

## **Ginsberg stresses importance of breaking down barriers at ideas conference**

CEDAR RAPIDS — While it traditionally has been what they are best known for, nowhere in the mission statement of once-jewelry company M.C. Ginsberg do you see any reference of jewelry.

That is no accident, says president Mark Ginsberg.

He explained how he wants his company to be much more than what one expects from a traditional jeweler Friday to audience members at the NewBoCo ideas conference at CSPA in Cedar Rapids.

Ginsberg got into the jewelry business after inheriting his father's Iowa City store, then one of five stores in Iowa called Ginsberg Jewelry.

"Having grown up in a retail circus, I became a retail circus freak," he said.

Soon after taking control, he separated the Iowa City location from the rest of the family business, changed the name of the business to M.C. Ginsberg and chose to focus instead on "objects of art."

That definition is constantly changing.

These days it includes expanding into manufacturing through the usage of mills and 3d printers that allows Ginsberg to quickly manufacturing a variety of objects at a very rapid pace through the use of computer-aided design. He brought some products created with his new facility with him, showing audience members a foot pedal from a 1961 Chevrolet and an artificial vertebrae disc that had been made using the M.C. Ginsberg 3d printers.

It's been a huge risk investing in the new area, but worth the potential payoff, said Ginsberg.

"No one wants to bet on things that aren't absolute. I've been willing to take the next step to lose a calculated amount of money to experiment."

Experimenting is a core tenet of Ginsberg's business beliefs and he encouraged attendees to tear down barriers in business whenever they see them.

"The one thing I push back on is the walls. As we get closer to innovating, we have to let more disparate thinkers come together so they can innovate. The walls have to come down," he said.

The NewBoCo conference Ginsberg addressed is focused on showcasing people who bring ideas into fruition to try and inspire local entrepreneurs. Ginsberg was one of several speakers listed in the category of "making it happen," while there were several sessions whose ideas were not set until they were determined by the attendees.

NewBoCo is part of NewBoFest, which is going on all this week in the New Bohemia neighborhood.