

Company-wide improvements uplift production and people

Carl Sparks, lead welder on Line 1 at the New Millennium Salem, Virginia plant remembers what working at the plant used to be like. His face would burn. His eyes would burn every time he'd lift his welding helmet to see. At the end of each day, his eyes would be bloodshot and raw from the bright welding and sparks. "Stare directly at the sun for 10 minutes," Sparks explains. "And then put salt in your eyes so they burn and you can't see. That's what it was like."

But Sparks feels better now and has more energy at work. That's because about a year ago, New Millennium bought helmets that have air conditioning and heat packs that flush fresh air into the welder's faces. The fresh air hook-ups can be warmed or cooled from the back of the helmet to keep smoke from coming up inside the helmet into a welder's eyes and nose. Sparks says the helmets look like a cross between a Star Wars storm trooper helmet and a Darth Vader Halloween mask with a hard helmet that covers below the chin and part of his ears.

The new helmets are now used company wide and are just one improvement that represents the New Millennium way.



New welding helmets deliver fresh air that can be warmed or cooled to keep smoke from getting into a welder's eyes and nose.

Salem plant revs up new manufacturing engine

"We took a 1940 model car and turned it into a 2008 Cadillac," said Van Johnson, production manager at the New Millennium plant in Salem. Like other New Millennium plants, Salem is finishing up major renovations and additions.

Ten older buildings were originally housed on the 61-acre property. Smaller offices, tool rooms, electrical and maintenance buildings were replaced with new and renovated structures. New Millennium is renovating 89,000 square feet of the joist building and adding 65,000 square feet. The old corrugated grey tin siding is being replaced by tan metal siding, along with new metal roofing. A new 50,000 square foot deck plant is being built, along with a 34,000 square foot slitter building and a 1,800 square foot locker room/cafeteria. Employees have been working in trailers until a 16,000 square foot office building can be finished.



The Salem plant is renovating 89,000 square feet of the joist building and adding 65,000 square feet.

Continental plant puts finishing touch on upgrades

New Millennium's plant in Continental, Ohio is also completing major renovations.

"The plant is 35 years old and was in pretty bad condition," said Troy Bayman, controller at Continental. "The actual structure was in pretty bad condition."

Eighty percent of the original structure has already been re-roofed and re-sided, and should be completed by the end of August. The existing building of 102,000 square feet was partially demolished to make room for a large addition that

increases the size to 167,360 square feet. The project started in November of 2006 with the expansion of two existing production lines – the short span line (small size joists, like rod and crimp, angle joists that are 8 to 30 inches) and long span line (girders and anything longer than 30 inches).

Like its sister plant in Florence, South Carolina, the Continental plant has a new specialty line. The specialty line is being added in a separate building that will produce large girders, scissors joists, bowstrings, double barrel pitched joists, gable joists and other specialty products.

Leaner and greener company-wide

Another change is the use of water-based paint. The water-based paint is more “green” environmentally friendly than the previously used solvent-based paint that let off emissions and was difficult to clean and remove. In addition, more automated equipment – besides the rigging table – is improving efficiency by drastically decreasing the amount of time spent on moving steel.

“In our old plant we finger printed the steel,” Salem’s Johnson said. “We picked up steel here and set it there and then we did it again. By the time we were done with it we had touched it 10 times. The new system moves stuff much quicker.”

Instead, material is direct-lined to fabricating. Steel is cut and passed straight down the rollers and employees put it together and send it down to welders who have an automatic welding system. The new welding system can handle larger 60-inch wide steel rolls. Weighing 56-60,000 pounds each, the rolls are put on a machine known as “the slitter.” The slitter feeds the 3/16 inch thick steel through the machine and cuts the rolls into small rolls that weigh 1,500-3,000 pounds. Each slit section is then taken to a machine, the channel former, which forms the flat sheets of steel into short pieces of channel.



Renovation begun in late 2006 at the Continental plant has expanded production areas from 102,000 square feet to 167,360 square feet.

“It’s a much more economical process,” Johnson said. “It probably saves 35 seconds every minute.” The end result means customers have an excellent product and are assured of flexible and fast production, Johnson added.

Building momentum for long-term success

All of the upgrades are about to pay off for New Millennium’s customers. The renovations and improvements have helped create a culture change in recent months.

