

Hemard & Company

Client Connection

October-November-December 2011

From the desk of Victor E Hemard Jr, President

Look Up!

"You're so low, you have to look up to see down." - Louie Bordelon, Chalmette High School, 1970.

This attempt by my old friend from high school to give me a hard time rings true of the talk around the forest products business these days. Negativity is everywhere. Most people in the business will say it's worse than it's ever been.

I'm sure it is.

Given this sad situation, we are faced with two options: we either lay down and play the victim or we find ways to improve our business, despite the economy and lack of economic and business expertise currently being displayed by our government.

Of course, the obvious answer is to look up and find a way rather than laying down and singing the blues.

If you want pity, you won't get any if take the high road. No one pities someone who works their butt off and is winning because of it.

Those of you who went to college or even got a second degree while holding down a full-time job and supporting a family won't have a

newspaper article written about you or appear in the evening news because you worked extremely hard and made sacrifices to have a good life and accomplish great things.

Neither will you see a lot of stories about those who, as a person right out of high school, worked in the family chip mill, wood dealership, or oil field service company from "can" to "can't" to become successful and be a winner in life.

This newsletter is the exception, of course, because those are the people we're looking for in our client success stories.

Often, when those success articles do appear about someone who has earned their way in life, the reader will say, "Of course, he was able to do that... he wasn't dealing with [insert excuses here]."

What we see on the news and in the newspapers are articles about what will a perfectly healthy person do when their 99 weeks of unemployment runs out. They'll go get a job, which is what they would have done 99 weeks ago if the



government wasn't there prop them up.

On the other hand, there are people who want to work. There's dignity in work. There is a definition of self in work. There is a sense of purpose. There are people who don't want to sit around and become wards of the state.

These people are being hired by companies making it in a less than ideal economy.

Companies are making it in this economy because they are able to look at their business as a blank slate with no pre-conceived ideas and not be confined by only the conventional methods of running a wood dealership, chip mill, sawmill, or oil field service company.

For example, wood dealerships are doing a better job of merchandizing

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LFA Annual Meeting—Southern Comfort

"Well, there he is!" I heard from a distance as I got off the elevator. I was on my way to the President's Reception at this year's Louisiana Forestry Association meeting in Lake Charles. This voice from the past was that of John Tiley, whom, along with his twin brother George, I have known since the 70s when we were at LSU.

Although George is a regular attendee, John has been a forester in Alabama since he graduated from LSU and I had not spoken with him since 1994. You never know who you will see at a forestry association meeting.

The reception, of course, was for another classmate of ours, Dick Meyers, who has done a great job as president of the LFA.

As I approached the registration table to get my name tag, the LFA staff was busy helping members as were two women who volunteer for the meeting every year, Jeanine Connelley and

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Hemard & Company

We're not just hardware and software. We understand these things about your oil field service, chip mill, or timberland management business you can't find elsewhere:

1. How your business operates
2. The markets you serve
3. Your competitive challenges
4. Your business priorities
5. What works and what doesn't work

"Chip mills are finding ways to better communicate with the paper mills they supply by exchanging purchasing, inventory, and shipping information on a daily basis.."

Root Kits

If your computer is running slow and your Anti-virus program shows no infection, it may be possible you have a Root Kit.

Root kits are hard to detect and remove without damaging the operating system of the computer. With experience and specialized software, root kits can be safely removed.

Don't try this at home... or at the office, for that matter!

Get experienced help....

Look Up! (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

timber, separating valuable pine and hardwood sawlogs whenever possible. In addition, they are shipping to sawmills who will pay them promptly and correctly, improving their cash flow.

Sawmills are making it by finding specialty markets for their products, filling orders quickly, controlling their inventory, and managing their receivables.

Chip mills are finding ways to better communicate with the paper mills they supply by exchanging purchasing, inventory, and shipping information on a daily basis. In fact, Forest Products Accounting has a module designed specifically for this purpose.

