



A Note from Wendy and Howard...

Hello,

My, how time flies! It was 30 years ago today that Wendy and Howard Huffman took the leap of faith into entrepreneurship and started Huffman Engineering. It's been an incredible journey lined with the loyalty and generosity of others- which is why Huffman Engineering is a thriving business today. Thank you to all who have helped us along our journey.

Through all the ups and downs, twist and turns, we are incredibly blessed and humbled that you've stuck with us. As one celebration* of this milestone anniversary, we decided it would be fun to give you the back story: an inside glimpse of the Huffman Engineering behind-the-scenes journey. Don't miss the last part of the article where Howard and Wendy share their lessons learned and advice to aspiring entrepreneurs.

For our employee spotlight, we thought it would be fitting to honor and celebrate a foundational member of our team, Craig Malesker, PE. He was the very first engineer hired at Huffman Engineering! You may already know Craig, but even if you do, we bet you will learn something new about him.

Thank you for the 30 remarkable years of warmth, friendship, and support. We absolutely couldn't have done it without you, nor can we take the next steps without your help!

Best regards,

Huffman Engineering Team

*Psst! We've also been celebrating with a 30-for-30 series of celebration events. Make sure you're following [our Facebook page](#) to see all the fun!

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With a Few Lucky Breaks and a Heart Full of Appreciation, Huffman Engineering Celebrates 30 Years in Business

The story of how we started, what we're grateful for, and what we've learned.

To celebrate 30 years in business, we decided to give our community an authentic glimpse into the ups and downs of running our business. One thing is for sure, Wendy and Howard Huffman count their blessings as they reflect on the twists and turns of their 30-year journey. They are quick to say that Huffman Engineering is here today because of the support, dedication and loyalty of employees, friends and family who were willing to dig in and help when the need arose. In addition, the support and loyalty of many customers and business partners made all the difference.



When we asked Howard, what led him to start Huffman Engineering, he thought and then deadpanned, “Well, it was just an act of stupidity and ignorance.” Howard reflected on his youthful exuberance, “Despite ignorance and being severely undercapitalized, we made it work with the help of others.”

In Huffman Engineering’s founding year, 1987, Wendy and Howard had been married for about 7 years and had two small children. Originally from Nebraska, they had been living in Rockville, Indiana while Howard was finishing up his Master of Science in Electrical Engineering at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. In addition to full-time classes, Howard had a full-time job at the Eli Lilly and Company’s manufacturing plant in Clinton, Indiana.

As he was finishing his masters, Howard and Wendy wanted to move to either Indianapolis, where their friends lived, or return back home to Lincoln, Nebraska. Howard asked for the transfer to Eli Lilly’s facility in Indianapolis, but was turned down. His director later told him, “We are not going to let you go; you are too valuable here.”

Howard was left with the choice to find another job in Indianapolis or move home. Howard began interviewing with companies in Indianapolis. Amid his job search, a trip home for Thanksgiving in 1986 changed the course of their future.

Thanksgiving Trip Home Leads to The Big Break!

Wendy's brother, Tom, was doing mechanical consulting for a food producer. At Thanksgiving, he asked Howard if he knew how to hook up a load cell to an Allen Bradley PLC – a new technology at the time which Howard had already been working with. Thirty years ago, there were not a lot of integrators. Manufacturing was just adopting the new PLC technology. Tom asked if Howard would be interested in helping him on the project. When Howard and Wendy returned to Indiana, Howard started work on the schematics for his brother-in-law; weeks later they presented it.

The customer loved it. It was exactly the type of electrical design expertise they had been looking for! In fact, they loved it so much that in February of 1987, the customer flew Howard to Omaha for a meeting. At that meeting, they told him they were building an additional production line and wanted him to start his own business, move back to the area, and do the engineering work on the new line. They gave him a P.O. worth nearly a year's salary to close the deal!

Riding High

With that P.O. in hand, Wendy and Howard were feeling great about their future! Howard was still finishing up his class work and told the company he would not be able to make the move until June, but he would work remotely part-time to get started. Howard and Wendy put their house on the market and started looking for a new home in Nebraska.

