

4/22/2026 Meeting Summary & Highlights

Speaker Highlights

Hosted by Bill Zielke and introduced by Tony Tranquill, Dan Starr, CEO of Do it Best Group, gave a compelling overview of the company's rapid acquisition of True Value through a pre-packaged bankruptcy, focusing on stabilizing operations, restoring the supply chain, and rebuilding trust with vendors and retailers. He emphasized the strategic importance of True Value's brand strength, a dual-brand approach, and the challenges of integrating systems, products, and culture under a unified, servant-led model.

Announcements

- Upcoming Meetings:
 - 5/6: Kathy Rogers
 - 5/13: Kevin Caewood
 - 5/20: Social Event @ Hop River / 4pm- 6pm

Tip Session Highlights

- - 3rd Party Tips
 - Phil Terrill tip to STAR
 - Kevin Caewood tip to Dick Fox
 - Zach Kessie / Clounie Landscaping nearing completion of new office and doing business with many respective to that (Brooke/Votaw/Titan Title)
 - Cassidy Young / Apex helping clients with LinkedIn page setup/management; to be a member [featured on Business Forum page](#), reach out to Cassidy
 - Guest Kevin Richards (Master Spas) in attendance / 2nd meeting, ready to shake hands and kiss babies for membership
 - Check out excellent article on [Jimmie Shindler featured in Today's Catholic](#)
 - Dave Lombard / Pointe Church thanked Phil Terrill for legal help in a family matter gaining full custody of grand daughter; and Fox and Fox for replacing/repairing a stolen catalytic converter on a church van.
 - Rich Schuiteman / Fort Wayne Zoo shared that the [Zoo was featured on The Kelly Clarkson Show](#), highlighting the Teens for Nature program, gaining national exposure.
 - Kevin Caewood shared on facing a rezoning issue, successfully contesting sidewalk requirement and receiving full approval for now 8,000 sq. ft. addition.
 - Tony Tranquill shared excellent experience with Kim Ward on recent real estate ventures
- Featured Speaker (Summary / AI-Supported notes for record / recording available with request)
- Introduction: Dan Starr joined Do It Best in 2005 and became CEO in 2016. Do It Best, founded in 1945, is the largest private company in Indiana and is a member-owned cooperative.

- Acquisition of True Value: The process began in August 2024 when Do It Best received an unsolicited offer. To shed True Value's liabilities, the acquisition was structured as a stalking horse bid in a pre-packaged bankruptcy, with the asset purchase finalized in November 2024. True Value's sales had declined from over \$8 billion to \$1.3 billion.

- **Post-Acquisition Integration:** A top priority was restoring True Value's collapsed supply chain, which involved closing five of its distribution centers. Significant work remains to consolidate systems and about 80,000 SKUs. A major challenge was getting large vendors, who had been "burned" by True Value's bankruptcy, to focus on future business opportunities. Generative AI is being used to assist with the SKU reconciliation.
- **Company Culture:** Integrating company cultures was a primary concern. The servant-led culture of Do It Best (kindness, dignity, respect) was emphasized as non-negotiable, and former True Value employees were brought back to the office from remote work.
- **Brand and Advertising Strategy:** The combined company has annual sales of around \$6.5 billion. Do It Best will maintain both the True Value and Do it Best brands to target different demographics. A new national ad campaign for True Value features actor Nick Offerman and uses irreverent comedy to appeal to the DIY audience. To differentiate the brands, stores will have access to exclusive private label brands, such as Easy Care paint for True Value.
- **Paint Manufacturing:** The company is evaluating whether to use True Value's paint manufacturing facility for both brands or partner with Sherwin Williams, which has historically supplied Do It Best's private label paint.
- **Future Operations:** The company plans to reduce its Chicago office space (formerly True Value HQ) and grow its employment base in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Integrating the two companies' ERP systems is an ongoing challenge, as Do It Best had just deployed a new Oracle system before the acquisition.