

From The Hot Seat – “Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast”

As Silicon Forest Electronics began, it was about making a difference for customers, employees, suppliers, and the community. As the culture of “being impactful” evolved, several years ago we created our tagline at Silicon Forest Electronics - “Making a Positive and Profound Impact”. Our culture was established through practice and we live it.

Peter Wong, our Manufacturing Systems Engineer and ESOP Board Member, suggested that our executives read the book by Simon Sinek, *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*. From the study of that book, we created an additional sub-set tagline of “360 Degrees of Impact”. Recently our Quality Assurance Manager, Terri Polette, asked me and Jay Schmidt (General Manager) to articulate the meaning of our “360 Degrees of Impact”. It appears that our message can be better delivered. In this message “From the Hot Seat” I will articulate what we feel is the essence of providing our 360 Degrees of Impact and strengthen the understanding of our culture internally and externally.



Creel Price, an entrepreneur and speaker from Sydney, Australia was quoted in LinkedIn, *“The answer to attracting staff, clients and investors and motivating them to work with you without a big budget is all about building a compelling philosophy — essentially, a method to your madness.”* I want the world to be clear that it is not just rhetoric and that we strive to exemplify “impact” in all four directions every day.

Although “Impact” can be very personal and often time is, the overall essence of what we believe is capsulized below in the bullet points of the four quadrants; Customers, Employees, Suppliers, and Community.

Customers:

- Timely and effective communication
- Responsiveness – each step from quoting to order confirmation to delivery
- Product quality – fit for use by customer requirements
- Competitive pricing
- Risk reduction – from obsolescence to excess materials to design reviews



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Employees:

- Respect for the individual and concern for their safety
- Stability & Business Growth
- Fair Compensation & Benefits
- Respect for Diversity & Inclusion
- Personal Growth

Suppliers:

- Clear requirements – business & technical
- Effective Feedback
- Fair Opportunities

Community Partners:

- SFE as Community Role Models – active involvement & presence
- Care of our Environment
- Respect for Diversity and Inclusion

There is some debate on who coined the phrase (and its many variations) “Culture eats strategy for breakfast...”. Most have credited management guru, Peter Drucker. For this paper we continue the dialog as a Peter Drucker statement. Culture is enhanced or destroyed by our actions. It takes time to create a strong culture and it can be ruined quickly by our actions. No one is perfect. It is not about being perfect. It is about what the next steps are beyond any lapse and “what you do next” that counts. If we keep in mind the essence of this in all of our actions, few mistakes will be made. At the same time when a correction is necessary, we revert back to this list of attributes. We exercise our corrections using them as a guide. The culture remains intact. “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.....and lunch, dinner and snacks.” Culture grows our company through the reputation it creates.

Contributed by CEO/President/Founder - Frank Nichols

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CEO Frank Nichols with SFE Manufacturing & Stockroom teams:

