

ICMA Spotlight

Universal Electric Foundry, Inc.

Since 1912, Universal Electric Foundry has been loyally serving the casting needs of numerous industries across the United States and around the world. Back in 1912, the company started as Universal Brass Foundry. The founder, John Norwell Jr. emigrated from Lithuania where he had been a cabinetmaker. The only employment available at the time was working as a laborer in a local foundry in Chicago. After a few years, with newly acquired skills, John Norwell Jr. started his own foundry with six employees. Castings were produced for the plumbing, gear, dental, and dairy industries. Noteworthy were decorative radiator caps cast in dairy metal, a polished silver appearing alloy. A variety of configurations were cast such as angels, animal heads and whatever the public fancied.

While brass and aluminum were the most popular alloys poured, dairy metal gained in favor with new customers in the valve and food machinery industries. Higher nickel alloys were also in demand

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THE ILLINOIS CAST METALS ASSOCIATION Runner

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From Executive Director Stan Zielinski . . .

Manufacturers returning to the United States

There appears to be quite a bit of interest by manufacturers to reassess the value of outsourcing production to offshore sites. The industry is experiencing some movement to return to the United States to help reduce manufacturing costs, according to: "Manufacturers Consider Migrating Back to U.S.," a recent article from IndustryWeek.com. (Penton Media Inc. March 2009). This change suggests that rising transportation and fuels costs as well as the global financial meltdown are being examined closely by businesses. Hopefully, the good news is this tendency might continue and open up more jobs for American workers.

Over the years, manufacturers began moving their production offshore mainly to meet foreign competition and reduce operating costs. Unfortunately, they also left abandoned plants and laid-off workers that resulted in higher unemployment. Now, they're experiencing increasing costs due to growing freight costs while at the same time, they're being hit with less control over product quality and slower transportation schedules, along with rising commodity prices as well. The dol-

lar has dropped in value to the Chinese Yuan and China's manufacturing wages are on the rise, according to the results of a study conducted by Archstone Consulting. Other concerns include slower delivery time, reduced supply chain flexibility, lost control over supply chain quality and increasing bottlenecks in logistics networks, according to the survey.

And on a similar theme, the American Die Casting Association reports that its members are experiencing increased sales of diecast components, according to an article from *Foundry Management & Technology* (Penton Magazine, March 2009). The results of a survey conducted by the ADCA indicate that customers are concerned about product quality and metal costs, and supplier location as well as transportation costs and delivery time.

What does this tell us? Well, we still have a long way to go to see more American manufacturers return to the states but we're hopeful. One example is Stroh Die Casting, located in Milwaukee where sales manager Andy Stroh (member of the North American Die Casting Assn.), who participat-

ed in the NADCA survey, reports that OEM manufacturers are considering relocating domestic suppliers back to the U.S. because of poor quality of imported diecastings. He also noted that more parts are damaged during shipping because of poor packaging. "We are tooling up an aluminum diecast part for a company in Green Bay, WI, that was previously made in China," Stroh says, "The customer had quality issues with the part . . . that's why we got the work — because of our proximity to the customer. . . ."

Other casting companies are reporting that they're receiving more contracts because of their quality work and closer locations, and lower transportation costs and, without any increased capital costs on their parts. Along with this trend, we could see improved customer service, more innovation and job growth. This is not to say that we're seeing a mass return of manufacturing to the United States but, at least, it's a start. The foundry industry is hopeful that this movement could stimulate a resurgence of businesses taking a serious look at coming back home. We can only hope.

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Conflicts in the workplace: Top 10 workplace dysfunctions and how to TERMINATE them

by Roxanne Emmerich

The dysfunctional workplace is a killer. Untreated it will kill off your customer base, your profits, and your joy for living as surely as anything.

As managers, leaders and top executives within your organization, you've got to kill the conflicts in your workplace first before dysfunction takes hold.

The top ten workplace conflicts that disrupt organizations — and the cure for each

No. 1: No teamwork

The best managers lead a team — not just a group of individual employees. If you have employees at odds and you show no desire to fix it, then you are leading your organization to a disaster. So, make sure that the most direct supervisor meets with those involved in a workplace conflict to learn what it will take to resolve it and to secure a firm commitment to do so. Don't forget to spell out immediate consequences in the event of failure.

No. 2: Saying one thing and meaning another.

If you have an employee

with a pattern of saying, "But what I meant was . . ." call them on it. Requiring the offender to have all communications checked for clarity for a period of time usually nips this in the bud fast.