Consulting foresters are talking with their clients and setting up long-term strategies to manage timber without trying to time the market. Consultants are also providing timber management services other than timber sales. I can assure you there are many landowners in this part of the country who need a valid fire protection strategy after this summer's drought and disastrous fire season. Some are also managing forestland for a fixed fee per month or per year.

In the oil field, service companies are listening to their customers and expanding their services beyond salt water disposal. They are adding sodium plants, building well locations, building and treating roads, and doing roustabout work to provide

full service to drilling companies.

My point, is, of course, you can find a way to be successful if you listen to your customers and clients and meet those needs. Their needs change as the business climate changes, requiring us to change our thinking to serve our customers and clients better.

I certainly don't have all the answers, but I encourage you not to accept the status quo and try to improve your business by being open to new strategies.

No matter how low the economy has gotten you down, keep looking up and looking around for new ways to be successful.

An Oil Change for Your Computer System

If you have read a recent issue of Forests and People magazine, you'll see an ad that says, "Take My Advice!"

It is not only an offer for you to download a free report, but to let you know that we have so much more to offer than software and computer repair.

For example, our clients using our Proactive Protection computer network monitoring and service, we are able to uncover problems and fix them before the client

even knows there was a problem. Every night our Proactive Protection system acts just like an auto maintenance service.

What would it be like if you could leave your car in your garage; and, while you were asleep, the oil and fluids were checked, the tire pressure was checked, the brakes and drive chain were checked and the proper maintenance was implemented while you were fast asleep?

That's what our Proactive Protection clients

experience every night. Computers are checked and swept for viruses and malware and operations are performed automatically to keep servers and workstations running at their best. Any abnormalities are reported to us by e-mail. If we have to intervene, we fix problems right away.

With Proactive Protection, you can rest at night, knowing your computer network is ready to go the next day. Think about it!

Don't Get Stuck On Stupid

Rules set in concrete make it easier on you and get you home at a decent hour every day, but may also be hurting your business in the process.

For example, take a local musical instrument shop in our town, Doug's Horn Shop, back when my daughter Kristin was playing the flute in middle school.

There was a problem with the flute. I think it needed a couple of key pads and there was a performance that evening, so the flute had to be fixed.

Doug sold us the flute, so Nancy took the flute to Doug with three kids in tow to have it repaired.

After talking with Doug and explaining the urgency of the repair, all Doug could say was, "We've got a three-day turnaround on repairs."

"But Doug, the performance is tonight!"

"Sorry, Ma'am," Doug said.

That was it. Nancy snatched up the flute and loaded the kids in the suburban.

By that time, Doug came to his senses and realized a good customer was on her way out. He hurried out of the horn shop only to be sprayed with pea gravel, yelling, "Wait! Wait!" as she tore out of the parking lot, never to return to Doug's again.

There was another shop about 10 minutes away that repaired the flute in 20 minutes and won a loyal customer for many years.

So don't be stuck on stupid like Doug, with antiquated rules and procedures (3-day turnaround), when there is an opportunity to build and improve on a relationship with a customer or client

What are your rules that are holding you back? No work on the weekends? Don't have the perfect contract? Require approval for even the most minor decisions?

Another example: Back in 1988, I was in charge of a wood procurement and land management operation for Nekoosa Papers. I got a call one December afternoon from Foreman, Arkansas. The person on the line was telling me a fire was headed for the local sawmill and was out of control. It was after hours and there were no cell phones at the time, so I was unable to get in touch with my boss to talk it over and get approval to fight a wildfire not located on company lands.

I had two choices: tell the people in Foreman I couldn't get in touch with anyone to get approval or I had to make a decision on my own and trust my instincts.

To make a long story short, I followed my instincts and made a call to one of the drivers at our company and headed out to the location with the assistance of two bulldozers.

When I got on site, people in our company I trusted and respected told me the best way to stop this fire from burning up the mill and its inventory was to push the pallets on the edge of the sawmill into the direction of the fire and set them on fire to create a backfire to insure a big break in the fuel.

