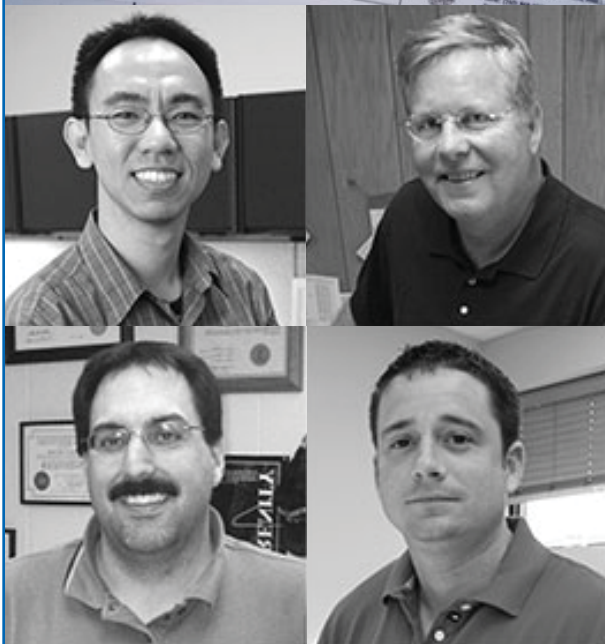
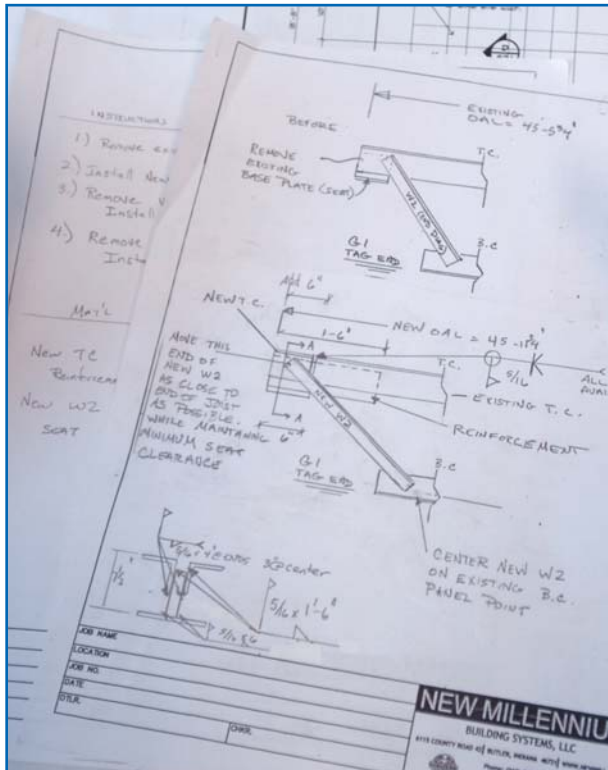




NEW MILLENNIUM

BUILDING SYSTEMS

Flexible to the Finish



Shorter RFI Process: Engineers Discuss Ways to Take Care of Customers

New Millennium's Engineering Managers recently got together at an informal roundtable to discuss their shared challenges and opportunities. The four men who oversee engineering activities at the company's three locations:

- Michael Winarta** - Butler, IN
- Carl Pugh** - Salem, VA
- Tony McCrumb** - Butler, IN
- Chad Bickford** - Lake City, FL



"You have to prioritize and use time management...I have things that pop up out of the ordinary, specific customer needs, and I have to make changes immediately to accommodate their schedule."

Chad Bickford
Engineering Manager
Lake City, FL

Taking Care of Customers.

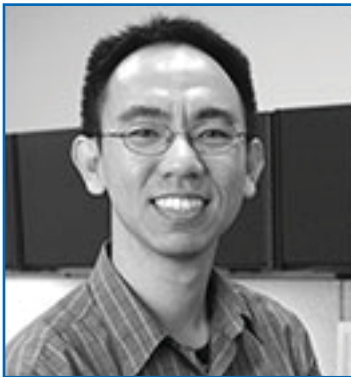
What is your role at New Millennium?

Chad Bickford: We oversee the day-to-day engineering process within our specific divisions. We coordinate with our internal engineering personnel to ensure projects are staying on schedule. We provide engineering insight on projects at the beginning of the quote stage up to the erection process. We help to promote customer service within the department.

Michael Winarta: We also perform many customer service functions in engineering. We have a well-rounded knowledge of the products, their advantages and limitations; and knowing the manufacturing process helps a customer out. We try to provide a good bridge between sales, traffic and production to make sure all the needs of the shop and the customers are taken care of.

Tony McCrumb: It may involve coaching, managing the schedule, communicating with the shop on special work and a number of different things because it varies day to day. Overall our goal is to make sure that we're customer friendly. I have a lot of interaction with customers to help them solve problems, including helping to get their jobs done more cost effectively and more quickly if needed.

