



A QUICK WORD

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Helping to keep you informed



What a great time of year spring is, when the country is in bloom there can't possibly be a better time to be anywhere, but especially for those of us lucky ones that live in the country.

Have you found a spring in your step lately; if you have, it is probably due to you having resolved a business problem that has taken up much of your time lately or could it just be that spring is here. Jeff Hort Engineering is no different to any business. We all have many strategic goals. In our case every year, we become a little more professional, this is pleasing and we have been able to achieve improved ownership of our business plan across all levels of the organisation. Our workplace culture is where it should be. Our work ethic, our hard-earned quality assurance and OHS performance is one of the best in the business we are told by our insurers. So all should be well one would think. Not true. There are two goals that we have not achieved! One is to operate at better than 5% profitability. The second is the failure to grow our business over the last three years.

Profitability we are working at and we are improving with reworks down even though our skill level is down.

Our inability to grow the business is not through any lack of endeavour. In our case our customer is our demise when it comes to our inability to retain our hard earned skilled labour.

To achieve business growth requires us to grow our numbers. The fact of the matter is that no matter what we do to attract tradesmen and relocate them to Orange and train new tradesmen through our extensive apprenticeship training program our numbers are not increasing. In fact, we have lost ground. Hence, our income is some millions of dollars down from its peak 3 years ago. It seems that no matter what we pay or what we offer were unable to compete with our customers hunger for skilled labour. We have flogged ourselves for our inability to no longer be an employer of choice. The things that we offer our employees that enabled us to attract skills people in the past are simply not enough to hold them today. Paying what we now do has lost us income from the non-mining sector of business because we have priced ourselves out of that market.

This is not a complaint against the free market in which we operate, nor is it anti mining, these are just the facts that we have to deal with today. What to do? Good question!!

There is no intent to walk away, we believe in ourselves and will continue to strive to go forward.

Should we return to being a small business and cut our losses? We are smaller today; this is the result of what is occurring, but certainly not by plan. Our aim always is to grow the business.

Should we approach our customers and ask them to stop poaching our hard earned skills? We have made this approach recently. No feedback forthcoming to date. I hear that our customer's workforces are being poached by other sectors of the Mining Industry such as Coal, Gas and Iron industries. Market forces are at work here. The issue will be when the mining boom is over one day and the wages paid and conditions offered are no longer sustainable.

Should we offer to be a trainer and a developer of skills for our customers?

It would be a fantastic business to be in but there has to be relevant work to be carried out to do the training. We have again increased our apprentice intake and will soon have 40 apprentices in mechanical trade training. We simply are unable to do more

unless there is another way. Regards *Jeff H*

Two Major Awards presented to Jeff Hort Engineering

In the space of three-weeks, Jeff Hort Engineering received two major prestigious awards. The first was held on October the 6th at the Australian Technology Park in Eveleigh (Sydney) when Peter Rogers picked up the "British Airways Award for Best Employee". The award was presented to Peter by Rosanna Piaggio New Business Development Executive from British Airways. "All but two of this year's winners were technology businesses which says a lot about where innovators are focusing their efforts," said My Business Magazine Managing Editor Simon Sharwood. "Collectively, all the entrants elated the My Business team. We know everyone has heard plenty of gloomy economic news this year, but the efforts detailed in the 200-plus entries we received this year speak eloquently about the talent and drive of the Australian business community. If the entries we received this year represent even a tiny fraction of the energy in Australian business, the future looks bright."



Rosanna Piaggio - British Airways new business development executive presenting the award to Peter Rogers. The Host on the night was Tim Webster from radio 2UE



Group of award winners pictured with Simon Sharwood and Tim Webster. Peter Rogers middle far right



Peter Rogers with the proverbial speeches



Above Rosanna Piaggio on the British Airways Stand

Simon Sharwood stated via the "My Business Magazine" website Peter Rogers of Jeff Hort Engineering is a boss' dream – this mature age worker has never lost his hunger for knowledge and self-improvement. During his eight years at Jeff Hort Engineering he has continually put up his hand for more work and more complex roles, making him a standout in the judges' eyes



There were nine winners on the night in the following categories • Award for the best small business • Award for the best medium business • Award for the best business growth strategy • Award for the best business leader • Award for the best corporate social responsibility • Award for the best employer • Award for best employee • Award for the best use of technology • Award for the best start-up business

The second major award

“WorkCover NSW SafeWork Awards”

Best Individual Contribution to Workplace Health and Safety

Won by **Peter Rogers** HSQE Superintendent

The eighth annual WorkCover SafeWork Awards was held on the 27th of October 2011 at the Parkside Ballroom Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre - Darling Harbour

Established in 2004, the WorkCover NSW SafeWork Awards is an annual event, designed to reward and promote high standards of work health and safety (WHS) in workplaces around New South Wales.