I said, "Let's do it! I'm already in this far. We might as well do it right."

As a result, this was the only strategy that would have saved the mill because of the wind speed and the intensity of the fire.

I called my boss the next day and told him the story. My boss at the time was Ben Myane. (By the way, one of the few regrets I had in leaving the corporate world was I would no longer be associated with Ben or another mentor of mine, John Steele). Ben usually heard of things as soon as they happened, so he was expecting my call. All he said was, "You did the right thing. Just put a note in the file."

I learned from this.

First of all, life is too short to be stuck on stupid. Think about things that may be holding you back because they've always been done a certain way.

Also, I learned to trust my gut. I learned if you do the right thing for the right reasons, it will work out.

Keys to an Effective Backup and Disaster Recovery System

Data backup and recovery, done incorrectly can cost you thousands of dollars in lost information, lost time, and lost productivity. Some information, if lost, can never be replaced. You can't place a value on the permanent loss of files, photos, a database, or accounting information. Here are our recommendations:

1. All data should be backed up throughout the day—even open documents. This means if your server crashes, we can recover your work without losing a day's work.
2. All data should be AUTOMATICALLY backed up to a highly secure, off-site location. This eliminates the unreliability of tapes and external hard drives, and protects you if your office is destroyed by an earthquake, flood, fire, theft, or human error.
3. Stay away from systems that require you to swap tapes. Everything should be done automatically.
4. If your server crashes or gets destroyed you should have a mirror copy of your server, with all the settings and software EXACTLY as you had them with the ability to INSTANTLY take over. You won't be down for days while your server is being rebuilt.
5. Your backup and disaster recovery system should be monitored 24-7 to make sure it's working. You don't need to find out later your backups weren't working.

Need more information? Call us and ask about our Safe and Secure backup and disaster recovery system.

Books I've Read Recently

Decision Points by George W. Bush is a first-hand account by former President Bush of the decisions, particularly the tough ones, and how and why those decision were made. There were two decisions I opposed:

1. Medicare drug benefit. Here's why. Census data released in October reported that the net worth of the typical U.S. household headed by a person age 65 or older has a net worth 47 times greater than a household headed by someone under 35. So why are we taking money from the paychecks of young people to finance drugs for people who, as a group, are much wealthier?

2. Government Intervention and manipulation of the markets. If Bush had stayed with his free market instincts and not taken the advice of his slick Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, the downturn would have been sharp and swift and over by now. Instead, programs like T.A.R.P., bailouts, and loans to the banks and auto companies have paved the way for endless spending on government solutions that do not work and only drag out the recession.

Most of Bush's decisions were courageous and good for the country, however. Bush instituted policies that kept our country free from attack starting the day after 9-11-01 until the present. And his tax cuts pulled us out of a recession that was in progress in 2001.

I also give him credit for being willing to make hard decisions, when many presidents prefer to kick the can down the road.

On balance, I liked the book and consider Bush 43 to be the best president since Ronald Reagan and light years better than the current administration.

The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands by Dr. Laura Schlessinger. I'm going to cause some controversy with this book, but it makes sense. My wife and I heard about this book on the radio. Dr. Laura is right in her thinking when she says husbands are very simple creatures who respond to acceptance, appreciation, and affection. They also have feelings. She may be on to something.

Louisiana Forestry Association (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Debbie Barrilleaux. Jeanine and Debbie are both accomplished administrators and their help during the meeting is invaluable to the association. I also got caught up on Debbie's family and granddaughter, who has taken her family by storm.

I'm starting to get how this grandchild thing works but I'm not sure if I'm ready for it yet. It's a wonderful thing, I'm told. Thinking back on how our parents took to our children, I know for sure it's a special relationship.

I saw a lot of familiar faces at the meeting, but one I had not seen in a long time was Cary Petty. It was great to catch up with Cary and his wife Dianna. I lost track of Cary and his family a few years ago and wondered how they were doing. Cary was a forester with Willamette and later owned a wood dealership and whole tree chipping operation in the late 70s until 2001.

