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Monday, 16 August 2010 13:34

I was somewhat stunned when asked what Kaman is doing to help our customers return to "normal." Wasn't this the "normal" that played a role in sending the economy into a recent tailspin? Frankly, maintaining the status quo has never been a goal of Kaman Industrial Technologies.

We know that the industrial distribution business is not typically viewed as the bellwether of change in American manufacturing. Still, it's always been our mission to re-examine our operating assumptions and to encourage our customers to do the same.

We've recently been driving a LOT of change at Kaman, by our own design—*not the economy's* . We're creating new ways to:

- Elevate customer service through dramatically improved operating efficiencies.
- Bring new brands and technologies to our customers.
- Support energy-efficiency and sustainability objectives, both here and with customers.
- Make manufacturing reliability rather than downtime recovery the new measure of success.

So, what's the new normal that manufacturers should be striving toward? One aspect is that in order to stay competitive, they will need to drive more output with fewer resources. Most of our customers are expected to keep their staffs lean and rely more on distributors, OEMs, integrators and contractors to fill the gaps of lost knowledge due to reductions in the workforce. We are well-positioned to accept this responsibility: Our focus has consistently been on value-added selling and application-engineering support.

One of the more significant changes taking place at Kaman relates to our recent acquisition of Minarik Automation and Control. This acquisition has the potential to alter the way we serve our customers and creates an ability for Kaman to serve manufacturer's operating needs from end-to-end. The combination of Minarik's focus on automation and control-systems engineering with Kaman's expertise in plant maintenance and reliability creates a supply resource that understands the current operational needs of our customers, as well as the processing needs of the future—*and helps draw a roadmap for getting there.*

We're working with manufacturers in ways that were never possible before to assess the value of new technologies. We're taking advantage of both planned and unscheduled downtime to re-examine complete systems from basic power transmission and motor and drive packages to sophisticated process controls and complete energy-management strategies. Our success in helping develop measurable results in traditional areas is pulling us into uncharted territories and is spurring innovations that can be translated globally into other operations and business units. And our in-depth exposure to the heart of what drives our customers' success is teaching us to be better supply partners going forward.

Kaman embraces the notion of challenging everything, including our own organizational structure and approach to creating customer value. We're constantly working toward a better normal—*not resting on the success of past paradigms*. If recent events have taught us anything, it's the lesson that waiting until it breaks to fix things is too late.

We want our customers to get ahead of the curve and avoid the unplanned. With Kaman as a supply-chain and plant-reliability partner, air leaks, wasted energy, duplicate inventories, patchwork solutions and quality problems become a thing of the past. Being more productive, more competitive and more profitable is what the new normal looks like. **MT**

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