

# Comply365 hosts conference

By WILLIAM BARTH Editor | Posted: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 4:00 pm

BELOIT — While digital technologies naturally are disruptive, innovations should be helpful rather than difficult for users.

Comply365 — a tech company at 655 3rd St. in Beloit — is hosting a three-day business conference this week focused on navigating the evolving digital workplace. Comply365 is a growing Beloit company that works to bring a variety of core digital solutions to the workplace to help businesses work smarter through connections and innovation.



Frank

At a kickoff Tuesday morning Comply365 Chief Executive Officer Kerry Frank introduced ABC Supply Co. co-founder Diane Hendricks, who addressed conference attendees at the Beloit Life Center, 2170 Murphy Woods Road.

Hendricks talked about what it takes to start and grow a business. She recalled when ABC started with just two employees — her and her late husband, Ken Hendricks. Now ABC has nearly 600 branches, 10,000 employees and annual sales of \$6.5 billion. Forbes Magazine named Diane Hendricks the number one self-made woman in America.

She praised Beloit and the state of Wisconsin for helping to foster not just ABC Supply, but the many other business enterprises under the Hendricks umbrella.

“We found this state to be easy to work in, very pro-business,” Hendricks said. “The citizens here are the very best in the world.”

When Frank addressed the audience she talked about the changes in mapping, noting that for nearly three-quarters of a century maps came published in big atlases. Then came fold-up maps, which kept people traveling for more years. Electronic maps started with the basic Garmin, then exploded through Google maps and a variety of real-time applications in hand-held phones. Each innovation made it easier for users.

“Digital is a lifestyle now,” she said. “Technology is disruptive, but it didn’t disrupt me (the end user).”

As the digital workplace evolves the result should be the same, she said — making work life simpler and more efficient.

“The digital workforce is one of the most important trends in business,” Frank said. “There’s no more business as usual. Change is coming. It doesn’t have to be scary.”

She urged businesses to avoid a tendency to rely on legacy practices and even brand dominance, citing Kodak as an example. The iconic film producer arrived late to the digital revolution, and has become an historical footnote.

“This change requires us to do something,” Frank said. “If we don’t do something we’re going to risk irrelevance.”

Companies, she said, must realize “the next wave of technology is out there and you need to get in front of it before your competitor does.”

That can require even successful companies to shake up their own products and workplaces.

Comply365 Chief Operating Officer Tom Samuel used the example of Apple’s legendary Steve Jobs introducing the iPhone, which combined the functions of not only internet-access like a computer and mobile phone technology, but also came with a built-in iPod music platform. At the time Apple’s iPod products accounted for more than 40 percent of the company’s profit, but Jobs was focused on getting to the next wave of technology before his competition.

“Significant innovation,” Samuel said, “requires disruptive thinking.”

Business leaders, Samuel said, must look at evolving technologies “as a journey, not a destination.”

“Digital technology is changing constantly,” he said.