National Tooling & Machining Association
NTMA PRECISION

Business Management Advisory

For Precision Custom Manufacturers

MK38 **File: MARKETING**

MARKETING FOR JOB SHOPS: SUCCESS VS. FAILURE

SUMMARY

Nearly all job shops originate when entrepreneurs decide to try to make a go of their own business. Job shops that have operated successfully for some time have most likely done many of the things our previous BMAs have discussed, either consciously or not. In this BMA we will consider some of the things that should not be done in a job shop that wants to survive.

The manager who looks for employees who agree on all major points is almost sure to fail. The good leader is secure enough to encourage some diversity among the people in the company. Good managers give serious consideration to opinions and ideas different from their own. Don't discourage conflict. Don't hire only "yes- men."

Teamwork is important to success, and the shop with a manager who wants to make every decision, do all the tough jobs personally, always steer the course alone, will stay small and will eventually collapse. The good manager finds help when it's needed, hires good people with ideas of their own, and provides an environment in which the can excel.

TARGETS CAN ALWAYS BE RAISED

At the time you started your shop, you probably had in mind some other successful person who had done something similar, and you tried to emulate that person. You followed someone you considered a good example. As a shop grows, new examples, more successful role models must be chosen, and new targets set. Participating in trade associations, visiting other shops, reading the magazines, and developing some friends in the business will allow new targets to be set, and even more growth. Don't stagnate.

And remember that other generations than your own also may have a great deal to contribute. Young people, with educations quite different from that provided to your age group, bring new approaches and new solutions. Older people, especially those with a diversity of experience, can provide needed wisdom - even if they gained their experience in a different industry. Don't limit your hiring to people of your own age, or sex, or race.

And mingling with your own people, with little concern about who is a "shop" person and who is "office," with no barriers against who might contribute ideas, helps too. Walking around the shop and talking to anyone who wants to talk keeps one in touch, and provides opportunities to motivate and stimulate others. Don't isolate yourself.

One of the best managers I ever knew was considered "lucky" by some of his peers. He admitted to being lucky, and said, "The harder I work the luckier I get." Of course, he was also intelligent and creative and had some other virtues we learned about in the Boy Scouts. The point is that success comes to those people who do work hard, who work long hours, and who are smart enough to excel. Avoid undue stress, and listen to your doctor about the dangers of spending too many hours on the job, but don't withhold effort. Someone is gaining on you.

THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Start-up companies are almost always a result of a dream. The dreamers, rather than seeing things as they really are, see success just around the corner and make it happen. The cold, hard truth of the situation never penetrates their thoughts, so they overcome adversities without really acknowledging that they might not be able to do so. A positive attitude, self-confidence and strong belief in yourself and your people will win most of the time. So, don't be negatively realistic about things.

We've read about the 98 pound mother who lifted a refrigerator off her child, or the polio victim who ran a four-minute mile. They are examples of what a person who believes in himself can do. Businesses have capabilities to excel, too. In tough situations, a team can accomplish things that appear to be impossible. Don't ever give up.

Perseverance is a virtue, however, only when one persists in doing the correct things and doing it in the correct way. In the job shop business, one can't keep trying every new idea

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that comes along, taking new chances every day, without planning and performing. Develop a plan that fits your talents, modify it frequently, check your progress, and keep raising the target. Don't justify by the seat of your pants.

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