“I feel like we’re ready to keep growing for a long time,” Smith said. “I’ve been ready for it. It wouldn’t surprise me if we get these three plants done and we build two new ones. I like to win. If you act like you’re going to win, you will win. You will win if you stay the course through the pain and the gains.”

Program rollout is “sign” of progress to come

New Millennium is on a roll. On July 23, performance expectations spiked across the company as the new *Flexible to the Finish* marketing and branding program was launched simultaneously at all five plant locations.

The morning began with a live webinar conducted by the general managers for field sales and Ozark, AL personnel unable to attend the day’s on-site meetings. The topic of the day, certain to be a key topic for months to come, was the immediate transition of five plant locations into one company that consistently meets the highest expectations of customers.

During the webinar and on-site events, customer expectations were reviewed along with initial steps to help the company



On July 23, under the theme Flexible to the Finish, a program for elevating company-wide performance was announced. Initial elements of the program include materials that provide a clear and specific understanding of customers’ highest expectations, so that every plant will rise to these challenges.

rise to these customer challenges. Among these steps are a new Customer Service Guide, a new web site, an evolved corporate logo signifying the company's evolution, and a customer appreciation program set to launch in the fall.

Keeping promises

As expressed by Rick Poinsett, GM at the Lake City plant, the success of all future marketing initiatives are entirely dependent on how well New Millennium, as one company, keeps its promises.

"Staying *Flexible to the Finish* is not just a marketing statement," Rick asserted. "We've made a lot of progress in

the last year, but we are not where we want to be as a company in meeting the tightest of customer deadlines and quality expectations. By having every plant focus on specific actions, this program will help us keep the unique promises only New Millennium can offer to customers."

Other comments were just as positive about the program and how New Millennium's unique agility can make a difference in the marketplace. As expressed by Denise Shepherd, dispatcher at the Butler plant: "I think agility does sum us up. We are very flexible. We do everything we possibly can to meet our customer's needs. No matter what we need to do, we go to the nth degree to try to please our customers."

President of Cavalier Steel tells why New Millennium holds promise

As an innovative business owner, Mark Bohling has made several key changes to help streamline Cavalier Steel. Since buying the company in 2001, he has raised production from 400 tons of steel a year to 4,000 tons – and increased the company's sales by nearly 600%.

Cavalier Steel President, Mark Bohling likes to joke he isn't the typical owner of a structural steel company. After going from a pre-law student to an engineering graduate of Stanford University, Mark always had aspirations of becoming the CEO of a large corporation. He climbed the corporate ladder for a while, working for various companies, including Sunbeam-Oster as the Vice President of Manufacturing. Prior to buying Cavalier, he worked at the executive level for Stanley.

"I got a little burnt out," Mark said. "I had given corporate America 20 years. I was tired and decided to do my own thing, to run my own business." Mark said he never intended to be an entrepreneur. He didn't want to build a company from scratch. Instead, he searched for a company to buy in southwest Virginia. That's how he found Cavalier Steel in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Progressive partnership

"When you own a business, you put everything on the line," Mark explains. "You borrow money from banks to fund the business. If you own your own business, and you fail, you not only lose your job but everything you own. That fact is what really builds entrepreneurial spirit in you. You have to make tough decisions and become extremely creative."

Mark sees New Millennium is trying to do similar things, to be creative and find ways to proactively solve customers' problems. "What has always set New Millennium apart is doing a real good job on service and quality, which is why I like to use them," he observed.

Sustaining this winning relationship is no simple challenge however. According to Mark, most of the time the structural steel package follows an orderly delivery cycle, but periodically, sites get ready quicker than originally planned. When that happens the general contractor expects the steel to get there quicker, too. Cavalier Steel must proactively try to meet the timetable and so must New Millennium.

"We try to deliver when the customer wants it," Mark concluded. "New Millennium will say 'let's see what we can do about it.' They make things happen."

High expectations for continued success

Mark Bohling shared the following expectations for mutual success between his company and New Millennium.

No finger pointing – When a problem arises on a job site, Mark said it's important to jump on the problem, get it fixed and get on with life. "Some of my competitors tend to argue about it for a while. When an argument starts, progress stops.

That's when the general contractor becomes angry and things start going downhill from there."

