

Step Right Up and Have Your Fortune Told

Most companies spend this time of year crystal ball gazing. Managers want to know the future so they can make projections, plan schedules, determine budgets and make major decisions that will ensure their success.

It would be nice if you could just put on your swami hat and know what was going to happen, but it doesn't work that way. The best you can do is identify what might happen, weigh the risks and costs of various outcomes and plan accordingly. The best planners often seem like fortune tellers, but they're not. They just have better information than everyone else.

As "The Gear Industry's Information Source," we try to do our part to help you stay well-informed. Our annual State-of-the-Gear-Industry survey is just one example (see page 28). Every year since 2006 we've surveyed gear manufacturers around the world to try to get an idea about current trends and future expectations. We're not statisticians, and we don't pretend to be, so we don't expect you to rely solely on this survey to plan your future. But more than 300 gear manufacturers participated, and their responses corroborate the other information we've seen. Call it reading tea leaves by consensus.

And the consensus among gear manufacturers is that 2014 was a pretty good year. Not a year where sales records were broken, but a decent year with modest growth and modest opportunities for more of the same. Not a great year, but not bad either. Gear manufacturers appear to be busy, with steady orders and prospects for work to continue.

Of course, the picture is a little bit different when you break down the numbers and delve into who is saying what. Gear manufacturers in North America are decidedly more optimistic than those in Europe, Asia or just about anywhere else. And naturally, the fortunes of manufacturers who are tied closely to specific industry sectors will follow those sectors more closely than gear manufacturing in general. So if you make gears for mining or construction equipment, your picture may be somewhat less rosy than what I've painted here.

But gear manufacturers seem to be an almost universally optimistic bunch. What

I take away from this year's survey – and from my own personal, anecdotal evidence – is that most gear manufacturers expect 2015 to be a little bit better than 2014. Some of that anecdotal evidence is reflected in Senior Editor



Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
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Jack McGuinn's article on page 22. Jack has interviewed a number of people across a broad spectrum of the industry so that we could share their opinions with you as well.

Like all of you, we here at *Gear Technology* rely on our predictions to make smart decisions for our business. In our case, we're optimistic about 2015, and we've made the decision to invest in our business by adding staff in order to make our products better learning and marketing resources for you.

Kirk Sturgulewski is our new online content manager. With more than a decade of experience in technical development and digital marketing, he is responsible for some of the improvements you'll be seeing very shortly in our e-mail newsletters, product alerts and other electronic communications. He's also working to make our websites more user friendly and accessible, so that no matter where you want access to our content – be it phone, tablet or desktop – the user experience will be smooth and intuitive. If you have any suggestions, you can contact Kirk via e-mail at kirk@geartechnology.com.

We've also hired Erik Schmidt as our new assistant editor. Erik will be responsible for developing our news sections both in print and online, so if you have industry news or new products to share with the gear industry, you can send them directly to erik@geartechnology.com. He'll help you get the word out. Erik will also be working on more in-depth feature articles, so if there are any subjects you think we should cover, we hope you will send him a note.

In addition, we're continuing to invest in making sure that *Gear Technology* can be found wherever there is relevant information related to the latest technology in gear manufacturing. Last issue you read about Jack McGuinn's trip to Lyon France to cover the International Conference on Gears. Last month we sent Managing Editor Randy Stott to the Gleason Works to attend the 5th WZL Gear Conference USA (see p. 100). We're also media sponsors of the CTI symposium on automotive transmissions being held in December in Berlin. If you go to the event, you'll find *Gear Technology* magazine there, too.

According to the best information available, the gear industry should have a strong 2015. We've made plans and investments accordingly. How about you?

