

A Word In Edgewise



VIEWPOINT

Dear Editor:

Re: Your editorial and "Viewpoint" by Joe Arvin.

Both you and Mr. Arvin make some valid points. Your editorial appears to be a response to Mr. Arvin's "Viewpoint." This is a response to both.

The first point you make is that we cannot depend upon any segment of the government complex to assist in "fixing" the problems of the gear industry. The second point is that the industry must develop its own solutions. And

lastly, I believe, your point is that something must be done.

Mr. Arvin notes the amazing growth of the gear industry in the Asian markets he and the INFAC affiliates visited. He points out that the equipment they saw was at or near "state of the art." He also points out that Asian countries have invested heavily in training and research. Noted too is the fact that less attention seems to be paid to worker safety in some countries. His viewpoint reiterates the posture that company training would put his company at a price disadvantage with his competition.

Much of this is true, but nothing is said as to why these conditions exist. Better understanding of the reasons for these differences should lead to better planning for competitiveness.

In all of the countries mentioned, all government agencies, the banking community, and the industrial complex work in consort to develop and advance their business interests and markets. Some of this is true for many European countries as well. In this country and with our system, not only is this improbable, but illegal. Anyone expecting "a level playing field" within his youngest grandchild's lifetime is an extreme optimist. Understanding this may assist us in developing plans for better posturing.

The previous paragraph leaves "an industry solution," "doing something," and "training and research" to be addressed. I believe that these are virtually the same or so interrelated that I cannot separate them.

It has long been my belief that our

education system needs to be directed toward teaching subjects usable in the working world. I also believe that requires the input of every mom and dad and all industrial leaders. All of us, may need a large club to get the educational community's attention, but involvement is in everyone's best interests.

That tips my hand. I believe that involvement in education, at all levels from primary through graduate, does something toward addressing "industry solutions" through training and research. If training and research costs exceed their payback, then we are teach-

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While INFAC and the IITRI gear research facility may address some of the education and research needs of the gear industry, they may also prove the terrible state of our machine tool industry. Other social and industrial communities have banded together to produce facilities similar to Phillips Government Training Center and Precision Engineering Institute and have expanded their industrial base and been less sensitive to recession than areas of the country that have done nothing!

Letters for this column should be addressed to: Letters to the Editor, GEAR TECHNOLOGY, P.O. Box 1426, Elk Grove Village, IL 60009. Names will be withheld upon request, however, no anonymous letters will be published.

One additional point I would like to make is that the gear community has not been supportive of American machinery manufacturers and vice versa. Maybe a solution lies in a program similar to that used by various agricultural sectors. They contribute money to support their research and marketing efforts to an industry council that distributes it where they believe it reaps the greatest reward.

What if...every gear manufacturer in America were to put \$.001/pound of gears cut into a Gear Technology Development Fund accumulated and administered by an industry council? The money could be directed to areas of need in the industry: materials research, heat treatment research, tool development, machine development. No Government! No Banks! No Interest! State of the Art American Machine Tools! Materials! Methods! For All!!!

I mean to include everyone cutting gears of all types from the largest to the smallest instrument gear, including the automotive, HD, and agricultural industries...EVERYONE! Some FUNd! Maybe the amount needs to be only \$.0001/per pound! Who knows? Can an industry council that encompasses everyone manufacturing gears be illegal? Is the Beef Council?

Will we let petty differences keep us from arming ourselves to do battle in the world marketplace? If the Asian experience has not taught us enough, are we waiting for the European Economic Community to teach us the rest of the lesson? When will we learn? Has education failed us? Completely?

There is a way to accomplish more than anyone making gears today dreamed possible to a greater extent than imagined! Do we have the resolve? If not this way, there are others. The question remains, "Do we have the resolve?"

Clem Miller
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Crown Point, IN

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