



PARTNERING

Staying Competitive in Today's Challenging Production Environment

By Juli Fortune, EDSYN, Inc.

Competition is generally good, however, it can strangle innovation and lead to a loss of focus as manufacturers strive only to produce "the next best thing." For companies that are driven by competition alone, the words of author Edward Abbey may prove alarmingly prophetic. "Where all think alike, there is little danger of innovation," he stated famously. These words were part of the mantra of the late Bill Fortune, founder of EDSYN. He focused strongly on innovative products that were designed to ensure that technicians and operators worked as productively and efficiently as possible. Even the company name reflected this ideal as it stands for "Engineering Dedicated to Suit Your Needs."

The trend today seems to be toward adding extra features to an existing product to make it appear different. Closer examination of these "new features" reveals that they are often impractical and unnecessary. Developing a productivity strategy which includes evaluating the tools required within the manufacturing process ensures that when purchasing the perceived "latest and greatest" it actually works for productivity and not against it. If an added feature does not improve productivity, it does not address the real needs of the manufacturer. When purchasing a product, the astute production manager will ask, "Will it deliver superior results in the quickest time? Will it improve productivity levels? Am I likely to experience sudden and unexplained downtime that I can't manage or control? Is it reliable, efficient, easy to use and maintain? Does it provide value for money, and is it cost-efficient?"

Fortune's Legacy

With these questions in mind, Bill Fortune founded EDSYN in 1961 and dedicated himself to making life easier for electronics manufacturers. The company fields a line of soldering and desoldering tools, along with rework systems, all designed to boost the user's productivity.

That same year, the company introduced the industry's first desoldering hand tool called Soldapull[®]. The tool delivered an efficient and productive method of removing solder from a board. This groundbreaking technology launched an industry revolution and propelled the company forward. Over the next five decades, Bill continued inventing many of the technologies found in the electronics manufacturing industry

today. His wife Shirley named and marketed his inventions, which ensured that they reached the widest possible audience and enabled the brand to remain strong.

This ties in to the concept that remaining competitive in today's global market is a must for every manufacturer, but attracting and keeping customers is becoming more of a challenge. Some believe that beating the competition is all about innovation to meet the demands of the ever-changing market, especially where technology is concerned. Others improve their bottom line by cutting costs wherever they can. In an economy where manufacturers may have few employees and possibly little available cash, the need to increase production output is all the more important.

The Right Tools

How does a productivity strategy help the manufacturer remain competitive? Generally, when the term "productivity" is used, thoughts turn to such topics as time-management, performance indicators, training, or reducing distractions in the

overall manufacturing process. Distractions can come in many forms and guises, but the one that the manufacturer must pay special attention to is the loss of productivity due to downtime. Downtime is a threat to any business and can be the result of a simple power outage, up to a devastating natural disaster.

Downtime can be managed and maintained by taking control of the tools, equipment and products used within individual production processes. For example, when purchasing a piece of equipment, consider whether it is price or quality based.

Also, take into account if the purchase is about efficiency or needing something to get the job done. Finally, will what is purchased be an integral part of the productivity strategy?

Today, EDSYN still manufactures innovative products at its factory in Southern California. In 2014, the company launched its "Legacy Series" product line, which pays tribute to Bill Fortune and solidifies his own legacy for generations to come. The company is also one of the last remaining manufacturers of soldering and desoldering equipment that is based in the U.S. EDSYN employs approximately 25 people and each tool is carefully and meticulously handcrafted.

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