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## AME Institute Board of Directors

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## Executive Editor's Perspective

Lea A.P. Tonkin



## Inspiration for a Better Way

Even as manufacturers face daunting market shifts, dire environmental predictions, increasing security qualms, and other challenges, we can find inspiration and reasons to strive for “a better way.” In this issue, you will encounter the spirited innovation and resourcefulness of AME’s 2009 North American Manufacturing Excellence Award overall winner — Automation Engineering Corporation — and also learn about progress underway at all of the 2009 AME regional excellence award recipients. Their shared understanding is universal: Transformations of the past may have brought progress, yet survival and success will depend on tomorrow’s continuing improvements and adaptations.

As Robert W. “Doc” Hall notes in “Manufacturing Myths,” even our best efforts to “go lean” may not guarantee survival. Organizations that look for ways to constantly reinvent themselves and their industry — even inviting competitors to jump into the collaborative brew — just might find the path toward longer-term resilience and value. Our definitions of “stakeholders” may change along the way, becoming more inclusive of our communities.

Leadership’s call to communicate and share the urgency of transformation is not an easy task, as noted by Ron Harper, president of Cogent Power, in “Executive Suite.” Because leaders at all levels are making changes and decisions in a non-traditional way — more as coaches and mentors rather than as managers — they need to actively be engaged in process teams whose members have the accountability and knowledge to make needed changes, contends Harper. This major cultural shift requires leaders to understand their own roles in the transformation, teach and create understanding as others work through conflicts that emerge, and clearly communicate about organizational goals and strategies. Such personal leadership accountability is the only way to change hearts and minds of people in a self-sustaining, self-creating organization that reflects continuous learning and improvement, Harper believes.

Is your vision of your organization’s goals and values clear, and has it been broadly shared and understood? As we reinvent the future for organizational survival, innovation and leadership from all collaborators is needed. We welcome your suggestions for finding “a better way” to make that happen.

*Lea*

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