No. 3: Giving lip service to new ideas then undercutting them in private.

You'll want to enlist everyone's help in keeping this workplace conflict out. Make it clear that dissenting opinions are welcomed during decision making, but that once a decision is made, undercutting will not be tolerated.

No. 4: Defensiveness at reasonable suggestions.

As a manager, it is your responsibility to let your team know that you consider a willingness to improve to be one of the hallmarks of a person with a bright future in your company. Defensiveness should be viewed as what it is — an unwillingness to improve one's self.

No. 5: Attraction to chaos.

Pot stirring is a violation of principles and a threat to productivity. Counterbalance the pleasure they get from drama

with a greater measure of negative consequences.

No. 6: Not following through on commitments.

Let your team know that they are expected to acknowledge errors and make a commitment to clean up every last bit of the resulting mess.

No. 7: Deflecting blame.

Deflecting blame equals deflecting responsibility. Make it clear that the only acceptable behavior is acceptance of responsibility and (as above) quick work to clean up the mess.

No. 8: People pretending like they "never got the memo."

If there was no breakdown in the actual system, make it clear that the employee is responsible for consistently accessing internal communications like memos and emails so that he is never again "out of the loop."

No. 9: Refusing to deal with conflict directly.

Conflict resolution is an essential part of a manager's job. Performance reviews can and should count disruptive interpersonal conflicts against

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SPOTLIGHT

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requiring higher pouring temperatures and more technical expertise. New electric induction furnaces were purchased to meet the needs of these alloys and eventually 60 different varieties of metals composed this small specialty foundry. The company name was changed in the early 1960's to highlight induction melting and remove brass as the prime alloy. Eventually, the foundry expanded to two

locations with 40 employees. New processes were acquired to further improve quality. Universal became the first U.S. foundry to utilize the French Spal process to control melt atmosphere and the SO₂ core process greatly enhanced casting production.

Today, Universal Electric Foundry is still a family owned and operated enterprise with fourth generation family member, Rodney Norwell as president. While the company is still small in employment numbers,

family pride in workmanship is still number one. Universal Electric foundry has been loyally serving the casting needs of numerous industries across the United States and around the world. UEF is dedicated to the satisfaction of their valued customers. Quite simply that means quality and service. And over the last 96 years of business that's just what customers have come to expect from us — not as a couple of corporate catch phrases, but a way of doing business everyday.

Value Statement: "We are dedicated to the satisfaction of our valued customers. Quite simply that means quality and service.. And over the last nearly 90 years of business that's just what our customers have come to expect from us—not as a couple of corporate catch phrases, but a way of doing business everyday."

Universal Electric Foundry, Inc. is a loyal member of the ICMA.

Illinois Iron Furnace Historic Site

The Illinois Iron Furnace is the only remaining iron furnace structure in the state of Illinois. Iron was manufactured at the Illinois Furnace by the charcoal blast method. The furnace was built on a dry laid limestone foundation. The exterior of the furnace was manufactured of large limestone blocks quarried near the town of Cave-In-Rock. The interior wall, or lining, was constructed of firebrick from Pennsylvania. The space between the interior and exterior walls was filled with sandstone. Wrought iron binders were placed through the stonework and tightened to secure the walls. All of the stonework was dry laid to allow for expansion when the furnace was in blast.

It took approximately forty men working in two shifts to keep the furnace in full blast. Workmen at the furnace included a general manager, at least two founders, a chief filler with five to seven assistants, a keeper and one or more helpers, a molder, a gutterman with four or five helpers, and five or six miscellaneous laborers. Workmen away from the furnace included many woodchoppers, colliers, iron ore miners, limestone quarrymen and teamsters.

A.H.Worthen recalled production at the Iron Furnace: It was built about 1837, and rebuilt and enlarged in 1856,

and continued operations until the beginning of the rebellion in 1861, when it stopped. It was 32 feet in height; the hearth and inner walls were built of the sandstone, and the outer walls of limestone. The blast entered the hearth on one side, while the iron was drawn from the opposite side and the slag from a third, while the fourth was closed. The blast entered was furnished by two horizontal double-acting cylinders, driven by steam power, and could be applied either hot or cold. The flame at the top of the furnace was conducted under a steam boiler, then around a heating apparatus for the blast, and escaped thence through a chimney. The ore was first burned on log heaps, to expel the water and prepare it for the furnace. Two hundred bushels of charcoal from oak and other hardwoods, were consumed in the production of a ton of pig iron. The furnace is said to have yielded nine tons of pig metal every twenty-four hours. It was usually run from six to nine months in the year, according to the facility with which the ore was obtained. The metal produced was of excellent quality, and always commanded the highest market price.

