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Fear of the unknown, or when in doubt, blame others

By Paperitalo Staff

Our industry seems to have been caught in a severe case of blaming others for our problems, especially here in the United States.

Going back a decade or so, it was the environmentalists, and particularly the EPA here in the United States that was causing us to miss the mark. One would hear learned industry leaders tell us and anyone else who would listen that we were not playing on a level playing field, that the environmental financial burdens would be our ruin.

The industry was dragged reluctantly into recycling in the early to mid-1990's, with cries of protest.

In the later part of the 1990's, the industry faced competition from electronic media in the printed grades, a phenomenon that had been predicted for a couple of decades and which finally came to pass.

After the fall of Enron and WorldCom, it was the onerous new reporting laws required to be a public company.

Jumping around a bit, in the late 1970's it was interest rates over 20% per annum and "oil shocks."

Isn't it always something? Are there not always challenges, some big, some small? Did not our forefathers have difficulties during World War I, the Depression and World War II?

It seems to me it is long since time for us to wake up, shoulder the responsibilities expected of leaders and shut up about things we cannot control. We are expected to manage around these problems, no matter what they are—that is why we said we deserved to be put in charge when we were hired.

It is sobering, but we are either competent or we are not, and no matter what happens outside, our control has little to do with it.

For safety this week, let us remember that we are definitely in charge of our own safety—our injuries are our responsibility. Be safe and we will talk next week. ##