

Plain Talk

Become a Committee of One

COLUMN BY ROB BUKSAR

I remember my high school econ teacher saying, “The only way capitalism will work is if there’s a free marketplace, and the only way you can have a free marketplace is if there is competition.” I’ll bet your econ teacher told you the same thing because quite simply, that’s the way it works.



That being said, do you remember when the cheap new CS130s started showing up? I remember that time as if it were yesterday. I can also remember the sales pitch used by the reps bringing these to market: “There’s no way you can compete with this new price. You can buy this far cheaper than you can rebuild it in your own shop. This isn’t a bad thing. Buying these units will free up the time and energy to focus on more profitable rebuilding, like imports, heavy duty, new stuff, etc.”

To many, this sure seemed to be a good idea because the concept caught on like a spark in dry grass.

Soon after, one new item after another became available from off-shore sources. The basic domestic line of starters and alternators is now coming in so cheaply they’ve become a commodity. It won’t be long before they are traded like frozen orange juice and pork bellies. That market is disappearing rapidly for domestic rebuilders who can’t compete.

Heavy duty, imports, lawn mowers, garden tractors, ATVs, marine, semi-trucks and earth movers for the larger part are all tooled and being produced new overseas. In many cases these new units are showing up in retail distribution like AutoZone cheaper than a domestic rebuilder can afford to take one apart.

With less and less to rebuild and the total inability to compete what will a small, regional, domestic business do to survive? Obviously the design is that small privately owned regional businesses aren’t supposed to survive.

For China and India it’s easy to pre-

dict their future for the next 10 years. Within that time frame they are going to be doing a heck of a lot more stuff that’s presently being done in America. According to Thomas Freidman’s best seller, “The World Is Flat,” in terms of jobs alone India is looking forward to gaining an additional 10 million American jobs in the immediate future. China intends on replacing (putting out of business) General Motors along with a number of other large American manufacturers. These are not fairy tales or idle threats.

We have lost our edge and to regain it will take action. As a committee of one, here are some ways to become active in making a difference in your local and global economy:

- Go to school—get the relevant training and put in the time to learn your business.
- Join with like-minded individuals—become an active part of trade associations, local business groups, and even government.
- Pay attention to current issues in the news—if you see a trend that’s likely to affect your business, make a move before you’re forced to.

If you want a future in this business or any other small private enterprise in this country you will have to become proactive to survive. Under the present global system we’re supporting, no one can assume anything about the future. For a place like America that’s just plain wrong. We can do better; we must do better.

May God help us all.

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