

MARKETING FOR JOB SHOPS: CREATE A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

SUMMARY

People always appreciate favorable attention, especially from the boss. If you start clipping articles about new machines and new technologies and passing them on to your key people, they'll read them. Post literature in the shop and establish a collection of technical data and trade magazines that is easily available to everyone. And talk, talk, talk about your new equipment long before you order it.

Establish a selection committee to visit other shops to personally examine similar equipment and to participate in the process of selection. Include as many of your people as possible, right up to those who will be running the equipment. You'll be surprised at how many good suggestions you'll get. Give plenty of recognition to anyone who participates fully.

When a decision is made on a new machine or new office equipment, tell everyone what is ordered and when it will arrive. Post literature in the area where the equipment will go, and make yourself available to talk to any employee who wants to discuss it. Explain how and why you reached your decision, and why you have become convinced that your shop must become involved with technologically advanced equipment.

SHARE YOUR PLANS

Prepare an outline of your plan for acquiring high technology equipment, and have copies available. There is no better way to show a person that you value them than to give them a copy of your plan and ask them to take it home and let you know what they think. Besides, they may find problems or opportunities you had missed. Mainly, though, they will understand what you are doing and why you are doing it.

Each person, of course, will be a different level of experience and exposure to technologically advanced equipment. Consider this when you talk with them, and determine the approach that must be taken with each. If the person knows little about such machinery, you must explain the basics and provide a convincing argument. More advanced knowledge allows you to secure participation, or even to delegate some tasks.

HIGH-TECH IN THE OFFICE

Job shops must introduce high technology in management and office functions as well as on the shop floor. CAD, CAM, CIM, and FMS are being rapidly followed by new acronyms like CAPP (Computer Aided Process Planning), SOC (Statistical Quality Control), etc. If we intend that our shop will

survive in a competitive environment, we must know what's available, invest in those systems we need, and learn how to best use them.

The major impact of technology is not in the application of the discrete systems, but in the benefits resulting from synergy when many systems are in use. We must also always keep the needs of our markets foremost in our minds; technology that won't improve over the long run quality, delivery, or price is not worth the investment.

Some systems can provide more than is obvious at first glance. A CAD system, for example, can give you the capability of accepting data electronically from your customer's data base, so you needn't depend on drawings and other documents. CAPP can provide a method for tracking requests for quotes, which could improve your ratio of orders to inquiries considerably. Smaller shops may locate helpful systems that run on personal computers and perform many of the functions the larger systems provide.

Consulting with other people in your shop and in your office may uncover something that a system will do to save time or money, cut inventory, decrease work-in-process, extend tool life, avoid errors, or just make it a bit easier for a customer to do business with you. And managers don't have a corner on ideas; if you talk to other employees you'll uncover other advantages.

CONSIDER THE PRICE

Price cannot be the determining factor when selecting technically advanced equipment or systems for your shop. Just as you serve your customer best when you concentrate on solving his problems rather than on being the lowest priced shop he can find, so the manufacturers of the equipment you are considering must show you how their product will meet your needs best.

Remember, your people are not much different from you; they will accept changes more easily if they understand all the potentials of the change, if they see that it was well planned and managed, and when they feel no threat to their safety or

security. They are also more comfortable with changes if you make them individually and don't try to introduce new changes before the older ones are fully assimilated.

Educate yourself, plan each change well in advance, inform your people, involve them, and make sure you select the appropriate equipment for your shop. Nothing presents a worse barrier to future change than having your last piece of new technologically advanced equipment sitting in a corner unused.

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