The iron castings called "pigs," were transported to Elizabethtown along the Ohio River. From there it was shipped out to manu-

factures. Worthen indicates the Illinois Iron Furnace shut down in 1861.

Although there was a need for iron during the Civil War, the lack of men to work at the furnace may have hampered attempts to smelt iron during and after the War. The furnace appears to have been in operation sporadically between 1872 and 1879. In August 1880, the Illinois Iron Furnace was "blown in" and manufacturing continued through 1887.

The furnace was partially destroyed in the 1930's to supply rock rubble for the embankments of the Hog Thief Creek Bridge built by the CCC. The current appearance of the Illinois Iron Furnace is due to a reconstruction in 1967. The reconstructed furnace core is solid, having been filled with rubble and concrete.

For More Information contact the Hidden Springs Ranger District, 602 N. First Street, Vienna, IL 62995, (618) 658-2111, www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/sha/wnee.



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On the lighter side . . .

Never put off till tomorrow what can be put off till day-after-tomorrow just as well.

~ Mark Twain

EPA begins new cleanup in Ottawa, Illinois

In late April, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 will begin a \$1.6 million Superfund project to remove contamination from a city parking lot in Ottawa, Illinois. Construction equipment and workers in protective clothing will be visible near the intersection of Jefferson and Clinton Streets. The work is expected to wrap up by July.

The Ottawa Radiation Areas site, located in LaSalle County, Illinois, consists of 16 areas polluted by radioactive materials. The 16 areas are scattered throughout the city of Ottawa and places outside the city. The areas were put on the National Priorities List as one site because the same wastes polluted each area.

The pollution came from

the Radium Dial Co. (from 1918 to 1936) and Luminous Processes, Inc. (from 1937 to 1978). These businesses made glow-in-the-dark dials for clocks and watches using radium-based paint. Building demolition material and soil, polluted with radioactive waste, were used as fill material in the Ottawa area. Many of the 16 areas are residential sections

and include some buildings. EPA removed the polluted soil in the residential areas first and is now working to clean up the rest of the areas.

The excavated material will be sent to an EPA-approved landfill. For more information visit <http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/ottawa>.

Communispond: Stoic wisdom

The Stoic philosophers believed that it was a person's duty to accept things the way they are and not complain too much. One of the great Stoic writers was Epictetus. He left us the following sage advice around AD 70:

"All men's actions proceed from one source; that as they

assent from a persuasion that a thing is so, and dissent from a persuasion that it is not, and suspend their judgment from a persuasion that it is uncertain — so likewise they seek a thing from a persuasion that it is for their advantage."

This doesn't mean that you can't change things; it

just means that it's hard. If your audience sees an advantage to them, you'll have a much easier time of it as a presenter.

He was also proof that accepting things are hard doesn't mean they can't change at all. Epictetus started life as a slave and ended up a respected

and wealthy free man.

That turned out to be the advantage of all of us.

Source: *Communispond*, marketing@communispond.com, phone: 800 529 5925, web: <http://www.communispond.com>, 5 Lauras Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937

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managers on whose watch they occur.

No. 10: Gossiping and backstabbing.

Once you establish a zero-tolerance policy for talking behind another person's back, give your people permission to address conflict head-on, out loud, courageously and honestly. And make it clear that giving or receiving

gossip is not acceptable.

You may have noticed a refrain coming back again and again in this advice: Make it clear. Once you've made the determination to purge your workplace of dysfunctional behavior, your greatest ally and most powerful tool will be clarity. Follow the advice in this article and in my new book *Thank*

God It's Monday and you will terminate all workplace conflicts and improve your organization's productivity.

Author Roxanne Emmerich is renowned for her ability to transform "ho-hum" workplaces into massive results-oriented "bring-it-on" environments. To discover how you can ignite the passion of your employees, catapult performance to new levels, and

boost the morale of your company, subscribe to the *Thank God It's Monday*™ e-zine at www.ThankGodItsMonday.com. Visit the Emmerich Group, Inc. online at www.EmmerichGroup.com. Phone 952-820-0360, toll-free 800-236-5885, Fax 952-893-0502. Address: 8500 Normandale Lake Blvd., Suite 180, Bloomington, MN 55437

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