

TOUGH TIMES TACTICS

By Sam W Stearman

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ASK FOR HELP

When times are tough, we are often too involved in the day to day problems to be objective. Don't be afraid to seek counsel. Here's where to look:

INSIDE –

- **Your employees are your most valuable assets** - They are the first to learn about problems with customers, missed opportunities and morale. They are the first to see how improvements can be made to your operations to improve production and to lower scrap and to simplify operations. They are the eyes and ears of the organization. True, lower level employee may know only a small portion of the total business, but they each know more about their areas than you could ever know. If you take the time to involve them in the decision making process, from your Vice Presidents down to the janitor, you will be pleasantly surprised at what they can contribute, you will find that necessary changes -including employee cutbacks - are accepted more readily and that your workforce will pull together to pull you through.
- **Education is key** - Problem solving, decision making and time management are invaluable skills that can be learned. Systematic approaches in each of these areas can improve your effectiveness and that of your employees. A small investment in these and other areas can pay big dividends, particularly in these troubled times. Look at areas of weakness and strive to improve your skills – and what better time when business is slow to invest in training to make your people more effective.

OUTSIDE –

When you're sailing in troubled waters, you need a roadmap. Here are some sources of valuable insight to help chart you through the icebergs ahead.

- **Use consultants** - A business consultant experienced in these areas can be a valuable associate in troubled times. With a broad-based background, a consultant can help you to step back and put things in focus and to identify action plans to strengthen your organization. He or she can provide valuable insight, suggest alternatives that have worked in other situations, suggest needed changes and improvements and even guide you through their implementation. Used properly, an outside consultant can earn his or her fee ten times over.

- **Upgrade staff** - If your "problem definition" reveals that your current staff is weak in one or more key areas, bringing in an experienced manager in that area may pay big dividends in the long range. However, don't look for short-term solutions. Any new hire must first learn about your business, your organization and your business personality before he or she can make a real and lasting contribution. Don't be afraid to upgrade, even with other layoffs. Downtimes offer great opportunities to fill those special needs.

Next issue will be: **Team Up With Others**

Mr. Stearman is a Principal Consultant at [Sino-Bridge China Consulting Ltd](http://www.sinobridge.com), Hong Kong. He can be reached by email: samstearman@sinobridge-consulting.com or by phone: (852) 6244-5166

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Our China Investment Business Advisory Team

Hong Kong

Rm 803-4. 8/F., Seaview Commercial Bldg,
21-24 Connaught Road West, Hong Kong

Company Website:

<http://www.sinobridge-consulting.com>

Guangzhou

17H, East Tower, Fuxing Comm. Bldg,
159-163 Huangpu Rd West, Tianhe Dist,
Guangzhou, PRC 510620

General:

Tel: (852) 3579 8745

E-mail: info@amdfk-sinobridge.com

Shanghai

Room 17C, Jin Cheng Bldg,
15 Xiang Cheng Road, LujiaZui Finance &
Trade Zone,
Shanghai, PRC 200122

Lyon Odiceo

115 Boulevard Stalingrad – BP52038
69616 Villeurbanne Cedex

Paris Odiceo

49 bis avenue Franklin Roosevelt
75008 PARIS

For any enquiries, please feel free to contact Ms. Nikita Yim, Marketing Executive:
nikitayim@sinobridge-consulting.com
