Written by Jane Alexander, Editor-In-Chief
Monday, 28 May 2012 17:41

A better title for this might have been, “Here’s To Some People Who Love People Who Love Tools,” but it would have been too long. To clarify, the reference is to YOU who love and count on state-of-the-art test and measurement (T&M) tools to keep your operations up and running and—as I came to realize recently—the people at Fluke who clearly understand and love YOU back. From what I see, there’s a lot of loving going on, in both directions. I came to this conclusion during the first week of April, when I joined other editors invited from across the trade press at the beautiful, expansive Fluke Park facilities in Everette, WA. The occasion was the company’s “Editorial Summit 2012: Optimization and Efficiency.” What an amazing affair! Attendees were urged to wear comfortable shoes, and it’s a good thing we followed our hosts’ advice. We had a very busy schedule. In addition to getting up close and personal with essentially all things Fluke (i.e., tools, tools and more tools), we got a unique glimpse into how these products are conceptualized, designed, manufactured, tested, distributed, maintained, serviced, upgraded and trained on—and why. There was so much to see, do and discuss with the Fluke technical experts and manufacturing professionals who were put at our disposal. Our group took full advantage of the opportunity. In short, we learned Fluke has come a long way since it was founded in 1948 by John Fluke, Sr.—with a power meter as its first product. In his opening Summit presentation, John Cavoretto, Fluke’s VP of Engineering, used the intriguing (at least to me) phrase “from engineers to artisans” in characterizing the journey the company has been on over the years. You, too, might find it interesting. Read on… In its earliest days, Fluke, like other T&M companies, was working to develop bench instrumentation that appealed to engineers, scientists and physicists. Then, in 1977, it introduced the first handheld (HH) digital multimeter, which marked the launch of a whole new product category in the T&M market: HH precision test equipment—and the “firsts” have kept on coming. Somewhere along the way, however, Fluke noticed the profiles of its customers beginning to change. While plenty of them still worked in R&D and company labs, growing numbers were service, installation and maintenance technicians who worked out in the field. In Fluke’s vernacular, these were/are the “artisans”—defined as “no-nonsense, practical, skilled troubleshooters…smart and quick…love to use tools and demonstrate they know what they’re doing…live in the ‘here and now’…love to be heroes.” Whatever YOU call them, such “artisans” are an important factor in the capacity assurance equation. Moreover, Fluke strives to serve them (and YOU) by producing the type of tools THEY say THEY need, not just those that Fluke says THEY need. That’s what customer-centricity is all about. We saw it on display over and over in Everette, in everything Fluke does, including, it seems, delivering a strong value proposition—a goal set early on. As Cavoretto reminded us, “Great ideas live well beyond their creators.” Although Fluke’s value statement has evolved and been refined over the years, the idea that “the customer deserves to get a little more than they paid for,” was a “John Flukeism” from the outset. It lives on, Cavoretto said, to frame Fluke’s values to this day. And to all that, I’ll say, “What’s not to love?” MT
jalexander@atpnetwork.com