

# A conversation with Dave Witsken of BrandSafway

For over 25 years, Dave Witsken has served the industrial and power industries. Currently president of BrandSafway's Energy & Industrial Division, the company's largest operating group with over \$2.6 billion in revenue, Witsken joined BrandSafway in May 2005 as vice president of business development, marketing and sales, after previously serving as president of Brand International. BIC Magazine recently sat down with Witsken to learn more about the successfully combined company's leadership.

## Q: What led to your position at BrandSafway?

**A:** The foundation of my career includes a lot of great mentors, a commitment to lifelong learning, and an early appreciation and respect for the value of hard work. I began my career as an hourly machinist while simultaneously earning a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Cincinnati. Athletic pursuits along the way, including two Ironman triathlons, taught me the importance of self-discipline and tenacity. Earning an MBA from Westminster College's Bill and Vieve Gore School of Business helped

me refine my critical thinking skills. Many years in the power industry taught me the importance of leadership and customer service. And raising a family has taught me both humility and accountability. All of these experiences and lessons, together with having the opportunity to learn from an incredibly competent and motivated group of co-workers, leaders and caring friends, eventually led me to my position at BrandSafway.

## Q: What is the biggest news at BrandSafway right now?

**A:** The successful combination of Brand Energy & Infrastructure Services and Safway Group has allowed us to continue to strengthen all areas of operations. The combined enterprise has yielded stronger teams, a wider array of service solutions, exciting new product innovations, an industry-leading safety culture and a greater ability to provide sustained value to our clients. We are better together — and always striving to help customers reach the next level of productivity and safety. Our more than 38,000 associates work hard every day to ensure our customers understand, experience and benefit from the full

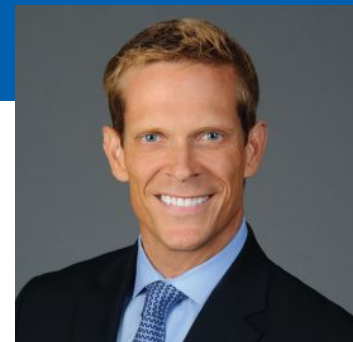
array of our combined and improved products, services and solutions.

## Q: What helps you succeed in this position?

**A:** Ambidextrous thinking helps. By that, I mean being able to easily transition from engaging in relevant details one minute to discussing strategic transformational ideas the next. To succeed in this kind of position, having the ability to switch gears often and fast is beneficial. For example, we might analyze safety incidents and trends in great detail to understand behavioral and environmental factors that drive improvement actions and, in the same day, review an innovation investment or acquisition opportunity that will add critical capabilities and allow us to provide more value to our customers.

## Q: Do you have a favorite quote?

**A:** Yes, it's from author John le Carré: "A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world." Being present and engaged with field teams is critical, especially in a branch-based service business such as ours.



**Dave Witsken**  
President, Energy & Industrial Division  
BrandSafway

Together with our entire leadership team, I try to be out in the field interacting with our workers and customers as much as possible. If we're going to continue to achieve success and grow as a company, we need to prove ourselves every day to our customers in the field.

## Q: What is a fun fact about you people might not know?

**A:** Engineering seems to be hereditary in our family. My father was an engineer, I'm an engineer, and three of my four children are engineers. ●

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