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### ***It is still management***

By Paperitalo Staff

As I wander around the industry, I still see one huge problem that overshadows all others: the lack of effective management.

We have completed a century of extraordinary expansion of knowledge in our industry (and, it goes without saying, in many others, too). We have off-the-shelf technology not even dreamed of two or three generations ago. The limitations to further growth seem quite simple: we do not have the management skills to harness what is available or what, with a slight amount of tweaking, could be available.

The problems are in several areas. We thrust young people into management roles without giving them the training to manage. Yes, we can train them on the job, but often we don't, despite the best of intentions. Then, floundering, they find something that works for them, something that may work in a smaller role but which they then continue as their responsibilities expand. Given responsibilities for large groups of people, they drag their poor skills from earlier days forward and continue to perform in a less than optimum fashion.

Managers, indeed all, continue to wear blinders. There is so much technology available that the human mind can't absorb it all. So, by subconscious processes we don't even recognize, we eliminate possibilities as our minds struggle to handle the zillions of pieces of data flying at them daily. We struggle here at Paperitalo Publications with this. We have so much fresh information to provide to you, the challenge is how to place it all so you can see it. Everything can't be at the top of the page. We are always looking for ways to put it in front of you.

Then there is corruption, both within and without. Humans being what they are, companies have internal problems in this area. They also have problems with their suppliers and their customers. An ethical standard, and swift, fair, and just enforcement, is necessary to keep this never-ending problem in check.

There are very few mills I see where they are at the end of their rope with the technology they have. External forces, such as a declining market, may have put them in bad and irrecoverable peril, but if they are in a stable to slightly growing grade, the optimization of the mill is seldom technology constrained. It is mentally constrained, from ineffective use of human resources to ineffective use of technological resources.

It is still management. This problem has been weighing on me much of the year. It just may be the challenge of the ages. The answers are not simple nor are they lasting. We will continue this discussion from time to time.

What do you think? What are the constraints holding back your mill?

And of course, safety is all about management. Effectively managing to prevent accidents and effective management planning to deal with accidents.

Be safe and we will talk next week. ##