Carl Pugh: We oversee shop drawings, designs, and shop details to make sure they comply with the Steel Joist Institute specifications and contract documents. We get involved with fabrication and manufacturing to make sure quality control standards are adhered to. We also get involved in any issues in the field with clients, contractors, engineers, and architects.



“As a manager, you don’t try to micromanage. Let people learn how to do things and let them be independent...”

Michael Winarta
Engineering Manager
Butler, IN

Taking Care of Customers.

How do you keep your engineers focused on customer needs?

Tony McCrumb: The key is to have the right people working with you to help you supervise. The detailing supervisor, for example, is expected to take care of the detailing group and to look to me for help and guidance. The same thing with quality control supervisors, the supervisor is expected to be in there coaching the inspectors, looking for quality problems and to come to me when they need help.

Carl Pugh: You need to be able to multitask, address different needs for different people. A sales person might ask what should be done to quote a job and it’s an estimated answer. Then once you get the job, you have to be more specific before we can actually manufacture it. You’ve got to be able to address any problems that may arise in the field and respond to a customer. The biggest thing is looking at the situation and applying the appropriate assistance.

Michael Winarta: You do need to learn how to multitask. As a manager, you don’t try to micromanage. Let people learn how to do things and let them be independent, but be in the background to make sure things are flowing right.

Chad Bickford: We have a strong engineering team, which helps the process tremendously. You have to prioritize and use time management, but you can’t set a schedule for yourself with this type of business. I have things that pop up out of the ordinary, specific customer needs, and I have to make changes immediately to accommodate their schedule. At the start of a day, I have a good idea of the itinerary. Then the phone rings and emails come in and you alter it. You don’t leave until it’s all taken care of.



“When any one of us has a better idea as to what we’re doing, every time that person shares it, we can separate ourselves from our competitors.”

Carl Pugh
Engineering Manager
Salem, VA

Taking Care of Customers.

How does your role interact with others to benefit customers?

Tony McCrumb: I tend to see my role in three ways. No. 1 is my communication with others to make sure we get a quality product out the door. No. 2 is to make sure our product is consistently being made the same and to a higher standard. No. 3 is making sure I coach our people that when you talk to a customer, you must ask the right questions to get down to what the customer really wants. This is important, because you can ask a question five different ways and get five different answers just by asking differently.

Carl Pugh: Communication is the key. Customers expect a certain level of service and of course, we’re going to supply the level they expect. But we can do more. When any one of us has a better idea as to what we’re doing, every time that person shares it, we can separate ourselves from our competitors. Communicating with each other is a tool that we can all benefit from. It enables us to constantly improve.

Michael Winarta: It’s important to have customers know we have good people taking care of the right things. When customers get to know us, they see we are very organized and proactive about their needs. Being able to effectively communicate with all the different departments is one of our biggest strengths and in the long term that is going to matter a lot.

Chad Bickford: The engineering department gets involved in the bid process and offers a technical overview of the bid information. This can help provide a more accurate quote to the customer from a design perspective. The engineering department takes up the majority of a project’s schedule, which means there is a need to communicate daily with our traffic/scheduling department to ensure the various project deadlines are met. Engineering works closely with production to gain knowledge of the fabrication process, and with this knowledge the engineering personnel can design a more efficient product through the shop for a quick turn-around time and higher tonnage volumes. Our strong internal communication provides a positive outcome for our customer base.



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"We need to let our customers know we are here to service specialty jobs as well as more standard jobs."

Tony McCrumb
Engineer
Butler, IN

Taking Care of Customers.

How do you stay current on the latest laws and codes?

Michael Winarta: Typically, we stay actively involved in the Steel Joist Institute and Steel Deck Institute. By staying close to them we know the different changes in the product designs that we manufacture. In addition, as professional engineers, we are required to take continuing education credit hours each year.

Carl Pugh: I'm on the Steel Joist Institute's Engineering Practice Committee. You've got to stay up on all the building codes and what the changes are and how that will affect the steel joist specifications. Plus, you have to have continuing education. I'm licensed in ten states, six of which require continuing education hours every year.

Chad Bickford: There are always new things out there. You have to do independent research to keep yourself in the loop. At New Millennium, the engineering personnel always talk about new trends of the design world. As a member of the American Institute of Steel Construction and the American Society of Civil Engineers, I review material from these organizations. I am also a member of the Steel Deck Institute's Educational committee.



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Taking Care of Customers.

How do you prevent errors in a design and yet meet accelerated timelines to serve the customer?

