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Adapting to Change is One of the Main Keys to Success

Gary Breed
Editorial Director



I think it was one of those self-help shows on PBS—that's where I first heard the statement in the title above. Although it is just one of many ideas that make sense, it is especially timely today.

Changes over the past four or five years have been dramatic—from a booming economy to a struggling one, from a high-riding stock market to big investment losses. We must add that the attacks of September 11, 2001 suddenly changed the attitudes of many people as our country showed a new kind of vulnerability. Then we engaged in military actions that required significant changes in the way our intelligence services and Armed Forces function.

These changes have affected us at every level. Individuals saw retirement accounts and other investments shrink. As stock prices dropped, the misdeeds of corporate executives and investment firms were exposed, which further accelerated the decline. At all levels of government, lower tax revenues and higher public safety costs combined to create unprecedented budget cuts. And the cycle of decline kept going for a while longer.

In response to the sharp, deep recession, we all changed the way we do things, both personally and in business. Many of the changes are likely to remain permanent, at least until the next crisis requires a new response. Now that things are getting a little better, we can look back and see how some of us have adapted to these changes.

In business, one of the biggest changes has been a new emphasis on productivity—the most dollars in revenue per man-hour. This has happened at three distinct levels. First was the expected trimming of waste from the way things were done when things were booming. Next was downsizing to adjust to the lower sales that most companies experienced. This was the most visible effect of the recession, as workers were laid off, salaries reduced and benefits cut back.

For companies with sufficient financial reserves and good management, a third step was taken: re-thinking their business practices with an eye to permanent improvements in both market awareness and production efficiency. Perhaps the most encouraging news about these new methods is that no two businesses did it exactly the same way. The solutions are as diverse as the markets served and technologies used, as well as the personalities of their owners and management.

I hope the new methods will continue to develop long after the time when business is good enough to forget how bad this recession was! When times are difficult, the ability to run a smart, efficient business is essential, but it's just as important when times are good.

On the personal level, many people have not yet become part of the recovery. Business has not yet improved enough to bring nearly everyone along, as it did in the 1990s. And, some businesses didn't survive the changes, either closing or being acquired and having their product lines combined with the acquiring company's.

A modest downside is that employment recovery is slowed by this new business efficiency—fewer workers are needed when productivity is high.

The recovery is moving ahead cautiously, and things finally seem

to be steadily moving forward. It will be interesting to see what the general “buzz” will be at the upcoming MTT-S International Microwave Symposium. This event will be a good indicator of business recovery and technology advancement within the RF/microwave industry.

In This Issue

The May 2004 issue of *High Frequency Electronics* continues our growth—part of our own response to changes in our business and personal lives. We have several useful articles on a variety of topics, from tutorial-level notes on specifying filters to advanced measurement techniques. Also in the mix are articles on both classic RF techniques (power amplifier matching) and those required for high-speed digital design (measuring jitter). Our well-rounded coverage also includes

a Technology Report on recent FCC actions and the introduction of a new EDA product for RF and analog IC development.

This issue also has our regular highlights of a couple of product areas, in this case, test equipment and RF power devices. The product focus areas for the next few issues includes capacitors, inductors and mm-wave products in June, wireless modules and coaxial cables in July, plus amplifiers and test accessories in September.

The regular New Products columns in the July and September issues will include many of the new products introduced at the MTT-S exhibition in Ft. Worth. Be sure to check them out, along with more of the top-quality technical articles that we work hard to locate and present to you—the engineers who need the right information.