalMarketing.com).

## April Coffee Connections with the Durango Creative District!



Thank you to the Creative District board president Charles Leslie for sharing information about the direction this important organization is headed and the projects they are working on. For additional information, visit [DurangoCreativeDistrict.org](http://DurangoCreativeDistrict.org).



## Featured Young Professional of Durango: Rebekah Click, YPOD Board President

**Where do you work?** Durango Motor Company



**What is your job title/responsibilities?** Social Media and Communications Specialist. I create and execute social media and email campaigns for Durango Motor Company's various assets and collaborate with my team on omnichannel marketing directives and campaigns.

**Why did you want to be a YPOD Board Member?** I found so much value in YPODs as a member and I wanted to be a part of an organization that worked to create various opportunities for young professionals.

**What are some hobbies/activities you participate in in your free time?** Baking, embroidery, watercolors, and hiking!

For more information on joining the Young Professionals of Durango, click [here](#).

## Featured Chamber Diplomat: George Johnson

**What is your business?**  
Open Mortgage Reverse  
Mortgages, soon to retire!



**How long have you been a DIP?** About 6 years.

How long have you lived in Durango? We've lived in southwest Colorado for 25 years, hopping between Durango, Bayfield, and Pagosa.

**Tell us about your family (including pets):** My wife's name is Jan. She and I have been married for close to 28 years now. She was my first love; I was in college with her brother, and I met her through him. But her mother would have none of it (she was 16, I was 21). We found each other again about 29 years ago. We have been in southwest Colorado since 1997, returning home to Colorado from Texas. We have 5 kids between us and 11 grandkids, ages 1 to 21. No pets, except the racoon who keeps coming over and messing with our bird feeders!

**Why did you become a DIP?** I knew some of the folks in DIPs and respected them. I wanted to do something that would benefit our local business community.

**What is your favorite part of being a DIP?** Ribbon cuttings are wonderful as we get to see new and re-opening businesses that we would not have known about and spread the word. Meetings are always fun because of the chaos of so many independent-minded business people there. And, of course, Business After Hours is a great way to meet all the business community and enjoy that comradery.

**What are your favorite things to do in Durango?** Snowdown, Durango Independent Film Festival, being downtown when tourists are in town, hiking, four seasons, being surrounded by the La Plata's, having cocktails or a beer with friends downtown.

There are limited spots currently available for the Diplomat program. Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Chamber Spotlight: Leadership La Plata: Janae Hunderman



**What do you love about LLP?**

LLP created a space for me to grow into the community member and leader that I am now. In my first year, I learned so much about La Plata County, but also about my own strengths and weaknesses. It was a giant stepping stone in both my professional and personal life. Continuing to participate in LLP committees now has connected me to a wide variety of local professionals that I've been able to collaborate with in multiple capacities.

**Fun fact about you?** I used to spend a lot of time mapping and surveying caves and was once underground for nearly 40 hours straight. More recently, I'm playing electric cello in a new band!

**What LLP class were you in?** 2012-2013

**What do you do for a living?** Education Consultant for Colorado Workforce Development Council & Colorado Department of Education. Private Career Coaching practice on the side

**What do you love about Durango?**

I love the sense of community that I find here, along with the access to the mountains, rivers, and desert. I travel often for work and am always so glad to come back and call Durango home.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Leadership La Plata.



## Business Connection

### Peak Food & Beverage

By Sara Lynn Valentine

Kris Oyler, a Colorado native, was born in Boulder but moved with his family to Greeley when his parents opened a restaurant there. While attending college in Denver, Kris began doing some homebrewing and became passionate about craft beer. After graduating from Metropolitan State University of Denver, he began working on a business plan with some partners, with the goal of starting a brew pub. In 1994, Kris drove to Durango in search for a place to open a brew pub, and he never left.



Steamworks Brewing Company opened in September of 1996 in a remodeled historic building on Second Avenue that dated back to the 1920s. For 25 years now, Steamworks has been serving delicious

‘elevated pub fare’ alongside beer made in their in-house microbrewery. They’ve also been winning awards, including 18 Great American Beer Festival medals and five World Beer Cup medals, all while steadily expanding their dining concepts and clientele.

“We continue to grow the company,” Kris says. “In 2013, we opened El Moro Spirits & Tavern downtown on Main Avenue. It’s a different concept from Steamworks, a little higher-end with a hand-crafted cocktail menu, along with a rustic approach to food that focuses on high-quality ingredients and prep techniques that allow the flavors to really shine.”

