

BUSINESS COURIER

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"Ask the CEO", Cincinnati Business Courier, September 22, 2003

OPINION

Dan Cunningham, President/CEO of Long-Stanton Mfg. Co. Inc.

Q: What do you look for in a new hire?

A: I'm looking for someone with the heart that drives them to improve themselves.

Q: How do you motivate your employees?

A: I explain clearly what I want from them, and then I lead by example. I think through what I want to do, which is to improve and get better every day. At some point, everyone comes to a stream they need to cross. I can help them across, but I can't drag them across.

Q: What would you be doing if you didn't have this job?

A: I really feel that whatever job I would have, I would be striving to do my best every single day. That really drives me. I'm happiest when I'm improving.

Q: What's the best book you've read lately?

A: "The Sun Also Rises" by Ernest Hemingway. It's a microscope into how people behave after they've been through a very rough time. I enjoy reading about history that looks over the broad sweep of time.

Q: What's the best advice you've received?

A: Ralph Stolle told me once that when you're in a business situation, ask this question, "Tell me exactly what it is you want me to do."

Q: What advice would you give someone starting out in your industry?

A: Understand yourself and carefully communicate what you want in forming the culture of the company. Then, you must understand very deeply what your customer wants and then give it to them.

Q: What's been your toughest decision as CEO?

A: Invariably, they are personnel decisions. Even though somebody is performing, they may not be at the level the business requires of them. The toughest thing is how do you move forward on that within the culture of the company. How you treat people is extremely important, and you have to respect that. This is the toughest issue, but it's where you get the greatest gain.

Q: Where is our economy headed over the next 12 months?

A: Up. The danger I see is that some areas are still overheated, like residential housing. Some high-tech companies are also still overheated. I think the economy is going to be up over the next 12 months.



Dan Cunningham, President / CEO,
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