

Make Things Happen

The old way of doing business is no way to do business.



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THE ECONOMY CONTINUES TO SLOW, and business tougher to come by. It's a much more difficult time to achieve sufficient bookings to break even, never mind to make a profit. Yet some cling fast to the old principles, not understanding that to get business means changing the way they do business. There is an aphorism that warns: "If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got."

Another one, sometimes attributed to Albert Einstein, asserts: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results." Frankly, I see these scenarios played out not only in the PCB industry but among contract manufacturers as well. Let me relate a story that really proves the point. While locating contract manufacturers to partner with a board shop client, I had the following phone conversation:

Contract Manufacturer: *Hi, I got this letter from you looking for information about our company. I want to know more about why you need this information.*

DB: *Sure, here's the deal. We're consultants working primarily with board shops. These shops' customers are requesting that they provide more service than simply building the boards. That is, their customers would like them to provide assembly as well.*

CM: *You're saying that these board shops you're working with are looking to partner with contract manufacturers?*

DB: *Exactly. Our customers want to add more value; in some cases, OEMs would like us to provide design, fabrication, and assembly.*

CM: *Who would handle the orders on a deal like this?*

DB: *It would vary. In some cases the board shop would be the prime. They would get the P.O. for fabrication and assembly and then they would place the assembly with the contract manufacturer. In many cases I think the board shop would ask the CM to act as the prime as long as the CM guaranteed it would place the board business with the board shop.*

CM: *We wouldn't be interested: We just don't work that way. We need to be in total control; we don't want a board shop between us and the customer. We have never done it that way and don't intend to start now.*

DB: *Really? I'm surprised to hear that.*

CM: *No. that's the way we do business.*

DB: *Okaygreatgoodbye. CLICK!*

I hung up before I could say, "You narrow-minded idiot! Yours must be the only company in the country that has all the business it wants, because how else do you justify closing the door on an opportunity, at this time, in this economy? And all because that's not the way you did it in the past!"

I'm still shocked. How can anyone turn away any opportunity to increase business? What is it about "innovative" that some don't understand? As I mulled this over, another thing hit me. The caller showed trepidation because I had requested his sales literature. Was he afraid it would fall into the wrong hands? Was he afraid that the wrong person might read it? And, if so, who did he think would be the "wrong" person? Let's say his top competitor procured his sales literature: So what?

I knew a company that developed a handsome set of literature. But the sales manager had calculated that each set cost exactly \$4.34, so each time his sales staff requested the

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literature be sent to a prospective customer he would ask, "Are you really sure we should send it? Do you really think they might become a customer? This literature cost \$4.34. Plus postage!"

Times are tough; but that's not the issue. The issue is, you should do whatever you can to increase your business. You should do whatever you can to increase your exposure, and you should do whatever you can to increase the opportunities you get to increase your business. The more you get your name out there in front of as many people as possible, the more you increase your chances for success. And this applies all the time, whether business is good or not.

Getting business is tough enough without the handicap of suspicious, narrow-minded thinking. Welcome every request to circulate your literature. Listen – and act upon – every offer to partner with another company.

In short, do whatever you need to do to make things happen. ○

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