



Winners

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What It Takes To Achieve Sustainable Success.

At a recent district meeting, a question posed to the panelists was “What will the ‘winners’ in our industry look like, who do you think they will be and why?”

I’d like to say that every member of the PMPA has what it takes to be a winner, and that I haven’t been in a member shop that isn’t able to compete on the world level in some area of its business—even if it isn’t on the basis of low cost labor. But there are certain company competencies I think will make the difference in helping our members achieve sustainable success.

Communication.

Companies that know how to communicate with multiple constituencies at their customers’ will have an edge over those that deal solely with a buyer or purchasing agent. Multiple channels of communication and involvement will be distinct advantages to companies that differentiate themselves from the competi-



tion by managing broader, deeper customer relationships.

Customer knowledge.

Those that know who their customers are (and conversely who they aren’t) will devote more productive energies to satisfying those customers instead of trying to make a fit where perhaps a good fit isn’t possible. Understanding your customers and knowing their requirements are not purchasable assets, but they could be among your company’s most valuable assets.

Self-knowledge.

Companies that know their strengths and weaknesses, and then bid accordingly, avoid some of the pitfalls on the road to success. Your company has certain high-value competencies that make a difference to customers. Knowing and exploiting those competencies is just good business. Similarly, by avoiding areas outside your company’s competency, you can assure that you’ll have the greatest odds for success.

Continuous improvement.

Companies that constantly work on continuous improvement will be winners no matter what the market. Innovating internally and externally, and learning from every transaction, keeps companies moving forward. Those that have an inherent ability to learn from their day-to-day activities are the pacesetters in every market cycle.

Competent change management.

The one thing that is certain in today’s business world is that the rate of change continues to accelerate. Technology, legislation, economic and geopolitical factors all fan the flames of change we face every day. Companies that understand change is inevitable and use change to ratchet up their organizational capabilities further separate themselves from those that manage to merely cope.

Provide customer delight.

Serving my “quality apprenticeship” in the 1980s and 1990s, I was taught that “quality” meant conformance to requirements. In today’s market, zero defects and 100% on-time are the benchmarks of “ordinary” suppliers. To differentiate, delighting customers must become the goal of everyone in your enterprise. Mere conformance to requirements just doesn’t cut it anymore.

Value talent.

Companies that value human talent (as opposed to managing labor costs) will be the real winners. It is your people that continuously improve your company’s processes and customer transactions. It is your people who will find that better way and make it happen for your customers.

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Know where to find assistance.

No man is an island, and in a global economy, no company is either. No one company has every capability or knowledge of every process. That's why belonging to the PMPA can help

make your company a winner. Sharing questions and answers with colleagues at meetings and on the member Listserves, looking up information in the Listserve archives, networking with other members, benchmarking and

referring and subcontracting operations to PMPA member shops that specialize in a particular area are all ways that PMPA membership can help your company be successful.