While a safe and healthy workplace is a legal requirement for all NSW workplaces, these Awards specifically seek to recognise and reward those organisations and individuals who have gone the extra mile to make their workplaces an even safer environment.

These Awards also serve as an opportunity for colleagues and fellow professionals to share in improvements and innovations that foster a safer workplace.



New South Wales Government
WorkCover Authority of NSW



Winner 2011
WorkCover NSW
SafeWork AWARDS



The Hon Marie Ficarra MLC was the guest speaker and award presenter



WorkCover
John Watson General Manager WHS



ABC Radio presenter Adam Spencer was the emcee on the night



The Hon Marie Ficarra MLC with John Watson presenting the award to Peter Rogers



And more speeches



The Hon Marie Ficarra, Craig Hort (General Manager) Jeff Hort Engineering, Peter Rogers and John Watson



The celebrations continued into the night with the help of the band Jellybean Jam and by all reports a good time was had by all





Guffaw Time

Listen hear

Don't mess with old dogs

An old hunting dog is out in the field chasing rabbits and before long, discovers that he is lost. Wandering about aimlessly, he notices a fierce dingo coming rapidly in his direction with the intention of having lunch.

The dog thinks, "Oh, oh! I'm in deep doggie do now!"

Noticing some bones on the ground close by, he immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching dingo. Just as the dingo is about to leap, the dog exclaims loudly,

"Boy that was one delicious dingo! I wonder, if there are any more around here?"

Hearing this, the young dingo halts his attack in mid-strike, a look of terror comes over him and he slinks away into the trees.

"Phew!" says the dingo, "That was close! That old hunting dog nearly had me!"

Meanwhile, a squirrel who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree, figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the dingo. So, off he goes.

The squirrel soon catches up with the dingo, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the dingo.

The young dingo is furious at being made a fool of and says, "Here, squirrel, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine!"

Now, the old hunting dog sees the dingo coming with the squirrel on his back and thinks, "What am I going to do now?," but instead of running, the dog sits down with his back to his attackers, pretending he hasn't seen them yet, and just when they get close enough to hear, the old hunting dog says...

"Where's that squirrel? I sent him off an hour ago to bring me another dingo!"

Moral of this story...

Don't mess with the old dogs... Age and skill will always overcome youth and treachery!

In an recent interview, General Norman Schwarzkopf was asked if he thought there was room for forgiveness toward the people who have harboured and abetted the terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks on America.

His answer was classic Schwarzkopf.

The General said, "I believe that forgiving them is God's function OUR job is to arrange the meeting."

I suspect that the most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. We seem to hear what is said, but we never listen anymore. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention especially if it is given from the heart. When people are talking, there is no need to do anything but receive them. Just take them in. Listen to what they are saying. Care about it. Most times caring about it is even more important than understanding it. Most of us don't value ourselves or our love enough to know this. It has taken me a long time to believe in the power of simple saying, "I'm so sorry," when someone is in pain and meaning it.

One of my friends told me that when he tried to tell his story people often interrupted to tell her that they once had something just like that happen to them. Subtly, his pain became a story about themselves. Eventually he stopped talking to most people. It was just too lonely. We connect through listening. When we interrupt what someone is saying to let them know that we understand, we move the focus of attention to ourselves. When we listen, they know we care. Many people with cancer can talk about the relief of having someone just listen.

I have even learned to respond to someone crying by just listening. In the old days, I used to reach for the tissues, until I realized that passing a person a tissue may be just another way to shut them down, to take them out of their experience of sadness and grief. Now I just listen. When they have cried all they need to cry, they find me there with them. Ready to Listen

This simple thing has not been that easy to learn. It certainly went against everything I had been taught since I was very young. I thought people listened only because they were too timid to speak or did not know the answer. A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well intentioned words