Recently, Peak Food and Beverage (the parent company for all the restaurants) took another giant step forward, buying the popular, locally owned HomeSlice Pizza’s three locations (College Drive, North Main and Three Springs), which brings their Peak Food and Beverage family of restaurants to a total of five. All five have liquor licenses and serve wine and mixed drinks as well as their signature beers.



“We currently employ 350 local residents,” Kris says. “We want to provide good jobs for people in our area. We pay a living wage plus health insurance and benefits for our full-time employees. We want to be part of the fabric of the community.” Many of Kris’ colleagues and employees from the early days have been part of the business for years and are now raising another generation of Durangoans. Kris and his wife, Kim, have a 17 year-old daughter who works at Steamworks and a 15 year-old son who has also worked at one of the restaurants.



“We’ve been members of the Durango Chamber of Commerce ever since Steamworks opened in 1996,” Kris says. “The Chamber has been a great partner, supporting our business and all businesses in Durango.”

You may learn more about the Peak Food and Beverage family of restaurants at the following websites:

[www.steamworksbrewing.com](http://www.steamworksbrewing.com)

[www.elmorotavern.com](http://www.elmorotavern.com)

[www.homeslicedelivers.com](http://www.homeslicedelivers.com)

## La Plata Extension: Health Tip of the Month by Nicole Clark

### Easy ways to save that make “cents”

Gas prices have certainly caught your attention. It's hard to not hear the sound of silver dollars falling out of your pocket with each fill of the gas tank, ouch!

Big picture discussions aimed at addressing the challenges of oil reliance are in order, but not in a 300 word article. Staying focused in the moment, we need to keep pennies in our pocket now.

If you can ride a bike, bus or trolley to get around, great! But let's be honest, this is a rural community with limited public transportation, so most of La Plata County drives. Maybe the question about how to save money on gas, isn't the one to be asked.

Instead, ask where else you can save money in order to pay for gas.

Your first short term solution is to re-assess any automatic payments you have set up. Convenient? Yes. Easy to forget? Also yes. Maybe you don't need that App, subscription or monthly box of clothing, hand selected just for you, anymore.

When was the last time you reevaluated your phone (land and cellular) and television plans? Are you really making use of what you pay for?

Our household just dropped cable tv, which we only used to watch a handful of Broncos games, and immediately saved \$70.00 a month.

We're going old school now, listening to Broncos games on the radio. Which can easily be done from the kitchen, while we make our own chicken wings. The money saved by preparing food at home will certainly add up.

Finally, with garage sale season just around the corner, some spring cleaning may be in order. What have you collected over time that has no other purpose than to collect dust? To someone else, it may have greater value. To you, it's money back in your pocket. And as the saying goes, “a penny saved, is a penny earned”.



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## TikTok Basics for Business

Are you on TikTok? Maybe you're just figuring out video and livestreaming and you have written off TikTok as a site for kids.

While you aren't wrong about that (32.5% of users are between 10 and 19, while 41 percent of TikTok users are between 16 and 24 years old), the TikTok adult audience has grown at a rate of about 5.5 times in just 18 months.

The app now boasts 1 billion active users. TikTok videos are becoming a way to pass time for many people and the average user spends about 52 minutes per day on the app. It also has huge reach. 167 million TikTok videos are watched in a minute on average.

So, if you're looking to reach an under 35 audience in your business, TikTok might be the avenue for you. Here's what you need to know as a beginning user:

### TikTok Basics for Business

If you're new to TikTok or are considering it for your business, it's a little different than other social media platforms.

#### Premise

TikTok is a video platform. Some people lip sync, act, create short video blogs, or showcase their products. Humor is a popular driver for likes on this platform.

Before creating anything, think about visuals and short, punchy ideas. This is not the place for a long diatribe. The audience is constantly swiping and liking. Comments will tend to be shorter and emoticon driven.

There are lots of editing options in app, but some people still prefer to use other programs (like Canva) to create videos and then upload them to TikTok. Going viral on this platform seems a little easier than Facebook or YouTube.

#### Business Accounts

Like most social media platforms, you can—and should—create a business account, instead of a personal one. The main reason for this is that it will keep you out of trouble. A creator account is a copyright infringement waiting to happen because the app allows users to attach music (and not the safe royalty-free kind either) to their videos. While Kenny Chesney may not sue a parent for adding his latest song to the background of a video of their kid's first step, you can be certain he's not going to want people associating his music with their product (not that he has anything against your product, of course. It's just that he—and any other music creator—is going to want to be compensated for his music. While I don't speak for Kenny, proving me wrong about how he feels regarding your product by using his music without permission could be quite costly for your business). It's just too easy to get yourself in copyright troubles with a creator or personal account.

