

# THE CONSULTANCY

FALL/WINTER 2023

## His Years of Practice Paid Off

WHEN SKYLAR FARIA'S MLB  
DREAMS WERE DASHED,  
HE PIVOTED TO SURFPREP



**ACCESSA**



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TEAM ACCESSA: MORE IN 2024



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E-COATER SAVVY + DENVER BAR +  
DANISH TREATS

## Opening Message



As we embark on a new year, Joe and I wanted to take a moment to express our thanks to each and every one of you for your exceptional dedication and commitment to our shared vision. Our growth in 2023 was a testament to your hard work and the vibrant, collaborative spirit that defines our team.

Accessa is not just a company. It is a team and one that has grown significantly over the past year. Our journey is not a solo endeavor but a collective effort, and your contributions have played an integral role in shaping our success story.

Looking ahead, our mantra for 2024 is #morein24. This is more than just a tagline — it's a call to action for us as a team to strive for excellence, push boundaries and achieve new heights together.

One of the ways we carry out this mantra is by providing good customer service and not just lip service. As [this Industrious Blog post illustrates](#), "Customer service is the backbone of any business. It is the way you interact with your customers that matters the most. Good customer service can help you retain your existing customers and earn new ones. However, not all customer service is created equal." Doing so requires consistency, personalization, attention to detail, empathy and problem-solving. (Go to page 7 for more.)

2023 also brought added product diversification, much of which was a result of the Q4 '22 acquisition of Clark Deco. The [value of diversification](#) cannot

be understated. By not having all of our eggs in one basket, we can provide top-notch service and recommendations to our customers, and we can limit the risks associated with relying on only one source of revenue.

Accessa's commitment to diversification plays out in different ways. For example, we empower reps to be consultants, not just salespeople, and we offer a varied product line that protects our company from changes in the market. This kind of diversification gives Accessa a competitive edge and is one of our key traits — one we will not waver from.

A final way we will do #morein24 is one of my favorite principles. It's the key to success and helps separate us from the pack: [Dare to be different](#). We all want to fit in. It's human nature. But when it comes to our decisions and lifestyle choices, it makes sense to take a step back every now and then and ask ourselves if zigging when everyone else is zagging might be the best course of action.

Our customer base is as varied as our product line, thus it's important for us to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting your business.

Thank you once again for partnering with Team Accessa. Let's continue to create, innovate and make 2024 our most impactful year yet. With the right attitude and a bit of courage, daring to be different can open up opportunities that you never dreamed of.

Happy Thanksgiving,

**Vince Todd, Jr.**, Vice President, Principal



## Come See Us in 2024!

Team Accessa will be represented at the **Midwest Tool Expo & Auction** in Shipshewana, Indiana, on January 25-27; the **Daviess County Construction Show** on February 9 and 10 in Odon, Indiana; the **Mt. Hope Showcase** in Millersburg, Ohio, on February 15-17; and the **Wood Pro Expo Illinois** in Schaumburg on April 17-19. We look forward to reconnecting with you, so please stop by and say hello!



## September in Denver

Accessa hosted a customer appreciation event near the Denver office in September of 2023, and members of our management team got to enjoy time in the beautiful Rocky Mountains.

## Accessa Hits the Links

Accessa is an active member of the **Indiana Manufacturers Association**, an advocacy organization focused on advancing policies at the state and national levels that will help Indiana manufacturers compete at home and around the globe. In June 2023, we joined peers in Camby, Indiana, at the 2023 IMPAC Golf Outing to support pro-business candidates in the upcoming election.

During the **Architectural Woodwork Institute** Golf Outing, we networked with fellow Chicago chapter members while enjoying a day filled with golf, food, beverages, prizes and fun on the golf course.

In August of 2023, we headed to Comstock, Michigan, for the Western Michigan chapter of the **Chemical Coaters Association International's** Annual Scholarship Golf Outing.



IMPAC Golf Outing in Camby, IN.



