



GERRY DICK

Host With the Most

By Matt Ottinger

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce and Gerry Dick have endeavored together through the years to showcase and bolster the state’s business community.

Dick is now being honored as a 2024 Indiana Chamber Volunteer of the Year for lending his emceeing prowess to the Chamber’s Best Places to Work in Indiana Awards program, which celebrates organizations for their workplace cultures, as well as his efforts in the same capacity at Work and Learn Indiana’s annual Impact Awards. The latter honor Hoosier work-based learners, employers, innovative programs, work-based learning supervisors and career development professionals.

‘Best’ of partners

Dick expresses enthusiasm when discussing the impact young people have on Indiana’s workplaces. That’s why he so values his participation the past 12 years with the Impact Awards, specifically.

“It’s seeing young people engaged in business and careers, and on the flip side, seeing businesses really embrace young people as a way to give them experience to help their business,” he praises. “We all, no matter what we’re doing or where we’re at, had somebody or some company that helped us along the way.

He also lauds the Work and Learn staff for bringing in attendees from across the state to make it a “packed event.”

“(There are) businesses of all sizes who really take this personally,” Dick remarks. “It’s important for their business, but it’s important for them to give back and to help young people on that career path.”

His contribution is certainly appreciated by the event’s organizers.

“Gerry’s dedication and leadership have played a vital role in highlighting the importance of this event and impactful partnerships,” compliments Sally Saydshoev, executive director of the Indiana Chamber’s Institute for Workforce Excellence, which houses the Work and Learn entity. “Gerry has consistently brought engagement and charisma to the awards and provided a platform for ongoing elevation of this initiative.”

She points to his tradition of taking a selfie with the audience as just one example of adding a personal and memorable touch.

Furthermore, Dick enjoys the Best Places to Work in Indiana Awards and its consistent attendance in the four figures for its energy and broader message.

“The first year of the event had a great crowd, but each year it’s been bigger and better, if that’s possible...,” he offers. “And

(Workforce Research Group President and fellow host) Peter Burke does a great job with that event and has from day one. I think it's been a topnotch event, and he brings the excitement too."

Entrepreneurs: Takes one to know one

Awards are something Dick knows something about as his Inside INdiana Business with Gerry Dick multi-media brand now boasts six Emmy awards, the latest coming for a series of shows from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway earlier this year.

Dick remembers his first career break came as a student at Indiana State University studying broadcasting and getting an opportunity to report the weather for Terre Haute's local NBC affiliate. Thankfully, the fact that he knew nothing about weather proved to be a navigable obstruction.

"They were looking for a weekend weather person and they gave me the job with zero – and I mean zero experience – and it was one of the best things I ever did because you're out there, you don't have a teleprompter, you're winging it for three and a half minutes or whatever," he recalls. "So, it was a great experience."

He then moved on to a position in Fort Wayne and would break into the Indianapolis market as a reporter for WRTV in 1983. Then he asked himself a question.

"I thought, 'Where do you go to get local business news?'" he reflects. "You can go a million different places to get national content on cable, and certainly that's the case today. But where do you go to get local? There really were dwindling options."

Dick then created *Inside INdiana Business* television in 1998. Seeing the warm reception, he then decided to seek ownership of the show. Two years later, he partnered with technology entrepreneur Scott Jones to form Grow INdiana Media Ventures, an Indianapolis-based multimedia company focused on producing and distributing business news and information. Dick sold the company to IBJ Media in 2021 and now serves as president of Inside INdiana Business, a division of IBJ Media Corp.

Icons

Dick's success is clearly no accident and stems from the Vermillion County native's work ethic.

"For a number of years, I was easily doing more than 100 events. That's either speaking, emceeing, moderating, some form of that."

When asked how many speaking engagements he does now, he notes that he's pulled back the reins somewhat, although he



Only the "best" host is worthy of emceeing the Best Places to Work in Indiana awards, according to Indiana Chamber organizers. Dick has also conversed with Indiana's most notable government and business leaders through the years.



is still quite visible.

Dick has now been awarded the state's top honor, the Sagamore of the Wabash, three times. Other accolades include Ernst and Young's prestigious Entrepreneur of the Year Award and the Small Business Administration's Journalist of the Year.

Clearly a business success in his own right, he values his partnership with the Indiana Chamber.

"The Chamber is an iconic Indiana institution," Dick begins. "The name

resonates with the business community. And way back when our partnership really started in the very early days of Grow Indiana Media Ventures, that's certainly one of the things that attracted me."

Specifically, he appreciates that the Indiana Chamber represents businesses of all sizes and from all corners of the state.

"That representation and that connection to the business community is something that's very appealing and very important for our state," he concludes.