

MANUFACTURING

BRAINCHILD OF AN NAM MEMBER

TALK RADIO

Manufacturers are multi-skilled, creative and passionate, to say the least. Enter New Jersey manufacturer Lew Weiss.

Weiss, seeking a new way to grow his business, awoke in the middle of the night and blurted out, “Radio!”

The next morning, Weiss called his company’s vice president, Tim Grady, and said, “I got an idea. Let’s start our own manufacturing talk radio show. We’ll discuss all topics.”

“What do we know about radio?” Grady asked.

“Nothing,” Weiss replied. “We’ll learn.”



Click here to listen to Weiss and Grady at mfgtalkradio.com.



“OUR MISSION IS TO PRESENT USEFUL INFORMATION TO THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, FROM THE CEO TO THE SHOP FLOOR.”

They learned fast. And two weeks later, on November 13, 2013, they went on the air—and online—with their creation, “[Manufacturing Talk Radio](#),” a unique outlet for manufacturers to talk about their issues.

As co-hosts, Weiss and Grady are still learning as they push to expand and promote their relatively small but meaningful hour-long internet show, which they broadcast live each Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. ET.

Weiss cites figures showing an overall weekly audience of more than 5,000, which includes policymakers as well as manufacturers and trade groups nationwide.

A longtime member of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), Weiss is a self-described “news junkie” who, at 73, with long hair and wire-rimmed glasses, looks a bit like the late rock legend Jerry Garcia. Like a rocker, he exudes energy.

“I’m passionate about manufacturing. I’m passionate about our show,” said Weiss. “We want people to talk more about manufacturing. It’s vital to our economy.”

Listeners can tune in by going to a link on the website of Weiss’s company, [All Metals & Forge Group](#) of Fairfield, N.J., or by downloading the show as a podcast.

On the show, Weiss and Grady discuss industry news, trends and forecasts. They also dig deep into a host of topics, such as the struggle to attract skilled workers to manufacturing, the resurrection of “Rust Belt” towns and how manufacturers integrate old and new technology.

“Our mission is to present useful information to the manufacturing industry, from the CEO to the shop floor,” Grady said. “We have tried to avoid politics, but it is getting harder because our government does some really stupid things.”

For example, the show has pounded a gridlocked Congress for failing to permit a fully functioning U.S. Export-Import Bank, a key player in trade.

“This is costing manufacturers tens of billions of dollars,” Weiss said.

A number of business groups and U.S. agencies—including the Small Business Administration and the Commerce Department—have had some of its top officials join the program as guests.

Brad Holcomb, who compiles a closely watched monthly report on manufacturing for the Institute for Supply Management, was on the first show in 2013 and has been a guest on just about every month since to present his findings.

“It is the only media outlet that affords me enough quality time (at least 30 minutes) to do justice to our report,” said Holcomb. “This lets me provide the detail that we believe people in manufacturing want and deserve.”

Weiss said the original idea for his show was simply to attract industry listeners and drive them as potential customers to his company, which produces machine parts for a number of industries, including energy, aerospace and defense.

“But the show has gotten legs of its own as various people now tune in, including politicians and government officials,” said Weiss.

The show has been funded entirely by Weiss’s company. And the audience keeps expanding.

Toward that end, Grady and Weiss take the show on the road every few months, including stopping by the NAM’s State of Manufacturing Tour visit at Philadelphia Distilling Company. They do so in their trademark outfits—black shirts with yellow ties and yellow sport coats.

“We’re small, but we’re growing,” Weiss said. “Where it goes, I don’t know, but I’m sticking with it. I enjoy it. My wife says, ‘When are you going to retire? You need a hobby.’ I say, ‘I already got one: our show.’”