



Jay's Journal – "10 Years After"

February 2018

It's hard to believe - next month I will have completed 10 years at Silicon Forest Electronics! While it seems that the past decade has gone by fast, the journey has been fantastic and impactful. Here are some of my key "reflections" about my first decade at Silicon Forest Electronics, and the challenges/opportunities ahead.....

1) We Have Great People

Our people care. There is a spirit of caring that has been instilled in the culture of our organization by our CEO/Founder Frank Nichols, and that spirit of caring can be seen daily in the way our employees work together, how we interact with our customers, and the degree to which people will "cover" for each other when someone needs support.

I get to meet face-to-face with our customers and get their feedback on our performance. One of the comments I recently heard from a customer was that Silicon Forest Electronics is "serious" about hitting our committed delivery dates, something that they did not experience with other suppliers. This customer said "we can feel it" - this is due to the fact that our employees care about meeting commitments whether it be on-time delivery, quality, or continually improving processes. We are not always perfect, but I know that our team will always care to make a positive impact.

2) We Make Cool Stuff!!!

Silicon Forest Electronics is not "just a manufacturing company" – we provide advanced manufacturing services and the assemblies that we produce end up in very cool products and systems used around the world, and beyond! Our custom circuit board assemblies end up in products that help people fly safely, live healthier, and stay protected & secure. Some of our customers are on the leading edge of technology in unmanned systems, medical research and aerospace systems.

When I get the opportunity to show kids in schools and young adults what we do, I always get excited to share the "cool factor" and how I've been fortunate to work in an industry that truly makes cool stuff! We even have electronic assemblies that are used in outer space, most recently headed to the International Space Station! How cool is that?!

3) Our Community Partners are Fantastic

A small business like ours benefits greatly from the relationships and presence that we have with our community & economic development partners. Silicon Forest Electronics has received valuable support from the Washington State Dept. of Commerce as part of our international business development efforts. We participate as active board members with the Pacific NW Defense Coalition, the WA State Center of



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Excellence-Aerospace, and the Pacific NW Aerospace Alliance. Our local community partners – Workforce SW Washington, WorkSource, and the Columbia River EDC – provide a valuable & consistent level of support to meet our needs in workforce & business development. We truly appreciate the work that all of our community partners do!

4) The Challenges & Opportunities Ahead

We have three main "inputs" to our business in order to thrive. The input of sales and new customers is fundamental to our success. Then we must effectively manage the inputs of materials and workforce to complete the cycle. If we can get materials and if we can get the right people in place, we have a great opportunity to meet the needs of our customers' extreme demands. Recently, we've seen that the availability of materials and their respective lead times continue to increase. As the supply chain for electronic components "ebbs and flows", and lead times continue to stretch out, we have the opportunity to work more closely with key supplier partners who will develop strategic programs which will help us be responsive to our customers.

Likewise, our ability to quickly ramp up with workforce is dependent upon a continuous availability of motivated, skilled potential employees. We take advantage of every opportunity to work with our workforce development partners who help us attract and retain employees with the right skill level.

I'm thankful that I've been able to experience the last 10 years at Silicon Forest Electronics, and I'm very excited to see how well we do in the next 10 years!

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