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Iowa CEO panel shares entrepreneurial tips

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KAYLA CRAIG / THE REGISTER
 Lloyd Hill, vice president of American Equity Investment Life Insurance Co. in West Des Moines, and Connie Wimer, founder of the Business Record and dsm magazine, were executive panelists.

Eager entrepreneurs got an inside look into the world of startups at Des Moines Area Community College's "Ideas in Action" Innovation Week.

See [photos from the event](#).

The week-long event culminated with an [executive panel](#) presentation Thursday at the college's west campus.

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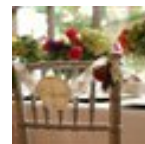
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Kayla Craig is a business mobile journalist for the Des Moines Register.

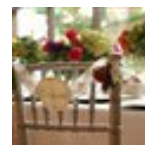
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“I guarantee you, opportunities are out there, you just have to find them,” [Lloyd Hill](#), vice president of [American Equity Investment Life Insurance Co.](#) in West Des Moines, told the crowd.

Panelists took questions from the audience, a mix of young and seasoned professionals.

Dennis Albaugh, a DMACC alum who turned his ag chemical company into a billion-dollar business, making him one of [Iowa’s richest men](#), shared his perspective on persistence.

“Be aggressive. The worst boss I ever worked for was myself. Don’t take no for an answer,” said Albaugh, chief executive and founder of [Albaugh, Inc.](#)



KAYLA CRAIG / THE REGISTER
 Todd Jones, left, director of marketing and public relations at Des Moines Area Community College, networked with Fred Buie, chief executive of Keystone Electrical manufacturing Co. in Des Moines.

While panelists emphasized the importance of education, [Fred Buie](#) said the strength behind successful startups doesn’t come straight from school.

For him, preparation was pivotal.

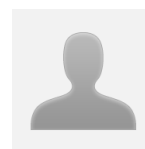
“I worked for ‘the man’ for 16 years, saved my money and got ready,” said Buie, chief executive of [Keystone Electrical Manufacturing Co.](#) in Des Moines.

“Once I was ready, I started looking for that opportunity. I always knew what I wanted and I didn’t lose sight of the things I had to do



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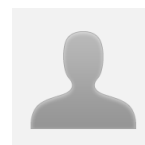
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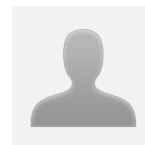
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to get where I wanted to be.”

That determination must dwell in employees, too, said [Connie Wimer](#), founder of the [Business Record](#) and dsm magazine.

She recommends hiring teams who have the initiative to innovate and think outside the box.

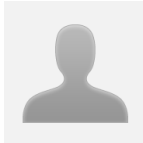
“Every single day, we are having to do research on what’s going on in the industry,” she said of excelling in the evolving publishing industry.

[Sarah Grant](#), chief executive and founder of [Sticks](#), asks, “How am I going to do this?” every morning before overseeing her furniture and art manufacturing company’s creative concepts.

And the answer is constantly changing. But one thing she knows for sure is that when the business bug bites, there’s no turning back.

“It’s destiny,” she said.

Tags: [advice](#), [Business](#), [central iowa networking](#), [CEO](#), [Connie Wimer](#), [dennis albaugh](#), [Des Moines Area Community College](#), [DMACC](#), [entrepreneur](#), [executive](#), [Fred Buie](#), [Ideas in Action](#), [Innovation](#), [Lloyd Hill](#), [networking](#), [panel](#), [Sarah Grant](#), [tips](#), [West Campus](#), [West Des Moines](#)



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