

Main Street Gourmet: Growth Undergirded by Learning



Harvey Nelson, co-owner,

has been a member of [EDGE](#) since the inception of the non-profit organization ten years ago.

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— Harvey Nelson, co-owner, co-CEO, Main Street Gourmet

The CEO retreat, a singular experience offered by EDGE to CEOs as part of their membership, allows the sharing of "deep personal and business issues," Harvey continued. For him, the importance of the retreat focused on succession planning, a task he and his partner, Steve Marks, are deeply involved in. "Sometimes, you just need to confirm a decision you know you need to make," Harvey continued.

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EDGE drives growth for mid-sized companies by bringing together their leadership teams to share best practices and inspire each other to pursue the biggest opportunities. EDGE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, and is the only NEO economic development group that is focused on helping mid-sized companies strengthen their leadership teams in order to take their companies to the next level.

Founded in 1987 as Main Street Muffins, the custom bakery products company has evolved its strategy and product line from a humble muffin shop in downtown Akron into the custom bakery company it is today. Main Street Gourmet manufactures customized cookies, muffins, brownies, bars and granola, for customers that include grocery and restaurant chains. Each stage of the company's development has produced newer and more exciting growth opportunities.



Main Street Gourmet expansion project featured in the Akron Beacon Journal (June 2016)

With a new expansion and renovation project underway, Main Street Gourmet is advancing the systems and through-put to improve efficiencies that will be realized as it celebrates 30 years in business next year. The \$6 million wholesale bakery company of 1995, the year it moved into its facility in Cuyahoga Falls, occupying a mere 25,000 square feet, has grown into a nearly \$40 million enterprise today, soon to occupy 67,000 square feet.



For Harvey, the company still might have achieved this growth without EDGE, but he believes that learning is integral to what he wants for himself and his leadership team as they evolve and grow the company together. "EDGE is an important piece of the puzzle," he said.

3 reasons Harvey cites for joining EDGE:

1. The personal reason of being with other CEOs who serve as an advisory group. I like that much of the group is made up of other manufacturing companies.
2. I wanted the leaders in our company to have access to groups of leaders who have similar jobs at other companies. I wanted them to be able to create connections and learn from others. If they faced a tough decision, they could pick up the phone and call someone who's done what they might be doing.
3. Education. We attend a few great sessions every year and try to apply the concepts. I like that they are big-picture focused.

What's next for Harvey? First he wants to see through the plans of the new expansion to execution. But he also wants to see the successful transition of the business as the succession plan is implemented. To transition the business well, "you've got to take it seriously," Harvey said. "Finish big!"



[EDGE](#) is the Northeast Ohio non-profit organization that helps mid-market companies build their leaders and grow their value. To learn more about how you and your leadership team can benefit from EDGE membership contact:

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