

The President's Message

What Actions Have You Taken?



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Now that we have all been back from the FEDA Convention for several weeks, it seems appropriate for me to ask, “What are you doing with the knowledge you gained?”

The Convention Planning Committee focused a great deal of effort on ensuring each of the speakers at the 2017 FEDA Convention offered action items at the end of their presentations. Remember the new “ABCs of Selling” keynote Daniel Pink left us with: A (Attunement), B (Buoyancy) and C (Clarity) are essential in everything from persuading a team member to trust in your vision to convincing a supplier partner to work with the KEC before bypassing the dealer network.

As I reviewed my notes, I realized—first and foremost—how poor my handwriting is, which promptly made me so thankful that we have audio available for all of the workshops and general sessions. There were plenty of take-away nuggets, all of which are only beneficial if I take action—soon. Otherwise, it is very likely that my organization will not benefit from the time I spent in San Antonio.

My personal plan is to begin with my own weekly “genius hour,” by devoting at least 60 minutes to work on new ideas or master new skills. This will give me the space to allow myself the time to absorb and develop more of the content into an actionable, impactful plan for my company. (Thanks, again, Daniel Pink). Here are the items that are on my radar from the FEDA Convention:

1. Ensure our sales professionals have “buoyancy” by coaching them through the hardest part of being in sales—facing a continuous ocean of rejection. (Daniel Pink)
2. Enhance our current innovation

process by getting our team on board with the “genius hour” concept, allowing them the time and space to innovate and create a better path. (Daniel Pink)

3. Teach young employees how to sell an idea up the “hierarchy,” while helping them understand the value of getting small wins, trying something new and the art of not bowing to the fear of failure. (Seth Mattison)
4. Remember and share the words of Seth’s grandfather: Love people, serve people, add value and HAVE FUN!
5. Implement professional interviewing techniques and processes to ensure we make the best hire possible in this highly-competitive time. (Stephanie Bean of Ace Mart and the entire “How to Professionally Interview Candidates” roundtable group)
6. Test at least five of the apps that were presented to make my work or home life more productive/profitable: Slack, Animoto, Charlie, Expensify & HelloGbye. (Your Nerdy Best Friend, Beth Z)
7. Spend time working to develop our story and mascot to make our brand more impactful to customers and prospects. (Johnny Cupcakes)

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Schmitt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Foster Frable continued

NAFEM Show was one of the best ever, but it would be great to keep the momentum going and not wait another two years to see what's new. □

Notable Takeaways



-There were several equipment copies/clones on display—and not just the standard off-the-shelf stuff, but advanced technology equipment like microwave-assisted panini grills and induction ranges. Although some of this equipment may offer good performance, they are, nonetheless, high-tech products with complex systems and controls. Buying this type of product from a copycat manufacturer comes with risk. For example, will they be around when there are maintenance and/or warranty issues?



-There appeared to be renewed interest in kettle-type cook chill systems used by commissaries and large institutions. Both Tucs and Groen have completely redesigned their products, which I assume is related to the growth of home meal delivery services. Large commissaries are popping up in many metro areas to service this market.



-Cleaning, or lack thereof, is a big issue. As I walked the show, I had my eye out for new products that had been prototypes at NAFEM 2015, NRA, or the HOST show in Milan. At that time, those products were already selling in Europe, in final development, or promised for a U.S. rollout in 2017. Sadly, every single one of the seven products I went looking for were substantially delayed, in terms of rollout, or their manufacturers have no plan for them to be released in the U.S. market at all.

The explanation given was that because many U.S. operators and chefs do not clean or maintain equipment, failure rates and warranty repair rates are excessive. Consequently, not only are users unhappy, but the cost to manufacturers is significant. As equipment becomes even more automated, I believe this will be a big issue for operators—as the sophistication level of equipment escalates, so does the need for cleaning and daily maintenance.

Perfect Location continued

fluorescent fixtures with electronic ballasts and sensors to turn on only the lights where people were working. Even without the utility company rebate, this produces a two-year return on investment. Adding in the electric utilities' support, takes the return to three months. There is also a significant public relations advantage. Environmental awareness, coupled with rapid return, can be turned into a strong sales point.

Selective Pruning

In most remodeling projects, it is faster, easier and cheaper

to rebuild rather than cutting, fitting and patching. The office area was a warren of small spaces, inadequate washrooms, patchwork electrical, and worn out utilities. The solution was to remove all the walls except those that were perfectly situated for the master plan. Everything fell into place when the front door was moved to enhance the first impression of the property and the counter entrance was redesigned for ease of customer parking and loading. Essentially, the area was completely gutted and everything dead or extraneous removed. This left only the best parts and none of the compromises.

There is Still Time to Change

If our client has the perspicacity to see an opportunity and seize it, so can you. At the very least, find the perfect location for a new facility. If there is an existing structure currently available, an investment partnership may be a vehicle for controlling it so that the facility is available when you need it. Renting the property to others can provide immediate income and help fund future remodeling. Similarly, tying up a parcel of land through outright purchase, or a first option, guarantees availability when you are ready to move.

Putting a master plan and team in place now, and preparing for the future, guarantees that you can move quickly at the perfect moment. The Latin phrase *carpe diem* means seize the opportunity. It is as true today as it was 2,000 years ago. □

About the Author

Robert B. Footlik is a licensed professional engineer in the U.S. and abroad, who graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology as an industrial engineer, and has worked extensively in the fields of materials handling, plant layout, packaging and management systems, throughout the world.

President's Message continued

- Remember that we only have to develop an idea 80 percent to begin testing and implementation, and then the most critical step is to debrief as we progress on the execution of continual improvement. (Carey Lohrenz)
- Focus on the countless interactions with other dealers and manufacturers that help me continue to grow, and learn how to address issues or questions that may seem difficult because we have not faced them previously in our business.
- Take dance lessons or quit trying. My apologies to everyone who was unfortunate enough to have watched me participate in an impromptu dance party at the closing banquet.
- Over the years, we've often heard Ray fondly say, "It's the people you meet and the relationships that you build that make the FEDA Convention a great investment." I'd like to amend that. "It's the people you meet, the relationships you build and the actions you take..."