Keep a proactive attitude – "I've never believed in the old manufacturing mentality that you should check your brains at the door," Mark said. Just like at New Millennium, his employees have the authority to make decisions. They think independently and as a team to solve customers' problems.

Put an end to bad habits – Over the years, bad habits become internally focused and create a bad mentality, Mark advised. "The customer is always the problem, nothing is ever wrong internally. There has to be a paradigm shift. What you do internally

is irrelevant unless it satisfies the customer. Without the customer, you only have cost. With only cost, your company will cease to exist over the long run.”

Quality is everyone’s responsibility – Quality assurance means giving suggestions to help improve the company and retain more customers. “Just because we’re doing something one way doesn’t mean it’s the right way,” Mark said. “If someone has a better way to do something and it’s going to improve quality and cut costs, I’m always open to it.”

Use technology to your advantage – Mark joked that Cavalier was “operating in the dark ages” when he first took over. Computers and the internet now make his process more efficient. Instead of manually filling out purchase orders and other requests, everything can be emailed. In addition, he outsources his detailing to achieve far greater efficiency than before.

Setting Sales: Sales Managers embark under New Millennium banner

Sales Managers across the company talked recently about their role and how New Millennium is setting out to achieve customers’ highest expectations

What is the role of Sales Manager at New Millennium?

RM: We’re here for customer support, and to support our outside sales people. It’s all about servicing customers, taking care of problems and setting pricing for different areas. It’s all encompassing. We communicate with production, traffic and engineering. It’s a broad spectrum that we cover.

JM: It’s a lot like we’re driving a car. Our job is to keep in the middle of the road and not jerk left or right. Everyone needs to work together to make sure the customer ultimately gets the delivery they are looking for.

B. Basham: It’s about overseeing the sales department, making sure the customers’ needs are satisfied, especially if there are any special needs. If there’s a problem, we need to be involved and help get that problem resolved. It’s about service, service, service.

B. Barrick: We focus on the business side. We have to maintain a profitable, but seasonally adjusted backlog. That is achieved through teamwork, our internal relationships and by building relationships with clients, by creating value for them.

Is the role of Sales Manager at New Millennium any different than at other joist and deck companies?

B. Barrick: The main thing we do, as Stephen Covey (author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*), says, is “start with the end in mind.” Start with where the customer wants to go and work back from there. Other companies dictate a schedule and stay rigid. We try to maintain flexibility and agility in our schedule to maintain what the customer needs.



“Our goal is to communicate with customers and build a level of trust. As long as we maintain their trust in us, we’re going to be a strong company.”

– Bob Basham, Sales Manager
Salem, Virginia

JM: I think we support customers better when we communicate better between our departments. We don’t lie to customers. It’s great to have a sale, but not at the expense of a customer. You try to do everything you can for your customers, but you can’t be all things to all people, so why lie about things you can’t do. People appreciate that. If you can’t do it, be honest up front.

RM: We are more involved with our off-site sales people than our competitors. Our pricing is done from the plant. We require feedback from our outside sales force. We set the parameters. We have more control on pricing and because we receive feedback, we have a better feel for the pulse of the market.

How else does your interaction with others in the company benefit the customer?

B. Barrick: In the early stages of a project, the sales department acts as the quarterback to bring all the departments in to help exceed the client’s expectations. Then we hand off to the

engineering and traffic departments to move the ball up the field, to satisfy the customers.

JM: Every job starts in sales, but as the job evolves, it becomes more complicated. If you don't pass on important information, explaining what a customer needs, you're not going to give the customer what he wants. It's important that everyone knows the details to meet the customer's exact needs.

RM: We are involved in day-to-day operations. We have a scheduling meeting every morning. For any hot jobs, all the department heads from engineering to traffic know what is going on with those jobs. We all communicate and help each other out.

Specifically, what is the role of a Sales Coordinator?

B. Basham: Sales coordinators handle pricing, the process flow, changes in the job and additions, and they make sure information is in the system. They make sure the production and engineering staffs know the special requirements for a job. They also follow up and handle customers' needs.

RM: They are a liaison. They deal with a set territory and set customer base. They do the order entries for joist design. They field a lot of calls from customers and outside sales. Sales Coordinators are one of the lifelines between outside sales and the plant. I call them mini engineers. They know our joist design system so well. It's amazing what they do. When a customer calls in and talks, our Sales Coordinators are very knowledgeable about the product.

