# *From the Desk of Jeff Banning ~*

Banning Engineering has been in business for 24 + years. We have survived because of our awesome work family; they are both loyal and dedicated and we have loyal clients.

What Do We Do: We perform the work that no one notices unless there is a problem . . .

- Traffic Jam
- Floods
- Toilets Won't Flush
- Water Pressure is Lousy

We also do fun stuff like:

- Splash Island
- Al & Jan Barker Sports Complex
- RAC RAC

Entrepreneurship – What is it? My definition would be it is exciting, hard work, rewarding, and scary but at the end of the day it is fun!

Leap of Faith. My wife and I sat on a park bench in Swinford Park and said a prayer or two; we had three young sons and a daughter on the way. It was an absolute Leap of Faith! I had been working in Plainfield/Hendricks County for seven (7) years previously, so I had some contacts and relationships already established. This was huge and necessary for succeeding. There was no real work lined up, no real business plan and no real idea of what running a business was all about. Leap of Faith!

My first bit of advice:

- Have a good attorney set up the business.
- Have a backup financial position. One of the first protection items was to get a home equity line of credit (HELOC) on our house. Even though we did not qualify for a HELOC, we apparently had advocates on the bank board that were willing to vouch for us; we had a short-term backup plan.
- Relationships. I mentioned this earlier how important they are. My attorney was my financial consultant, my accountant and in this instance, my banker.

In Business! We started mostly with office space and drafting equipment in the garage, rolling up the garage door and watching the sun come up every morning. Hooks Drugstore became our copier and supply store; we used the library as needed; and did whatever it took to survive and sustain.

Success/Growth/Transition – Fortunately, the good Lord blessed us and we succeeded, survived, hired employees, bought a used copier (bye, bye Hooks Drugstore). We eventually needed office space and could only find available space east of town with an Indianapolis address. That did not work; we were a Plainfield business, a Plainfield Startup so it had to be a Plainfield address. John Albertson converted his downtown storage space into an office; Stacy's/Flap Jacks became our conference room (bye, bye Library). Eventually, we outgrew this space and became part of what we called "Plainfield's First Incubator"! This office consisted of Banning Engineering, Whicker Construction, JDH Contractors and Raymond's Alignment, and John Albertson. These five businesses are still thriving today and have made the community's success continue. As one business benefited, we all benefited. To this day, we all work together in some form or fashion. Remember relationships are important.

Final Points of Emphasis:

- If you do business the way other people tell you to do business, you will likely go out of business. That does not mean cheat, lie and steal. Be aware of who you consult with and at the end of day, you have to make a "business decision" according to your values.
- The Chamber of Commerce has played a significant role in Banning Engineering's growth and significance in the community. One of the proudest days of my life was when I was asked to be a part of the board of directors. That was a quick and easy answer.
- You have to spend money to make money. Do not spend it frivolously but with a purpose to benefit the long-term significance and viability of the organization.
- Reading Books. I cannot believe how many people said that good leaders, good people, good businesspersons read. I totally agree and still wish I had more time to do much more than I do.
- The last business thought is to be well-balanced – spiritual, family, health, exercise, travel, etc. You have to have outlets other than work. I love working but there are so many more important things in life. You have to enjoy what you do and that is key!

Remember to provide guidance, knowledge, be a friend, and most of all create a personal relationship!

~ Jeff Banning

You might enjoy this short video of a "Conversation with an Engineer".