Chad Bickford: Quality comes first. We stress this in all areas of our business, and engineering is no exception. Our engineering department has internal checks and balances, and we have a great group of people that genuinely care about the quality of their work. We are human and when mistakes occur we learn from them and move on.

Carl Pugh: Good information, good tools, good people. You need all three to make it work. Getting the information can be the toughest challenge and it's something we constantly work on.

Tony McCrumb: It's a fine line. Sometimes you have to pick priorities. Sometimes the shop schedule needs to change, because the needs of the customer can change at any point in the day. You may start something at 8 a.m. and switch jobs at 9. That's the way the business is.

Michael Winarta: Our structural steel products must carry roof or floor loads. We have developed a check and balance method in practically all the different departments. We always stress the importance of doing things right the first time. In addition, a checker is checking that the quality of the product is as intended. When we need to follow an accelerated schedule, we still enforce all of these checks and balances.

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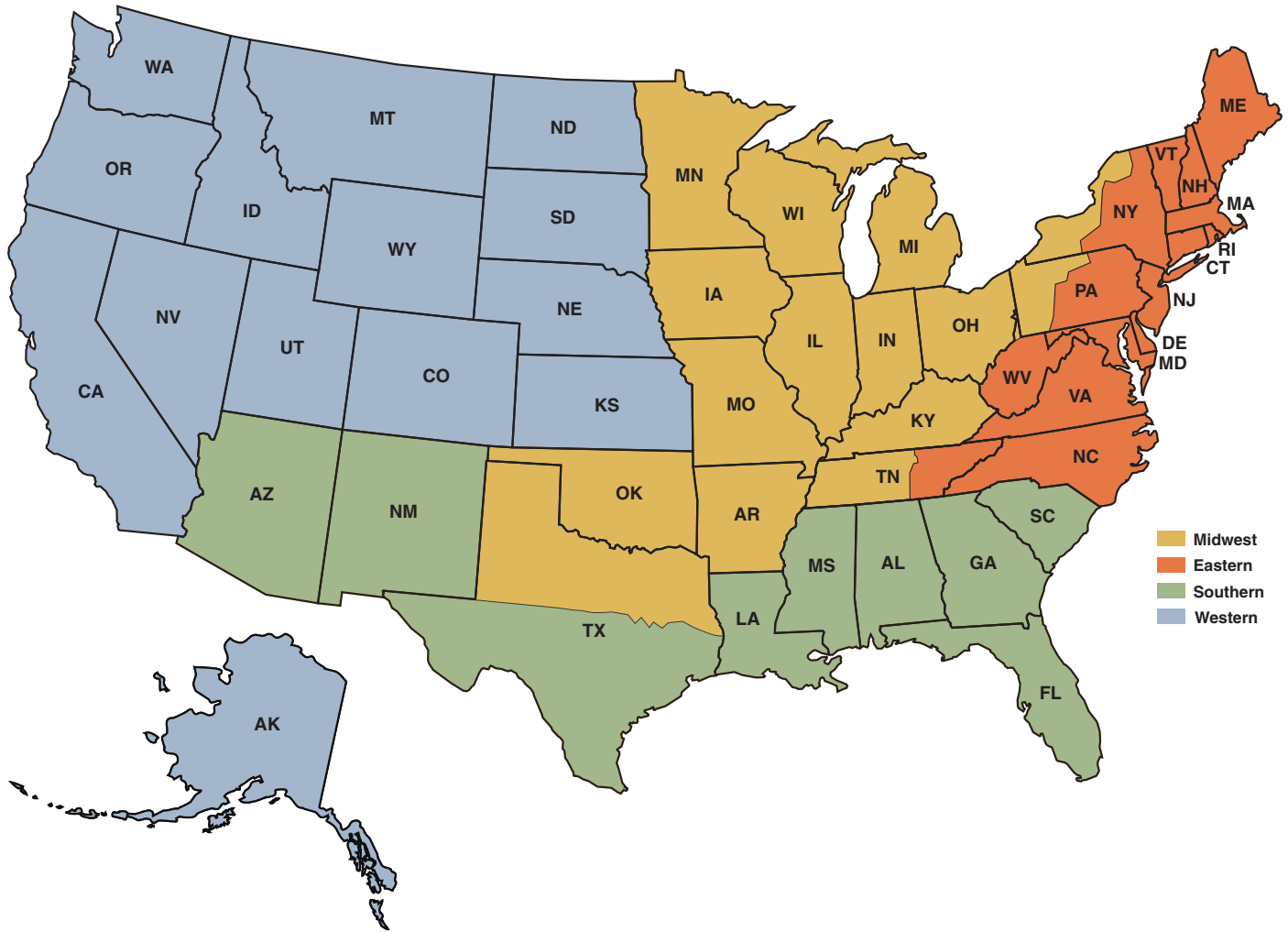
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