AWI Golf Outing in Chicago



Western Michigan CCAI Annual Scholarship Golf Outing

## Wood Pro Expo - Lancaster

In October of 2023, Team Accessa made its debut at the 10th Wood Pro Expo in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, produced by the Woodworking Network inside the Spooky Nook Sports Center. With upwards of 1,200 people in attendance annually, the event is the largest professional woodworking industry conference and exposition in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast U.S.



## Swing4Heroes to Fight Cancer

Team Accessa joined the Heroes Foundation to elevate its cancer-fighting mission during the 7th Annual Swing4Heroes Pro-Am Golf Tournament, Teed Up by Hays + Sons and SBC Wealth Management, on September 21, 2023, in Indianapolis. Accessa is a longtime supporter of the nonprofit organization, whose mission is to provide meaningful *support* to cancer patients, education to promote cancer *prevention* and resources to advance *research* for a cure.

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## THE ACCESSA TEAM

### Welcome to Our New Hires



**Sheila Medley**

Lab Tech/Production  
Hired in May 2023  
Millersburg, OH



**Deserae Adams**

Customer Service Concierge  
Hired in June 2023  
Elkhart, IN



**Joshua Knapp**

Production  
Hired in August 2023  
Elkhart, IN



**Tyler Majewski**

Production  
Hired in September 2023  
Elkhart, IN



**Pat Soller**

Corporate Controller  
Hired in September 2023  
Indianapolis, IN



**Michael Stephenson**

Production  
Hired in September 2023  
Elkhart, IN



**Scott Kohlmeyer**

Technical Coatings Consultant  
Hired in November 2023  
Chicago, IL



## Meet Accessa's Man in the Field With 30+ Years of Chemical Industry Experience

### Anton "Tony" Pavesich



Anton "Tony" Pavesich joined Team Accessa in April 2023. He is one of our experienced Chemical Consultants and serves the entire Midwest region of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Iowa. We caught up with him for a little Q&A.

#### **You're relatively new to Accessa. Where were you before?**

Before Accessa, I spent 30 years in the specialty chemical industry with Chemetall and, more recently, Quaker Houghton. My professional background includes direct and management roles in both technical and commercial positions. I started as a bench chemist, progressed through technical applications roles and finally onto commercial roles in business development and global account management.

#### **You're on the road a lot. What do you do out there?**

I serve customers by selling and servicing surface-finishing chemicals provided by Henkel and our own HitSol line. This entails meeting with both customers and prospects and staying active with industry associations like the CCAI.

#### **What are the most important qualities of an Accessa Consultant?**

To be successful, you need to enjoy customer and prospect engagement. I enjoy the technical problem-solving situations presented by the surface finishing industry and winning business based on that ability.

#### **What is one challenge you enjoy tackling?**

In a post-COVID world, people's front doors are usually locked. Nobody answers telephone calls or responds to emails. These are new challenges, but I enjoy trying to optimize prospecting for new business in this new environment.

#### **What have you learned at Accessa that is new to you?**

I competed against Henkel for 30 years. Now, representing them has given me new insight into their technology and why it is the global leader in surface finishing.



*One of Tony's great loves is watching his grandkids play baseball, including eighth-grader Carter Fishers.*

#### **Can you share a little about your life outside of work?**

I've been married for 41 years to my wife, Teresa. We have three grown children and six grandchildren. I used to be an avid golfer with a handicap of 8-9 but don't play as often these days. I'm also a big sports fan and love watching my grandchildren play competitive sports. I visit my local health club often to stay healthy and fit.

#### **What do you love about your home?**

We have lived in Downers Grove, Ill. — the western suburbs of Chicago — for 35 years and found it to be a great place to raise our children. Teresa is still active on the local high school board of education (20 years). Chicago remains a world-class city that provides a wealth of activity, from sports to culture and nightlife.