Business accounts have music available as well but none of it will get you in trouble with rights holders. The music available on the business side is royalty-free. A business account also has analytics that personal accounts don't.

#### Links

Like Instagram, website links are a bit of a challenge at first. TikTok doesn't let you have a link in your bio until you reach 1,000 followers. It used to allow businesses to add a link before the

1,000-follower mark but that changed in January. These days, you must meet the follower threshold for links and the ability to go live.

#### Hashtags

TikTok is another hashtag driven site. There are very specific hashtags used here. For instance, for writers there's #BookTok, #writertok, and #authorsoftiktok. There are hashtags for business like #biztock and #smallbiztok. Take some time to research these. They are very specific but will help you find your ideal audience.

#### Filters and Film-Ready Face

If you're like me, you may have some hesitancy being in front of the camera. Heck, most of us barely make it out of pajamas these days, let alone put on makeup or look presentable on camera. To this challenge, there are several solutions:

1. You don't have to show your face. People do a lot of things with babies, pets, products, etc and subtitles.
2. Use a filter. You can alter the way you look using filters. I understand there's even a perfect skin and makeup filter (I'm still looking for that one.).
3. Record your videos on "shower day." You can make yourself camera ready and record several at once.

#### Sponsored Toks

TikTok, like other apps and social media platforms, allows for sponsored videos. They appear in a user's stream marked as sponsored but they blend in quite well. Most businesses that pursue this option also use either influencers to record the video or create their own. This is not the place for a formal commercial. You want to think about fun entertainment, not a sales pitch.

#### Video

The best way to figure out TikTok is to go in and start playing around. (Here are the app's [directions for video creation](#).) If you're older than 40, you may feel like you're crashing a kid's party at Chuck E Cheese at first. But stick with it. Scroll through until you find a video you like. When you do, you can use the same effects they use by clicking on the links in the video.

On TikTok, imitation is the sincerest compliment. No one thinks anything of copying someone else's Tok (unless that someone else is your competitor. You might want to avoid that.)

You can create, like, and share content on this platform. If you entertain and are true to yourself and your business, you'll quickly amass followers and likes (they are counted separately as are your video views). Keep in mind the social rules you use on other platforms should be used here too. When people comment on your Tok, respond back. Don't simply publish. Like other people's work and comment on their posts as well.

If you want to learn more about using TikTok for your business, check out [TikTok's business page](#).

*Christina R. Metcalf (formerly Green) is a marketer who enjoys using the power of story and refuses to believe meaningful copy can be written by bots. She helps chamber and small business professionals find the right words when they don't have the time or interest to do so.*

*Christina hates exclamation points and loves road trips. Say hi on [Twitter](#) or reach out on [Facebook](#).*



## Welcome Durango Youth Hockey Association—the Durango Ice Devils!

The Durango Diplomats recently welcomed the Chamber’s new member, the Durango Youth Hockey Association, with a ribbon cutting to commemorate team’s new name, the Durango Ice Devils, and other many exciting changes this year, including the addition of hockey director, Alain Lemieux. Lemieux is a former professional NHL player and has more than 15 years of professional and AAA coaching that he brings to the organization.

The youth hockey association offers an intro to hockey for ages 4+ and competitive play for ages 10U to 14U. This season, more than 150 players participated from the Mites up to the high school level. Many of the youth teams have won championships this year. Congratulations to the Durango Youth Hockey Association! For more information, visit [DurangoHockey.org](http://DurangoHockey.org)



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## 36 Creative Ways to Bring More Attention to Your Business

Do you need more attention? Do you feel like your business isn't top of mind in your community? People won't buy from you if they don't think of you. While the easiest way to increase sales is to upsell existing/current customers, the second-best way is increased exposure. These days—to stand out—you need to get creative. Here are a few ideas to help get your business the attention it deserves without breaking your budget.

1. Host a contest on social media.
2. Sponsor a chamber event or provide a donation in exchange for recognition.
3. Sponsor a youth sports team.
4. Start a Facebook group in an area that interests your ideal target market. Real estate agents, for instance, might start a group based on community happenings.
5. Write an eBook showcasing your talents, special knowledge, or expertise. Give it away.
6. Host a class at your local library.
7. Host a drop in Q&A in a public spot in your town.
8. Celebrate a [national day](#) with a giveaway (like a free drink with every slice of pizza on National Pizza Day).
9. Advertise at your local movie theatre.
10. Be a guest on a podcast.
11. Write a guest blog for a site that is popular with your target market.
12. Set up your Google My Business page.
13. If you are a service provider, look for ways to attach your company name to your work. For instance, a painter may ask the homeowner if they may place a sign in their yard while the work is completed. Some companies offer discounts for that.
14. Place an advertising wrap or window cling on your car.
15. Advertise in a program for a large graduation or popular community event.
16. Apply or be nominated for a "Best Of" contest. They may be hosted by your city, chamber, or a local group.
17. Speak at an event and ask if you're able to provide brochures or ask for sign-ups for your list at the end.
18. Email past customers and those who have shown interest in you. Send them deals.
19. Create a VIP group that receives special benefits for a minimal investment (like free shipping).



