

Change Is Inevitable, Growth Is an Option

We all like change—when someone else does the changing. We get the latest and greatest version of whatever product (read Toys for Boys). We don't want last year's car model or previous software release. But how are we at updating or redesigning our own products and services to adapt to changes that are coming at us faster and faster?

Consider how robotics evolved in the automotive industry and eventually worked their way into shot peening cabinets. PLC became so inexpensive that relay logic joined the dinosaurs of technology. Those changes happened slowly compared to the way that the internet and digital communication tools are swiftly changing the way we work. For example, the http-based MTConnect protocol will deliver real-time information on every machine on your shop floor through an iPad or smartphone. Your electronic technicians are more likely to carry an iPad or smartphone than a Volt-Ohmmeter. Calibrations via USB connections have pushed aside small mechanical tools (we used to call them trim-pots because they would trim or adjust a parameter).

Speaking of smartphones, this small, ubiquitous device is changing manufacturing at every level. Electronics Inc.'s customer service staff now asks a customer to snap a photo of the machine with his phone, or maybe even make a short video clip, so we can quickly identify the product and the problem.

Where technology has simplified tracking and analysis issues for customer service, it's presenting challenges—and opportunities—in product design. Products are now expected to store calibration information, record operating time and temperature, and even alert us to when it's time for preventative maintenance or re-calibration.

The industrial world is suffering from chronic high unemployment rates and slow economic growth. But, at the same time, manufacturers desperately need qualified employees. Our local technical college offers two-year programs like the Manufacturing Production and Operations (MPRO) curriculum. The MPRO prepares students to be skilled equipment operators in today's high-tech manufacturing environments. This is a very good thing.

It's challenging, but we're also embracing change and growth at Electronics Inc. because we know that the opportunities are immense. We hope the new year holds positive changes and growth for you and that *The Shot Peener* magazine plays a role in keeping you informed.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

**JACK CHAMPAIGNE****THE SHOT PEENER**

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The Shot Peener

56790 Magnetic Drive
Mishawaka, Indiana, 46545 USA
Telephone: 1-574-256-5001
www.theshotpeenermagazine.com

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