

Leading Through Crisis



Manufacturers are awesome.

Over the past month, we've talked to a lot of manufacturers of gears, bearings, motors, gearboxes, couplings and other mechanical power transmission components. Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the current economic crisis, they've been universally positive and remarkably confident about their current operations and ability to continue through the crisis and after.

I'm amazed at their calm, their pragmatism and their willingness to weather the storm. I'm impressed by how smoothly they've implemented social distancing and increased workplace hygiene without missing a beat. And I'm extraordinarily grateful for their compassion, charity and willingness to pitch in wherever needed.

Manufacturers are good people.

As essential businesses, most manufacturing operations have remained open in order to meet the demands of industry. But none of them are doing so recklessly. They're mindful of the safety and health of their employees, their customers and those they come in contact with.

Sure, there are some factories that have been completely shut down, and others that have laid off workers. But we've heard of many that are increasing production or repurposing their manufacturing lines to convert to the emergency production of supplies and components for ventilators or personal protective equipment.

Nobody we spoke with is blind to the challenges, either. They're all watching their cash flow, managing their supply chains and planning to help their businesses survive over the next several months. And unlike many companies whose businesses have been devastated by the crisis - the local retailers, restaurants and other service-oriented businesses; the airlines and travel industry; the list goes on - manufacturers will survive.

In fact, they'll be the engine that powers the economy as we all struggle to emerge from what is undoubtedly a recession, even if the lagging government figures haven't revealed it yet. Manufacturers are keeping the economy going, and they'll continue to do so as the rest of the world recovers.

And it's not just the nature of their business. It's not just the fact that many of these businesses simply *can't* stop operating. After talking with so many of them over the past month and hearing their stories, it's clear to me that what sets manufacturing companies apart is also the can-do attitude of those who run them and those who work in them.

You can read more about how manufacturers of power transmission components are coping with the crisis, how they're helping other essential businesses and how they're meeting the challenges of this unique situation. We've shared some of their stories in our special coverage this issue (see pages 20-29).

Rest assured that just like the manufacturing industries we serve, we'll keep working, too. Every issue, we'll keep bringing you the most up-to-date, technically relevant information available. We don't want to miss a beat, either.

So, we'll keep delivering the information you need. You just keep being awesome.

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