20. Become part of a monthly subscription box.
21. Pay for search results.
22. Use targeting on social media ads.
23. Host a party or open house at your place of business. Offer door prizes, swag, and/or free food.
24. Use [retargeted ads](#).
25. Purchase a chamber banner ad, website ad, or directory placement.
26. Advertise with your local CVB or get your business added to the local tourist map.
27. Look for online directories in your niche and add your business information to them.
28. Ask for referrals. Answer reviews on review sites.
29. Create cool swag and give it away to employees, partners, and vendors—walking billboards.
30. Post to local Facebook groups. Be solutions oriented.
31. Tie what you do into current concerns. For instance, if you work in cyber security, now is a good time to talk about the current concerns. Educate your audience through the production of free resources aka content marketing.
32. Get into video. Bonus points if you can entertain your audience, not just provide good information.
33. Trade website space with other businesses.
34. Advertise on a restaurant menu.
35. Use Messenger ads.
36. Create a text offers list (with your customer's permission, of course) and text out flash deals.

Marketing needn't be expensive. If it provides good return on investment by bringing in more money than it costs, it's invaluable. With these ideas you can play around with the right mix to find what works for you and provides good return and conversions.

*Christina R. Metcalf (formerly Green) is a marketer who enjoys using the power of story and refuses to believe meaningful copy can be written by bots. She helps chamber and small business professionals find the right words when they don't have the time or interest to do so.*

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## Thank You to TruWest Auto for Hosting the March Business After Hours!

The Durango Chamber's first Business After Hours in 2022 was hosted by TruWest Auto on March 17, and offered a festive atmosphere to celebrate St. Paddy's Day, along with a basketball hoop in the parking lot. More than 100 people turned out for the first networking event of the year. "People are ready to connect again, after taking a Covid-19 hiatus," stated Jack Llewellyn. "We're excited to get back to business and reconnect with all our members and community leaders. Many thanks to TruWest for rolling out the red carpet and making our first Business After Hours a great event."



## Join Spine Colorado for Business After Hours

- Beverages & Appetizers
- Door Prizes
- Connect & network with Durango's Business Leaders
- \$10/in advance and \$15/at the door
- Register **Now** for discounted pricing

[Click here](#)

Thursday  
April 21  
5 – 7pm





## Congratulations to TruWest Auto in Durango on their New Expansion!

The Chamber Diplomats recently celebrated TruWest Auto's expansion with a ribbon cutting.

TruWest Auto Outlet in Durango is part of the TruWest family which includes TruWest Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, Wagoneer located in Cortez, Colorado. With this recent expansion and remodel, TruWest has enhanced its service department offerings. Experienced and certified service technicians provide preventative maintenance such as oil and fluid changes, tire rotation, brake checks and more, as well as repair to all vehicle makes and models. The new oversized bay doors and service bays allow for oversized and construction vehicle repair and maintenance. TruWest's ever-expanding inventory of pre-owned vehicles are put through rigorous inspection. TruWest has called southwest Colorado home for over 20 years, and its Bodo Park Auto Outlet offers a premium inventory of pre-owned cars, trucks and SUVs. For additional information, visit [TruWestAuto.com](http://TruWestAuto.com) or call (970) 247-3325.



## 2022 DURANGO HOME & RANCH SHOW

**Saturday April 30, 2022 10a - 5p**

**Sunday May 1, 2022 10a - 3p**

**La Plata County Fairgrounds, Durango, CO**

The Durango Home and Ranch Show hosted by Four Corners Expos returns to the La Plata County Fairgrounds this spring with new products, engaging displays and educational demonstrations.

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"West Horseman" by Skyhorse Saddles, 2022 Featured Artist  
Photo by Waldemar Winkler

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[fourcornersexpos.com](http://fourcornersexpos.com)



## Nearly Half of Companies Have Recently Hired Out of Desperation

### 63% Overlooked Candidate's Hard or Soft Skills

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

Struggling with a depleted applicant pool, nearly 2 in 5 businesses (39%) report hiring someone they otherwise would not have in order to fill an open position, according to a new survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

This statistic increases with company size to 47% of companies with more than 500 employees, 46% of companies with 100 – 499 employees, 47% of companies with 50 – 99 employees, 29% of those with 10 – 49 employees and 25% of those with 2 – 9 employees.