A Not-So-Friendly Welcome to the Wonderful World of Business

In June of 1987, Howard and Wendy settled into their new home in Nebraska and Howard was excited to get started at the food producer. On June 1st, Howard arrived at the customer's site with his P.O. in hand to start the work on the new line. He was greeted with, "Oh, that project has been cancelled." They proceeded to give Howard the cancellation notice. Howard said, "Well, what do you suggest I do?" They told him to hang in there for a couple of months and maybe they would be able to find something for him.

Fun Fact: Howard almost became a college professor!

One of the jobs Howard interviewed for during his search for a job in Indianapolis was to be a professor at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUIPUI). He really thought he would enjoy being a professor but he came in number 2 behind another guy with his PHD in engineering from Purdue University. In August of 1987, IUIPUI somehow found Howard after his move to Nebraska and called him to offer him another position with the University. After much thought, Howard turned it down because work had started to pick up for Huffman Engineering. Of course, if he had a crystal ball to see the stock market crash that would occur two months later, he may have made a different decision

*Visit our website
www.huffmaneng.com
To view 30+ photos from
the last 30 years!!*

Huffman Engineering Spotlight: Craig Malesker

As we celebrate 30 years in business, we are shining the spotlight on Huffman Engineering's very first engineer hire, Project Manager Craig Malesker. Craig has been a dedicated and invaluable member of the Huffman team since 1993. Primarily focusing on the utilities industry, Craig has completed a variety of projects for customers including water and wastewater plants, power generation facilities, landfills, and gas peak shaving and distribution facilities. Craig earned a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Nebraska Lincoln, and holds his Professional Engineer's license in both Nebraska and Wisconsin.



“Craig Malesker is one of the foundations of our Huffman Engineering team,” said Howard Huffman, CEO of Huffman Engineering. “He has loyalty and dedication, extensive experience, and a great work ethic. We appreciate how Craig sets such a positive example for his co-workers, and helps others gain knowledge and experience.”

Craig's work with Huffman began with a liquid sugar pasteurizer at a local pharmaceutical plant. As noted in our feature article, Howard was amazed when on his very first project – a very large project – Craig completed all of the engineering work and when it came time to flip the switch on, EVERYTHING worked seamlessly. As Howard puts it, “There are very few jobs that when you hit start everything works with NO changes!”

After his first project, Craig moved on to two of Huffman's largest projects to date, both for a toner manufacturer in Milwaukee. More recently, Craig has put his PLC and HMI programming, system design, and broad project management experience to use on many projects for MUD – the Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha. Craig finds that his long history with Huffman occasionally comes in handy on projects with legacy systems.

“I think Huffman Engineering is a wonderful place to work. It's a small company with high values and every person has to contribute for the company to have success,” said Craig. “We understand how important our clients are and we work hard for them. I have enjoyed developing friendships with clients over the years. I have enjoyed working at Huffman Engineering for the majority of my career and want to be here until I retire.”

Craig cites the great variety in his projects as one reason he enjoys his work. He also likes spending time at customers' facilities, taking advantage of the opportunity to learn



how they operate. Craig enjoys seeing how finished Huffman projects have a positive impact for the customers.

Originally from Hastings, NE, Craig has been living in Omaha since 1987. When not at the office or a customer's site, Craig is an avid sports fan, rooting for teams like Nebraska Huskers football, including at a couple of bowl games! He also cheers on the Creighton University Bluejays basketball, and the Kansas City Royals and Chiefs. He loves to play golf, travel, and volunteer his time, especially at City

Impact. Craig enjoys visits with his large family, which includes three brothers, five nieces and twin nephews, and spends time taking care of his dog.

Transition from Co-Op to Employee



Blog post by Alex Winking, Mechanical Engineer

Jay Steinman Writes Article for Control Engineering Magazine



Huffman Engineering Attains Inductive Automation's Level 2 Certification for Latest Ignition Software



Huffman Engineering Successfully Completes State-of-the-Art Control System Design and Installation for City of Omaha Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

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