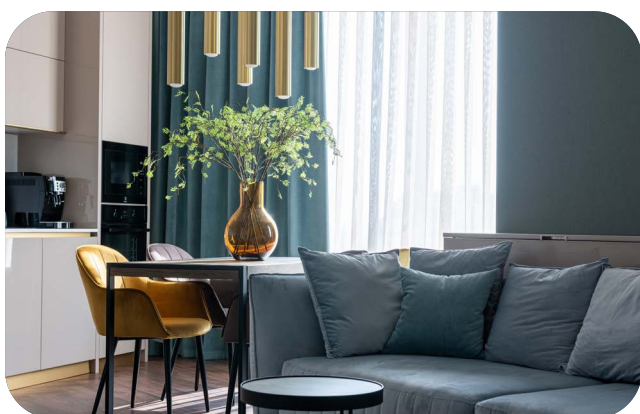


## Accessa Available Positions

Do you know someone who would be a great fit for Team Accessa? Please send them our way. Job descriptions are available on the Careers section of our website ([accessa.com/careers](https://accessa.com/careers)). Candidates can send a resume to [jobs@accessa.com](mailto:jobs@accessa.com).

- Coatings Consultant – Pennsylvania
- Coatings Consultant – Michigan
- Technical Coatings Consultant – Michigan

## LOOKING FORWARD



## Design Digest 2024

Look out for Accessa's annual authoritative roundup of interior design trends. Coming January 2024.

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



## Chicago Showroom Coming Soon

We are excited to announce that customers will soon be able to visit our new Chicago showroom. The space is designed so that customers can get up close to look at finish options, learn about trends and discuss coatings strategies. The space will also be used for internal training to keep Team Accessa sharp.

## What Separates Good Customer Service From Just Lip Service?

Customer service is the backbone of any business. It is the way you interact with your customers that matters the most. Good customer service can help you retain your existing customers and earn new ones. However, not all customer service is created equal. Some businesses just pay lip service to their customers, while others go above and beyond to offer exceptional service. What separates good customer service from just lip service?

**CONSISTENCY:** Good customer service means offering consistent support and assistance to your customers. It is not just about being available when the customer needs you, but also offering the same level of service every time. Consistency builds trust and loyalty with your customers, and it is something that sets businesses apart.

**PERSONALIZATION:** Good customer service is all about treating the customer as an individual. It means listening to their needs and offering personalized solutions. Personalization is about creating a connection with your customers and making them feel valued. Businesses that offer personalized service often build better customer relationships and achieve higher levels of customer retention.

**ATTENTION TO DETAIL:** It is the little things that count. Good customer service means paying attention to the small details that matter to your customers. It means going the extra mile, providing helpful suggestions, and ensuring that the customer leaves satisfied. Attention to detail helps businesses stand out from the crowd, and it is essential for building a loyal customer base.

**EMPATHY:** Good customer service is all about understanding the needs and emotions of your customers. It means showing empathy and compassion

towards them. When a customer has a problem, they want to feel heard and understood. Empathy helps you connect with your customers on an emotional level, and it is something that sets businesses apart.

**PROBLEM-SOLVING:** Good customer service is about solving problems, not creating them. It means being proactive and finding solutions to customer problems. It is not just about providing a quick fix, but about addressing the root cause of the problem. Businesses that offer good customer service are problem solvers. They are always looking for ways to improve their service and make their customers happy.



*Deserae Adams (left) and Abby Lanning have been friends since they were kids. Today, they bring their friendly energy and strong communication skills to Accessa as our Elkhart, IN, customer service team.*

By investing in good customer service, you can build better relationships with your customers, increase customer loyalty, and ultimately, grow your business. So, take the time to evaluate your customer service strategy and make the necessary improvements. Your customers will thank you for it.

**For more business smarts from Team Accessa, check out *The Industrious Blog* at [Accessa.com](https://www.accessa.com).**



## INDUSTRY PROFILE

# SurfPrep's Skylar Faria on Baseball, the Abrasives Business and What Drives Him



Like lots of little boys, Skylar Faria dreamed of becoming a major-league baseball player. And he was good.

"Baseball was going to be my ticket. It was going to be my way out and the answer to where I ultimately wanted to be in life," Faria recalls. But life throws you curve balls.

Today, Faria is the President of SurfPrep with his wife, Meri Faria. Instead of wielding a baseball bat, Faria now leads a team of 34 employees who might sell sanding equipment to perfect an MLB team's bats.

