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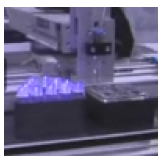
Video Interview: Packaging automation trends from Festo's perspective >>

Watch this brief video interview with Mike Harper, who speaks to the trends that he's seen over the last 10 years in packaging automation, specifically for washdown, food, medical device or harsh environment applications. Cost implications are addressed.



Video: Inexpensive, high-speed pick-and-place robot for packaging >>

Video shows a demo of the Tripod high-speed, light-payload, 4-axis pick-and-place robot that is servo-powered and controlled by a true robotic controller, but uses linear actuators for lower cost.



Video: Precision multi-axis control for pharmaceutical vial filling >>

Video of vial filling demo shows two axes of motion controlled by an 8-axis control that's mounted right into the valve manifold. Permits adding axes of electrical actuation to

It's a New Year - What sort of customer will you be?

December 18, 2009

It's late December, and when the Christmas rush is over, our thoughts may turn to resolutions for the new year. I have a suggestion that you might want to consider. Resolve to become a better customer.

You may be a customer buying parts or services to assemble packaging machines. You may be a customer buying \$25 million packaging lines. You may simply be a customer of someone in your company who provides your department with information or a service. We are all someone's customer.

About a decade ago, industry began new procurement practices that have led to many of us becoming bad customers and have contributed to the general decline of civility in our society. I've seen the evidence of this from both sides of the aisle, and my conclusion is that we have all been ill-served.

Somehow management became convinced that nothing counted but the lowest cost. They lost site of the fact that customers often don't understand what they need or want (especially in an era of down-sizing), may ask for the wrong thing and hold unreasonable expectations. They became convinced that hard-nosed negotiations and a stubborn resolve to hold the supplier, alone, responsible for performance was the way to save themselves to success.

This procurement approach has led to many adversarial win-lose or lose-lose propositions. It achieves the desired outcome of low cost, at most, only once. In a tight-knit industry like packaging machinery, word gets around. Suppliers subscribe to the old adage fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.

Although there is probably no line item for it on anyone's pricing schedule, quotes for difficult or arrogant customers are higher than quotes for polite tuff-but-fair customers. Results achieved by customers who seek win-win opportunities are always better than results achieved by customers who find satisfaction in win-lose transactions. These realities should be obvious to all of us, but somehow, many of us have been blinded to these facts of life.

As the New Year approaches, ask yourself what sort of customer you have become. No matter the answer, we can all be better. We all can contribute to raising the level of civility in the new decade. And with increased civility, our companies can achieve lower costs and improved results if each of us resolve to become a better customer.



About Keith Campbell

Leaders learn from the past while looking to the future - and bring both to bear on the here and now. This is the philosophy that has steered Keith Campbell's 30+ years in manufacturing. It has worked for him in operations, maintenance, engineering, R&D, education, consulting and professional organizations--and now he's putting it to work for you--taking you to the edge of his thoughts on packaging operations.

Suggestions?

Is there some place, event or thing that Keith should check out? [Send your suggestions to Keith >>](#)

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