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The Results Are In

The past several months have been filled with uncertainty. Everyone wanted to wait and see who would be our next president and how the political landscape might change. Now the elections are over, and the polls are all closed, so we should all be getting back to business, right?

Well, not so fast. We've still got that huge budget deficit to worry about. The fiscal cliff looms. And the balance of power in Washington remains pretty much as it was before the elections. So there's still a lot of uncertainty out there. If we do go over the cliff, the impact will be worldwide, and the gear industry will be affected along with all other industries.

But it isn't *all* bad news. We've been doing some polling of our own, in the form of our annual State-of-the-Gear-Industry survey, and the results are presented beginning on page 32. As expected, those results reflect the overall economic uncertainty facing our country and the rest of the world, and they point out many of the serious challenges manufacturers face today. But overall, the business of gear manufacturing remains steady, with our respondents reporting significant optimism about the future.

No matter what else is going on in the world and the economy, gears are still being made. Gear manufacturers continue to invest in technology, improve their quality, increase their productivity and grow their businesses.

Before you jump right into the statistics, I encourage you to read through Jack McGuinn's article on the manufacturing middle class (p. 22) and Matt Jaster's article on current trends in the industry (p. 28). These articles include interviews with a number of industry leaders, who help put the raw numbers into better perspective.

In addition to the questions we ask about business conditions, sales, production, capital spending, and so on, we also use the survey as an opportunity to ask our readers what subjects they're interested in and what types of articles they'd like to read more of. I find some of these results to be the most interesting and insightful regarding our marketplace.

For example, more than half of our respondents indicated they'd like to see more articles on gear inspection and gear grinding—by far the most popular subjects. Heat treating, cutting tools, bevel gears and lean manufac-

turing were also highly ranked, with more than 40% of respondents indicating they'd like to see more articles on those subjects.

We also asked our readers to rank (on a scale from 1-10) the types of articles that are of most value to them. Not surprisingly, technical articles received the highest ranking, with a median score of 8. This has always been the bread-and-butter of *Gear Technology*, and the area where we spend the most effort to ensure that our content is accurate and useful. Our "Ask the Expert" feature scored almost as high, at 7.4. But our staff-written feature articles are also highly valued, with a median score of 7.2. Providing the kind of in-depth coverage we give you every issue in all of these areas requires us to maintain a much larger, more experienced editorial staff than most magazines our size. It's rewarding to know that you value our commitment to the industry.

Clearly we seem to be doing something right. According to the survey, 80% of our readers spend 20 minutes or more with each issue of the magazine, and almost 25% of you spend more than an hour. In a time when attention spans are hard to come by, that really means something.

It also gives us a good road map for the future. With your continuing support and interest, we'll keep producing the highest quality content possible on the subjects you care about most.

P.S. While our survey gives us very good insight into what our readers like and don't like, we'd still like your feedback. If there are gear-related topics you'd like to see covered more, please tell us at publisher@geartechnology.com.