

## Joe Slawek – BIO

Founder of FONA Int'l, Recent Former CEO/Chairman of FONA Int'l

Joe Slawek truly grew up in the flavor business. This early foundation, learning the ins and outs of the business from the ground up helped create the man who would transform the industry. As a high school student, Joe would take a Chicago city bus each day to Food Materials Corporation for his first summer job.

Continuing during his college years, Joe continued to learn and grow. He moved from sweeping floors to extracting vanilla, compounding and spray drying flavors; then professionally, from selling flavors to leading national sales teams.

It was during these years working his way up through the ranks at Food Materials Corp (including 15 years as a national account executive) that Joe formed a vision. He dreamed of creating a different kind of flavor company – one that achieved both great technology *and* great service. It's called "High Tech, High Touch." Joe wanted to build an organization that could compete with the largest flavor companies across a range of market segments, but also connect with customers as only small companies can, developing relationships, sharing visions, methods and time. He founded FONA in 1987 on these very principles.

In 1999 Joe was inducted into the Entrepreneurship Hall of Fame in recognition for driving growth that was five times the industry standard. In 2011, Joe was personally honored with the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of The Year award for Manufacturing in the Midwest. In the highly competitive flavor industry, Joe has created an award-winning company that outperforms its competitors through better service, better quality, better programs and better people.

Joe is now former CEO and Chairman of FONA's Board of Directors due to selling the company in the last quarter of 2020. Joe also leads focused efforts for the Slawek Family Business Office, an enterprise dedicated to securing the future for the next generation of Slaweks. Joe and his wife Mary have three adult children: Luke, Kirk and Joy; and five grandchildren.

A graduate of University of Illinois at Chicago in Marketing and Management, Joe is also a published author. His book *Ingredients for Success: 10 Best Practices for Business and Life* was released in 2013. In his personal life, Joe is actively committed to his family, his church and community service. He is an instrument-

rated private pilot who enjoys recreational aviation. He recently completed his “type rating” for the Cirrus Vision Jet. Joe also values outdoor activities, particularly those with a conservation mission.

Joe proudly serves or has served the following organizations:

- *Secretary and Executive Committee Member for The McGraw Wildlife Foundation Board of Directors*
- *Advisory Board Member for US Polymers*
- *Member of Kane County Regional Planning Commission*
- *Member of Illinois Manufacturing Association*
- *Former Member of the Administer Justice Executive Board*
- *President and Co-founder of C-Level Christian CEO group*
- *Former Board Member of Wheaton Academy*
- *Former Chair of Fox Valley Christian Action*