B. Barrick: In essence, a Sales Coordinator understands that specific customer, at that specific moment. A competitive nature and a strong problem solving ability are important. But it's all about having a good ear and an understanding of what the customers are really saying.

What are some essential qualities a sales person must have to excel at New Millennium?

JM: You've got to be outgoing. You've got to be genuine. You've got to understand customers because they're not all the same. I think to be good, you have to get to know them on a personal level. Know how to talk to a person and not always about work. Some people want to talk for a half-hour. Some people want to get the job done and get off the phone. You need to know whether to take time to talk or get in and get out. If you don't know this, it will hurt you.

B. Basham: We need to be aggressive. We need to find out whatever a customer's needs are. Our sales people need to be very thorough in their estimates. If there is a problem, they need to make sure everything is relayed. They need to document a customer's concerns and make sure they are addressed in a timely fashion, by us, or by the appropriate department.

RM: Our sales people should have the gift for gab, or openness

with customers. We need to understand their needs and be able to communicate with them. It's about making the customers more informed about why our quote might be different from our competitors'. The more informed our customers are, the more complete their pricing, the more able they are to make informed decisions.

What is the difference between "proactive" sales behavior versus "reactive" sales behavior?

B. Basham: Proactive is trying to resolve any issue or problem before it occurs. A reactive person sits back and waits, and then



figures out how to address a problem. A proactive person tries to secure an order, while a reactive sales person is waiting for that order to come in.

B. Barrick: A proactive person is

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– Rich Madden, Sales Manager
Lake City, Florida

anticipating what the customer may not be saying, and what may prevent the customer from meeting his or her expectations. Being proactive means being ahead of the curve, anticipating

what the customer needs before he rolls into a flame and we have to put it out.

JM: It may sound cliché, but a sales person's role is to anticipate a customer's needs. Get a bid out as early as possible. And mind the details. Because the better package we can put together, the better chance we have of landing the project. You can look at jobs and see where they may benefit from an alternate design change that will save the customer some money. You have to create a team, and the customer is part of that team. If a difficult project comes through, you can wait for the problem to come up or you can anticipate the problem and get ahead of it. If you're reactive, you're waiting until you get the call and then you've got a problem to fix.

What are some other ways sales people can be more proactive?

B. Basham: Our goal is to communicate with customers and build a level of trust. As long as we maintain their trust in us, we're going to be a strong company.

B. Barrick: It comes back to effective communication. Everyone involved needs to avoid mutual miscommunication. Don't assume a customer knows. Ask a lot of questions and get clarifications. It might seem a little redundant, but it pays big dividends down the road.

RM: Don't wait until the last minute to ask, because it sends everybody into a tailspin. The more information we give our customers the better off they are. I don't like to have surprises and I don't think our customers like to either. When they get a price from New Millennium there aren't going to be any surprises or back charges coming in.

JM: In this day in age, with more communication technology, everybody is on a computer shooting out emails. Technically, our sales team doesn't have to leave home. But the proactive salesperson is out there visiting customers, constantly asking, what can we do better? Where are we missing the boat?

How do you stay in touch with customers? How do you build new relationships?

B. Barrick: We are always looking to retain customers and find new ones. One way is to find out what matters to them. It's about finding a way to help that person remember you. It's about keeping in touch, by fax, phone, or sometimes giving out your home phone or personal cell phone. You want to be their go-to-person. You always want to maintain an extremely high level of integrity, through good news or bad news. It's better to be truthful and deliver a secure order so they learn to trust you.

JM: It all goes back to being proactive. Lead by example. It's the greatest tool we've got. When we get a new customer, they are always skeptical about what we can do. They try to build extra time into the schedule. It takes two or three jobs for them to realize that we mean what we say. Once we show them we do what we say, they start giving us real time estimates. That's what starts the relationship. Our schedulers are so critical to our needs. A lot of our success is from word of mouth referrals. It's a tight industry and you can get a bad reputation real quick. It's how you take care of your mistakes.



“Other companies dictate a schedule and stay rigid. We try to maintain flexibility and agility in our schedule to maintain what the customer needs.”

