

Lessons Learned - Be willing to change and adapt



Global Marketing & Sales Committee – Lessons Learned

Be willing to change and adapt



This past October I faced a bit of a dilemma while attending the 2009 AMT Global Forecasting & Marketing Conference. I have found each conference I've attended to be highly valuable to me with plenty of "take-aways" to bring back to the office. However, my attention is usually focused on the "hard" topics of the economy, specific markets and industries.

So, here I am making a decision about attending a session on "Managing Millennials" by Bob Wendover. My first reaction was to snicker a bit, because with all of my problems in 2009, Millennials (defined as the generation born between 1981 and 1999) are the last thing I need to worry about. My second reaction was that I have a daughter who is a Millennial and it might be useful father/daughter information, but since Samantha is a sophomore at Miami of Ohio there is little or no "managing" to be done anymore — she is a great young lady and well on her way. We do, however, have the challenge of getting her off Mom and Dad's payroll, and onto someone else's. What to do?

I opened the door ... No doubt there was some other skepticism rolling around the room, with some off-handed comments, and knowing "old guy" smiles from much of the rest of the audience. The presentation began with some interesting statistics that began to catch my attention. Then further discussion about the multi-media, digital, multi-tasking, texting cultural environment that is the only thing this generation has ever known. OK, now I am hooked and taking notes. This has meaning.

What really struck home to me is that we had lost two really bright young Millennials in the summer of last year (they were definitely "keepers"), and in the back of my mind this had been troubling me for some time. This, because the young are our future — even in the machine tool business. The expectations of this generation are different, and we must change and adapt as much or more than they must learn to conform. Importantly, they are not just our new employees, they are our future customers.

We are changing the way that we bring younger employees into our business — providing them with a richer and broader experience during their early years. We will focus more on meaningful projects with a finite beginning and end.

Lessons learned? Well, there were several. First, always, always, always open that door — you can never be 100 percent sure what you will find on the other side. Second, don't forget the soft stuff — it is all about people. Third, make 2010 the year to attend the AMT Global Forecasting & Marketing Conference this October — it is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to learn about our business, our markets and to share

experiences with others in your industry.

You can also catch Bob Wendover at the upcoming Customer Service & Support Conference, April 15-16 in Nashville, Tenn. Visit www.AMOnline.org/ServiceConf for details.

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