With manufacturing locations in both Southern California and North Carolina, SurfPrep manufactures and sells sanding systems, tools and supplies primarily through their partner suppliers/distributors throughout North America, including Accessa.

Faria recently sat down with Accessa's Vince Todd, Jr. and Joe Todd to be interviewed on The Industrious Podcast to share the story of how he got into the sanding business and what drives him to push forward in what unwittingly became a family business.

The aspiring ball player was born in Massachusetts and grew up in California. His father worked in education, and his mother had multiple sclerosis. They got by, he says.

"From a young age, I had a lot of aspirations and goals to be something, to become something," he says. Faria played baseball for two years through the California

Interscholastic Federation, the governing body of high school sports in California, and then for a Division II team in California, where he competed in two College World Series.

The Milwaukee Brewers signed Faria in 1985. But then, over the course of just a month, the ball became a fuzzy blob. His vision had rapidly diminished, and his baseball career was over.

Faria had no other clear path forward. Not long after, he was selling shoes in an upscale department store when he and a customer discovered they both played for the same college, each with victorious World Series performances. They traded baseball stories and then the man suggested this crazy idea that Skylar get into the abrasives business. Once Faria got past his childhood memories of helping his dad with boring, character-building sanding/grinding home projects — "just to keep me busy" — Faria was sufficiently motivated by the promise of good money and a company car.

Faria started at VSM Abrasives in 1986 selling sandpaper. The learning curve was steep. One of the first accounts he called on was a small cabinet shop near Los Angeles. Faria went in wearing a tie and introduced himself, asking for an order!

"These two older guys, who were probably the age I am now, said, 'I've got three orders for you today.' So, I thought, damn this is easy. One of the two yelled back, 'Hey, I've got three orders for you! Get out, stay out and don't come back!'"



Faria got back in his company car and left, skeptical about his decision to take the job. But he kept going. "I learned quickly that it's not about the product. I was so focused on money then and was money-driven, and nothing really clicked with that kind of attitude. I realized I need to serve people and identify where they're bleeding," he says.

Faria says that in the back of every building, whether it's 1,000 square feet or half a million, there's a pipe exiting the building with blood flowing out in the way of excess labor and material costs. It's his job to figure out how to stop the bleeding — to serve them in this way.

Once he started serving people and focusing on solving their challenges, he forgot about the money, and things started to click. He also went deep into personal development. Faria became a student of the business, and he loved it. The money followed.

Skylar and Meri were married in 1998 and had started a family. Skylar eventually launched his own regional supply company serving the Southwestern US with sanding-related products. Then early one morning in December 2003, one of their key raw material suppliers of foam sanding blocks and pads called with an offer. In a matter of a few hours, the Farias agreed to purchase Dixon Enterprises, Inc. The manufacturer supplied fingernail-buffer products to more than 900 wholesale beauty supply warehouses around the world along with private-labeled industrial foam abrasives to numerous other coated abrasive companies in the US.

"I saw so much more opportunity in what Dixon could do and what they could offer. I embarked on a journey back in 2007 to make sanding much more ergonomic with less stress placed on the human. Rather than gripping and holding a piece of sandpaper or foam pad with your fingers, placing much demand on the body, I developed the first system where the foam pads or discs could be attached directly to a tool, making the tool replace the human's need to physically hold the abrasive with their fingers," Faria recalls.

Following this journey has led SurfPrep to win two AWFS Visionary New Product Awards (2015 and 2023) for their sanding system of electric and air sanders and foam products. More and more market segments are discovering new ways to use SurfPrep products, including the marine and automotive industries.

Through the years, his baseball days have never been far from Faria's mind. They taught him dedication, teamwork and perseverance. He recalls doing soft toss drills with his college coach, Steve Osaki. First, he wore a hole in his batting glove, and then one in the heel of his hand.



*The SurfPrep team attended an annual event in Atlanta where makers from all over the world gathered to share ideas and how to build and grow a profitable business.*

"You tell your hitting coach that your hand is bleeding from the knob of the bat, and he says 'Five more, give me five more. Swing the bat five more times.' There's never an end," Faria says.