– Bob Barrick, Sales Manager
Florence, South Carolina

RM: Having open houses and events build relationships. The plant is one of the biggest selling tools we have. I can't wait to see the look on customers' faces, because all of our facilities are becoming very impressive. And a lot of business comes from word of mouth. If we do the job the way we're supposed to, people will talk.

B. Basham: Before we came together as New Millennium, we pulled out of areas. Now we are re-establishing relationships and successfully handling more customers' needs. Many fabricators have felt neglected by other companies who say, 'I'll take your business, but I could not care less.' We care and we offer more.



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– Joe Maupin, Sales Manager
Butler, Indiana and Continental, Ohio

Steel Services, Inc. reports service is key

Steel Services Incorporated prefers New Millennium for all of the company's projects, and the reason is simple.

"New Millennium's customer service for scheduling is second to none," said Jeff Sommervold, Vice President of SSI. "Typically, in the way we operate we don't give New Millennium a lot of time to get the product shipped. We know that. We recognize that. They always have been able to perform and make us look good to the customers."

Sommervold's most recent example came on a Monday. He requested a large number of bar joists and metal deck for a large retail building. The order was delivered on the following Monday. According to Sommervold, New Millennium's delivery speed is incredibly fast, compared to other companies' four to six week timeline. It's the reason, he says, why Steel Services has used New Millennium since the day his company opened their doors.

New Millennium's product quality matches industry standards, Sommervold added. "I don't expect to get anything better than industry standard, but the customer service is what sets them apart. They are a quick turn-around and expedient. That's what we count on New Millennium for."

Christmas "miracle" defines proactive

It was Christmas Day, Monday, December 25, 2006, when a tornado ripped through Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida.

The extensive damage from the tornado included a large opening in the gymnasium's roof. With the roof partially destroyed, any rain or other inclement weather could ruin the remaining part of the gym. Embry-Riddle University needed the repairs done quickly and professionally.

On Thursday, December 28th, three days after the storm, Ronnie LaRue, Foote Steel Corporation's Operations Manager, received a call from the owner of A.M. Weigel Construction requesting immediate help.

Ronnie, who had interest in future upcoming projects at the Embry-Riddle campus, knew this was a great opportunity to exemplify what service is all about. Facing such a short time period to complete the repairs, Ronnie began preparing a game plan. One of the major items to address was replacing the damaged joist and deck in the gymnasium roof. Ronnie needed new joist and deck, and he needed them fast.

So he turned to New Millennium

As Foote Steel and New Millennium had developed a strong working relationship on a prior fast track project, Ronnie knew he could depend on New Millennium to respond quickly. He contacted Jake Fetters, then the traffic manager at the Lake City plant.

"Jake's business attitude is the same as mine," Ronnie said. "If the customer tells me his needs, then I'll do everything to make it happen."

Ronnie called Jake around noon on Thursday. Jake and Ronnie worked together and were able to quickly start exchanging information to get the joist and deck materials on their way to fabrication.

"It was a very quick turn-around," Jake said. "Typically, we at least have another day in between there, but we needed to close up the school's roof. Considering the circumstances, our engineering team put in some extra hours to help finish everything up."



Back in the game: Restoration of the university gymnasium roof was completed within days of a tornado strike – thanks to a proactive effort by both Foote Steel and New Millennium.



With such a fast track schedule the project required 14 joists and 20 squares of deck, and would need to be “ran in” with the current production runs without causing delays to other projects. As Ronnie put it, “To produce anything by breaking into your current production run is unheard of.” Ronnie had a team on site Friday morning performing the demolition and by Saturday morning New Millennium’s joist and deck had been delivered, allowing Foote Steel’s erector to complete the job two days later.

Two-day delivery impresses contractor

The teamwork between Foote Steel Corporation and New Millennium did not go unnoticed. Upon seeing such a collaborative effort, the Director of Construction for Embry-Riddle informed Ronnie that Foote Steel Corporation would be considered as a contractor of choice on future bids for the campus.

Ronnie added that the industry standard would have been a four to five week turnaround to complete what New Millennium and Foote Steel collectively accomplished in two days. “New Millennium’s ability to pull off miracles continues to make both New Millennium and Foote Steel Corporation build on a solid relationship that will keep the work coming.”