I've been blessed with people I've done business with who have become friends in the process. It's rare that you can lose contact with someone for 10 years and pick up right where you left off. Cary is now with Louisiana Economic Development in Baton Rouge. It's unique that someone with Cary's experience and knowledge of the forest products industry would offer their services to the state.

During the dinner portion

of the reception, we sat at a table with Joey and Ann Allen. During dinner, Ann stated that I must know every forester in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. Not quite, but it wouldn't be a bad idea. If you're reading this and you don't know me, go to my web site, Linked In page, or Facebook page and introduce yourself. If you remember that old game, The Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon, there's only six degrees of separation between you and every forester on the planet.

The dinner was very good and the official activities were over for the night. We then went to the casino's lounge and sports bar to close out the evening. We were at a table with Pat and Janelle Huber and enjoyed seeing them again. I gave a quick shout out to long-time friend and client Garry Walsh and also to Dave Cupp of Walsh Timber and associated companies.

After some informative sessions the next morning about timber markets, there was the traditional Bloody Mary social and shotgun raffle before the luncheon. I got a chance to catch up with some old friends: Paul Frey, Louisiana State Forester (Ret.) and Exec. Director of the Louisiana Landowners Association; Donald Baker of Baker Land & Timber Management; and David Maxey of Weyerhaeuser.

The luncheon featured the Tree Farmer of the Year, awarded to Horace White of Pineville. He sure was long-winded. Once you go

beyond 10 minutes with an acceptance, you start to wear out your audience. He earned the award, so we had to indulge him.

The next meeting was a Louisiana Chapter meeting of the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF). I enjoyed the meeting and also took the opportunity to congratulate Chairman Bill Seagel and the rest of the members for a job well done in hosting the ACF annual meeting in New Orleans. Steve Templin will be taking over the duties as chapter chair for the coming year.

The evening's activities were highlighted by the Graphic Packaging Fun Night. Graphic is one of the most respected wood procurement organizations in the South, getting more done with a handful of people than many companies do with five times the staffing.

The logger of the year, Jesse Greer, is the youngest logger to receive the award. At age 22, he goes against the conventional wisdom that no young people are entering in the logging business

Illusionist Bill Clary did an amazing presentation of magic and illusion. He and his assistant had dinner at our table before his act. He is a down to earth family man who is also a top-notch showman.

The breakfast on the last day was very entertaining. There were three speakers: Mike Strain, Commissioner

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Time Well Wasted: Giving Away the Bride

I was loading the luggage rack on the Suburban and thinking back on the events of the past week: the trip to Charleston, the wedding preparation, time spent with the groom's family, the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner, the wedding ceremony, and the wedding reception.

The most memorable times are those quiet times with my daughter as she prepared to enter into marriage with a fine young man who comes from a loving family.

I think most of our family was concerned I would break down as I walked down the aisle. I was concerned, too, because this was Laura's special day and even though we are close, I did not want to bring attention to me.

During the rehearsal the evening before the wedding, I felt the weight of the emotion of giving my daughter away. It's tough. As I walked down the aisle, I knew it wasn't the real thing but tear managed to creep out anyway. Tough.

The wedding day was very busy, but I thought about how I might be able to make that trip down the aisle with everyone focused on her, not me. We posed for some of the wedding photos before the wedding and greeted friends and family as they arrived at the church.

Then, about 10 minutes

before the ceremony, the complete weight of the wedding fell down on me. People were getting seated. I was in the back of the church by myself. Waiting.

The tears started to flow. Shoot. I wiped them away as I stood outside the staging room reserved for the bride and bridesmaids. I started pacing at the back of the church as I waited for the ceremony to start. I took some deep breaths to collect myself. This worked for me when I gave the eulogy at my mother's funeral. Somehow, this helped me gain my composure again.

