

## ...And Business for All

*"We believe a company consists of management, its workers, its shareholders, and customers. A key to the success of a company is that those four elements should equally enjoy the maximum benefit."*

Konosuke Matsushita

This above quotation relates the philosophy of Mr. Konosuke Matsushita. He was the founder of Matsushita Electric Industrial Company; the company that manufactures products under the names of Panasonic, Technics and Quasar to name a few. The General Electric VCR in my home was made in Japan by the Matsushita Company.

Here is an example of one of the most successful design, development and manufacturing companies in the world and the founder's philosophy dictates that management, its workers, shareholders and customers should all enjoy the maximum benefits. It's inspiring to be able to quote such a successful man who sets a fine example as a team and industry leader.

I have always thought of the corporate structure as an environment providing many individuals, having a variety of backgrounds and responsibilities, with the opportunity to work together for the productivity and benefit of all. Perhaps we should stress Matsushita's philosophy more often to make it function.

There appears to be a new corporate atmosphere in the U.S. that pits the CEOs, MBAs and top management against the engineers, programmers and workers that Matsushita mentions. Some people just want more for less and can never be satisfied. Is it survival, greed or just opportunity that encourages a businessman to raid a company or to pick one's pension pocket or lay people off just prior to vesting or treat co-workers poorly and without respect?

Meanwhile, the engineers, programmers and workers usually get better treatment when demand and utilization are high. During periods of high engineering manpower demand we cultivate better managers and companies since the poor managers lose engineers as their engineers seek

the better companies, skill enhancement opportunities and an improved work environment. It isn't long before top management isolates and replaces the managers that can't keep their staff and improvements do result. During low demand periods we must work for shoddy managers and bean counters that exist only because we have a manpower surplus. Is it possible that engineering manpower supply and demand can also effect the corporate climate?

As engineers, our problems increase with High Tech recessions, lay-offs and low demand. In 1986 Congress told us cuts would be coming due to the military budget reduction. Down sizing and the completion of engineering intensive programs resulted in the displacement of many more engineers and deprived them of employment and, most important, opportunities to increase and broaden their engineering skills. This also has a detrimental effect on U.S. Engineering Capabilities.

Our House of Representatives plays a major role in the Engineering Manpower Balance and with that role the ability to influence the corporate climate, work environment and productivity. We should remember that the worker, technician, programmer and engineer should also enjoy the benefits with management, the shareholder and the customer. Perhaps industry leaders with Mr. Konosuke Matsushita's philosophy could improve the corporate climate. However, I believe we need wiser representatives in Congress who are concerned about engineering utilization and U.S. engineering capabilities to set the foundation for this corporate atmosphere to flourish.

The AEA and members of the engineering community will have to undertake the task of informing and educating our representatives so they may strive for a Manpower Balance and full utilization of our engineers and technical workforce. This is the first step in making Konosuke Matsushita's philosophy, once again, become a reality.

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