

A close-up portrait of John Knappenberger, an older man with white hair, smiling. He is wearing a light-colored blazer over a red and white checkered shirt. The background is a warm, dark brown gradient.

redswan
PARTNERS

John Knappenberger,
Former President
and CEO of ANAB

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

IN THE TIC INDUSTRY

John

FORMER PRESIDENT
AND CEO OF ANAB

Knappenberger

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE TIC SECTOR?

Having spent a significant portion of my career in the automotive parts supplier businesses, I gained firsthand experience of the value of the TIC sector to the overall industry and its customers. As a supplier, I engaged with various TIC services, such as NDT, calibration, lab accreditation, and certified management systems. In 1993, an opportunity arose for me to join the Board of Directors of RAB (Registrar Accreditation Board), which later evolved into ANAB. This role allowed me to contribute my hands-on knowledge and drive advancements in the industry. Subsequently, in 2007, I was selected to become the President and CEO of ANAB, a position I held for 11 years.



PRIORITIZING CUSTOMERS, TEAMWORK, TRANSPARENCY, AND TRUST WERE THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR TAKING A GOOD TEAM TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

CAN YOU SHARE WITH US A SPECIFIC PROJECT OR ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF AND WHY?

Having worked for large businesses (Sales of \$2b+) all my life and watching most of the focus on KPIs and other financial measures for success, I felt there were more fundamental drivers that I could use my time and efforts to cultivate for overall business success. Business success for me was developing a business model that focused the operations on an effective and efficient team who work well together serving customers. I employed two key mantras to focus our business. The first was “Customer, Customer, Customer!” I used this as real estate people use “Location, Location, Location!” The focus of everything we were doing was to serve customers while ensuring we did so within the standards we were required to operate. We worked hard and listened carefully to customers’ feedback and took action to build solid long-term business relationships. The second was “Teamwork, Transparency and Trust”. These were the building blocks for taking a good team to the next level. The paid professional staff I was fortunate to join was small and comprised two lines of business. One line of business was the entire company one year before and the other was purchased in the same year I joined. Teamwork was my first focus but with a additional significant focus on transparency to ensure that all aspects of the business were open for discussion, review and direction. All the effort in these two areas, built trust not only for the employees, but more importantly with everyone. After five years, I commissioned an employee engagement instrument, which revealed significant improvements across key areas, including employee well-being, performance opportunities, and a clear understanding of their contributions to our company's success. Seeing the positive impact of our efforts was immensely fulfilling.



UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF OUR CUSTOMERS ALLOWS ME TO ALIGN MY FOCUS AND ALLOCATE RESOURCES ACCORDINGLY.

CAN YOU SPEAK TO THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR CAREER AND HOW YOU OVERCAME THEM?

Throughout my career, the biggest challenges have often stemmed from the fear, uncertainty, and doubt associated with change. Overcoming these challenges required a strategic approach. Firstly, I ensured there was a well-thought-out and clear plan for change, complete with a proposed timeline. Communicating this plan with a clear explanation of 'what will this mean to me' was essential. Additionally, providing dedicated time for constructive feedback allowed us to address concerns and make necessary adjustments. Lastly, open and transparent communication played a pivotal role in navigating through these changes successfully. By embracing change and engaging in open dialogue, we were able to overcome challenges and propel our organization forward.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST FACTOR AFFECTING THE TIC INDUSTRY AT THE MOMENT?

In my opinion, one of the most significant factors impacting the TIC industry is the 'maturing out' of auditors. As experienced auditors reach retirement age, there is a growing need to attract and develop new talent in the field. Finding individuals who are passionate about auditing and possess the necessary skills and knowledge is a considerable challenge. Additionally, the emergence of technologies such as AI has the potential to bring about transformative effects on the industry. It is crucial for the TIC sector to adapt to these changes and leverage technology to drive innovation and efficiency.

IN THREE WORDS ONLY, WHAT IS THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS?

CUSTOMER, CUSTOMER, CUSTOMER

WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AND TEAM MANAGEMENT?

Leadership and team management require a nuanced approach that recognizes the uniqueness of each role and individual within the team. Understanding the strengths and contributions of team members is paramount in developing a cohesive approach. I believe in fostering teamwork, transparency, and trust as the building blocks of a successful team. By implementing development plans tailored to each employee's skills and aspirations, we empower them to contribute their best to the company's success. Prioritization involves placing customers first, employees second, and strategic direction third, ensuring a well-balanced and successful approach.

HOW DO YOU PRIORITIZE AND MANAGE YOUR WORKLOAD TO ENSURE SUCCESS?

If left to my own devices, I can prioritize with the best! However, as a leader I use an old saying: I live in a valley, and everything rolls downhill! Having said that, my firm belief is customers first, employees second, strategic direction third, and all others fill in as required.



HOW DO YOU SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK?

Outside of work, I cherish my family life and prioritize building meaningful connections with friends. I am an avid learner and continually seek opportunities to expand my knowledge through various channels. Additionally, I indulge in my passion for classic cars, taking pleasure in driving my 1965 Mustang. Engaging in outdoor activities such as walking and traveling also brings me joy. Lastly, I find solace and inspiration in reading, allowing me to explore new perspectives and ideas.