"When you're going after something in life, there is no finish line. You have to stay focused, and there has to be passion and a why. That's what a lot of people don't understand. They look at others' success in life and they don't realize what they did on the practice field."

But is the pain worth it?

"My last at-bat in the College Baseball World Series was one of the hardest-hit, longest, highest, deepest home runs I'd ever hit in collegiate ball. When I got in the dugout, my hitting coach asked me, 'Skylar, was it worth it?'" And there was no question.

At SurfPrep, when Faria faces something that seems insurmountable, he reaches back to these kinds of moments.

"You keep the end in mind, and that's why you're doing it," he says.

**Watch the entire interview with Skylar Faria to hear his thoughts on entrepreneurship and raising his three kids to work in the family business. Find The Industrious Podcast on [Accessa.com/the-industrious/](https://Accessa.com/the-industrious/)**



## A Bar Worth a Very Small Fortune



The Radiator will soon open up inside a brand new apartment building in the River North Arts District of Denver. Look closely, and you'll see how a finishing client of Accessa Coatings Solutions used the ICA-PF5051 Polyester for its bar embedded with pennies. Our customer finished the white oak paneling with AcromaPro Akva Line 8000 clear and used ICA NATURWOOD on the flooring.



## A Danish Treat Wood Clients Can Sink Their Teeth Into



Accessa Equipment Solutions searched the world over for top-of-the-line abrasive brushes and found them in Denmark! Pro-Flex abrasive brushes are exceptional for edge cutting and five-piece door panel sanding. Their sole purpose is to enable the mass production of white wood and sealer sanding for product flow.

Customers love them because they are very flexible, so they can easily bend into profiles. Pro-Flex brushes are custom-made for each individual machine for your automated machine sanding needs. Get them in any grit and any size you want. They are also super durable and resist tearing, compared to other brands.



## What's Under the Hood Inside This E-Coater's Facility



One of our award-winning customers serving all major OEMs in the automotive industry relies on Henkel's Bonderite M-ZN ZMX from Accessa Chemical Solutions to zinc phosphate automotive parts prior to e-coating. ZMX is unique to the industry in that it is a single product that is internally accelerated and provides optimum corrosion protection for the coated automotive parts. Being a single-component product, it is easy to control and reduces the amount of waste by-product sludge that our customers would otherwise have to dispose of.

**Contact us to learn more about these and many other innovative products available from Accessa.**



# THE INDUSTRIOUS PODCAST

## The Podcast Built for Industrious People

Do you have a holiday road trip ahead? Want to hear inspiring interviews with people you can relate to? Check out The Industrious Podcast! Co-hosts Vince Todd, Jr. and Joe Todd invite guests into the studio for honest conversations that can get gritty and sometimes off-topic but are always entertaining and informative.

Listen to The Industrious Podcast through Spotify, the iTunes app or wherever you get your podcasts, or find us on YouTube.



### EPISODE 37

#### **Lauren Gaudion, Arrow McLaren IndyCar**

This Director of Communications shares stories from her pole vaulting past and gives us a peek inside her fast-paced work.



### EPISODE 36

#### **Gerry Dick, Inside Indiana Business**

Tune in as Gerry shares his broadcast journalism background and perspective on business in Indiana.



### EPISODE 35

#### **Mike Bensi, Bensi & Company**

Don't miss Mike's tips for leaders in a post-pandemic professional landscape.



### EPISODE 34

#### **Seth Alberts, Ralph S. Alberts Company**

Seth talks about organic company growth and the entrepreneurial spirit that led him back to working in the family business.



### EPISODE 33

#### **Judd Feldman & Noelle Perkins, AssuredPartners**

Tune in as Judd and Noelle share the latest in the world of insurance.



### EPISODE 32

#### **Brooke Crosley, Crosley, Inc.**

This company president shares her sales/leadership training background and the value of getting uncomfortable to achieve measured growth.

**EPISODE 38:** Get a preview of the guys' fascinating interview with Skylar Faria on page 8.

Subscribe and enable notifications so you never miss an episode! Click [HERE](#) to subscribe!