Now, the groomsmen were at the alter and the bridesmaids were working their way down the aisle. I think I'm going to make it.

I was called into the staging room for the bride. I saw Laura. She was beautiful, happy, strong, and full of confidence. I looked at her and said, "You're a beautiful bride, Sugar."

"Thanks, Dad."

"I Love You, Dad."

"I love you too, Baby."

We talked for a couple of minutes, then Laura looked at me, concerned, as if to ask, "Are you okay?"

I nodded and thought to myself, "I'm good."

Then we walked down the aisle.

When she took my arm I became bulletproof and smiled as we walked slowly down

the center aisle, savoring every second of the moment, walking slowly as we approached my future son-in-law.

When we stopped, I kissed her on the cheek. She said again, "I love you, Dad."

I said, "I love you too."

I turned to Greg and handed her over, shook his hand and nodded my approval. He did likewise and then the Mass began and they exchanged vows.

Nancy said, "You did good!"

I was relieved.

The rest of the wedding was easy.

Now that I think about it, this episode moves our relationship into a new chapter. I've always strived to be the father who is strong and always there for Laura (and my other children) if they need me. That will not change.

Now it has occurred to me that she is also the confident and loving daughter who is also strong and a source of strength me, for our family, for her husband, for his family, and for those around her.

This was Laura's day and we all wanted her to have good memories of it for the rest of her life.

In the next issue, I'll talk about the wedding reception and some of the special moments that happened there.



Approaching the Aisle to Give Away the Bride



Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Hutton



...And The Bridal Party



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Take My Advice!



Vic Hemard
President

Not all computer consultants are created equal. The question is, which ones will give you a solid solution and which ones will frustrate you, overcharge for their services, and possibly even make things worse. Don't trust your wood procurement and accounting system to just anyone! Our **FREE REPORT: 3 Things You Should Know Before Investing in an Automated Wood Procurement System** will reveal costly misconceptions about procurement and accounting software systems as well as the critical questions you should ask any Information Technology Consultant BEFORE you upgrade your computerized wood procurement system.

Forest Products Companies:
Don't Let ANY IT Consultant Sell You a Wood Procurement System Until You Read *This...*

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Download a FREE Copy Online: www.hemard.com/freereport.pdf

Ask Vic!

Q What are your thoughts about the holidays?

A . Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's are holidays that remind me how much I have to be thankful for... for God, for my parents, for my wife, for our children, for family, for friends, for opportunity, for good companies to partner with, and for clients

and their trust in me.

If you remember the movie, "It's A Wonderful Life," George Bailey had to jump off a bridge to discover how much he had to be thankful for. I just have to look around and think for a few minutes. There's plenty of good things to appreciate.

Yes, George Bailey.... Just like you, I am the richest man in town!

Merry Christmas and may God Bless!

LFA Annual Meeting (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

of Agriculture and Forestry, Author Leo Honeycutt, and former Governor of Louisiana Edwin Edwards. Governor and Mrs. Edwards caused quite a buzz at the meeting.

Yes. He was a criminal. He went to prison. He paid a debt to society. You'll have to decide for yourself if that is enough.

Although I never voted for Edwards when I lived in Louisiana or agreed with his political views, his charisma is still intact and his speech was entertaining.

Again, I don't agree with his philosophy of taxing profits and redistributing wealth, but we had an interesting conversation in the book line and to speak with him in

person for a couple of minutes helped me understand why he was, and still is, popular among Louisianans.

Well, that was quite an ending to a great meeting. Buck Vandersteen and staff did another outstanding job at this year's annual meeting.

Po-boy alert! On the drive home, I stopped in Natchitoches to get gas and also noticed the French Market Express also has shrimp and oyster po-boys. I was pleasantly surprised by the fresh shrimp po-boy, particularly at a gas station.

Next year's meeting is in Marksville, where North and South Louisiana meet. where redneck meets Cajun, and where the LFA will meet to learn, to discuss, and to have a good time.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!