

Group Focus versus Individual Focus

It's a very sobering feeling to be up in space and realize that one's safety factor was determined by the lowest bidder on a government contract.

I love this quote from Alan Shepard—even though those of us actually in the business of supplying technology for space know that being the lowest bidder is hardly what wins you the business. Rather, it is delivering a product so full of value and so exactly tailored to solving the customer's problem that you win in spite of your price tag. Glenair has been in exactly this business mode since we designed and built Commander Ed White's "Golden Umbilical" for the first US spacewalk in 1965. From backshells on the International Space Station to connectors and cables on the JPL Mars Curiosity Explorer, Glenair has been a go-to partner to NASA, ESA and the broad range of commercial OEM's engaged in the aerospace field.

In the January 2014 issue of *QwikConnect* I paid tribute to the marketing side of our business and thanked that team for their dedication and commitment to their work. Operations, the folks who equip and run our five factories in Glendale, Anaheim, Chicago, Mansfield and Bologna, are no less devoted to their endeavors. And when it comes to the quality and "safety factor" that occupied Admiral Shepard's thoughts as he walked upon the moon, it is our operations team that ensures our interconnect technology gets made right and performs as intended on every mission.

Which brings me to the real topic of this article, *group focus versus individual focus*. It has been my experience that most successful organizations—especially in their formative years—are able to stay focused on larger, shared goals while subordinating individual and department-level goals. But that over time, especially as they "grow and mature," organizational focus tends to shift away from larger, shared goals to an unfortunate prioritization of individual or departmental achievement. We fight this tooth and nail at Glenair. For example, we structure our incentive program so that rewards are tied to the performance of the entire organization. Likewise we specifically enjoin division managers from forecasting production or sales goals for their particular unit. Rather, we revel at our total monthly booking and shipment numbers and enjoy the benefits of each good month as a team.

No one is better at following this wisdom than our operations team. Whether we are building Micro-D's in Mansfield for an ESA satellite application, SuperNines in Glendale for a commercial launch vehicle, or Super-ITS connectors in Bologna for a ground support application, our operations team knows it is "group" focus and not "individual" focus that's going to get the job built and shipped on time. So bravo to all of you committed to following this key principle as we continue to deliver interconnect solutions that give our space explorers and customers peace of mind as they "walk upon the moon."

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