Of those who have hired a candidate they would have traditionally overlooked, roughly 3 in 5 (63%) say they have overlooked soft or hard skills, while 45% have overlooked an applicant's ability to pass a background check or drug screening.

More optimistically, however, there may be an end in sight for hiring woes with nearly two-thirds (66%) of hiring decision-makers believing the tight labor market will end before 2023.

Eliminating barriers to employment is pivotal to pulling workers off the sidelines, according to Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller.

"However, careful considerations for the safety and health of colleagues must be taken into account when waiving employment requirements," he



said. "With the right investments in training and education, companies can create their qualified workers ready to mentor the next generation."

### Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 10 and Dec. 2, 2021, among 1,009 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data were weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

*The Durango Express office is located at 321 So Camino Del and serves the Four Corners area. Local businesses and applicants are encouraged to stop by, visit [ExpressPros.com/durangoco](https://ExpressPros.com/durangoco) or call (970) 403-8780.*

## LLP Monthly Focus:



# Are you Fooling Yourself? Learning to Take Risks.

By Stacy Reuille-Dupont, StudioB

April 1st is the day to fool others. Some are hoping mother nature is just “fooling” with spring so you can enjoy a little more winter. Others are hoping she isn’t fooling and spring is here to stay.

How many of you play this game with yourselves? You might want something, but you play games with actually getting it. You go back and forth between going after what you want and playing it safe, staying cozy in the known. Some do this with your vision for the future.

You know what you would like to do but aren’t sure how to get it or are fearful you will be judged for going after your dream. So instead, you play small and stay comfortable.

As leaders, you have opportunities to model risk taking. The trying is the risk. Playing small means you’ll stay where you are, or close to it. You stay in the known.

This weekend, I took a road trip with two of my teens to bring my daughter back to college and enjoy some powder on a new mountain. My son and I had a conversation about the greatest music artists of all time. I learn something new every time he brings up his love for music. He also loves to take over the radio in the car and DJ. As we talked and he played, the discussion turned to “what makes these musicians great?” Over and over, the answer was they were “different.”

The artists pushed edges and challenged norms. They didn’t sound like anyone else, and they followed personal passion. The bottom line, these artists took risks. They did not fool themselves by following someone else’s vision for them. Not all succeeded in big ways, but all succeeded in finding new ways to bring their vision to the world.

Do you have a vision for something different, but are fearful of taking risks needed to make it reality? It can be anything - changing your look, losing/gaining weight, running a race, changing jobs, rearranging items on your desk, anything that challenges your status quo.

When it comes to taking risks, you could take them every day. Often, you jump to big risks when thinking of changing your life, but in reality, many of the risks you take to make big goals happen are not that big along the way. These risks are small things that help you move yourself in the direction of big things. When you focus on the end goal, it can feel overwhelming. This keeps you stuck in your comfort zone.



So, if you have been fooling yourself by saying you do not have what it takes, it’s time to stop listening to yourself. It is time to create a new strategy and find the place you can make a small change in the direction you want to go.

Find the place where your passion and originality intersect. Allow these personality traits to shine brightly together in everything you do. As you assert your unique vision on the world you will bring forth new ways of doing things which will lead to more innovation in your immediate circle.

I know this is scary for most. When you take the risk, you will be more vulnerable because you are publicly bringing new ideas to the table. Some people will not like your ideas. That is ok. When you allow yourself to be vulnerable with personal flair, you open up to genuine connection and true authenticity. This is the special sauce. People crave authentic, genuine connection. When you show up authentically it allows people to come along side you and work with you. This creates strong teams and greater innovation through shared creativity. And what business owner doesn’t want that?

If you are fooling yourself and playing small because you are afraid to follow your dreams, it’s time to decide which small step will move you in the direction of your goals. Remember, it does not have to be flashy or big. Small steps over time create big change.

If you are wondering how to do this, it might be time to get some training in leadership styles, how to lead with integrity, and build your risk-taking muscle. It reminds me of standing on top a pole in the middle of the woods, anyone else have that same memory during this read? Taking risks is scary, and you do not have to do it alone.

Ready to create your best self? Then it is time for you to apply for next year’s Leadership La Plata class. Applications are open and the due date is May 31st. Get your application in now and take the next step in your evolution!

### LLP Monthly Update:

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~ Janae Hunderman, LLP Alumni Committee



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