

Every Day is a Winding Road

We sometimes joke that our industry moves at a glacial pace—especially considering how old some of the Mil-Spec products are that still get spec'd in on new interconnect designs. But despite the many “static” markers revealing how slow and steady our industry can be, there are far more indicators that we exist in a “dynamic” business environment. The concept of dynamic versus static is an interesting one to explore. For example, we have braiding rigs on our factory floor that so exactly accomplish the work they were designed for that the equipment has seen little or no change in over 50 years. On the other hand we have new and advanced CNC machining centers and robotic assembly equipment that has dynamically improved the productivity and safety of our factory. The opportunity is always there for improvement. It just takes an appetite for innovation and change—a willingness to embrace the dynamic nature of the world—to move the operation forward.

A good historical example of resistance to change can be found in the rail industry, where the introduction of the automatic air brake made freight train operation safer and more efficient. Formerly, railway brakemen would move rapidly from car to car manually turning hand brakes—big wheels mounted high up on the sides of each rail car—to slow the train during a long descent. Automatic air brakes made this operation much safer and far more reliable—both for workers and the public. And yet years after air brakes had become a required standard on all freight trains, brakemen were still required by work rules and contracts to be present on every train—even though they no longer had a useful role to play in the operation of the train.

I suspect there are countless examples of this type, where business managers, government regulators, standards bodies and others have been more inclined to hold to a set of static rules than to interact with the world in a more dynamic fashion. But just imagine if everybody did this! If a ball club manager never adjusted his starting lineup, if a product manager never looked for ways to make existing solutions better, if an engineer never embraced technologies that improved the performance and reliability of an important system.

At Glenair we believe it is far better to go through life adhering to a set of core principles—all the while being open to adjustments and change—than it is to lay down rigid rules or “recipes” for how every circumstance in our business should be managed. *Every Day is a Winding Road*, or so goes the song. To me this means every day is guaranteed to be full of twists and turns, and that we are at our best when we remain as flexible and as open to new ways of doing things as we can in our ongoing pursuit of excellence and sustainability in every market we serve.

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