

**Stephen F. Rudy, CEF**  
Enequist Chemical Co.  
100 Varick Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11237  
718/497-1200  
E-mail: sfrudy@aol.com



## What Happens Tomorrow?

What happens tomorrow affects all of us, as we go about our daily routines. Whether it's family, personal, or professional, good planning is one of the most important tasks related to achieving our goals. This is probably our best predictor as to how tomorrow shapes up and is expected to occur. Events leading up to and including the present day help us focus into what tomorrow will bring. In the business aspect, are we prepared? Have all the options been considered? Is there room for improvement? How will our plans, changes, and commitments affect what happens tomorrow? Let us consider some areas of importance and how they could affect what we do today leading into tomorrow.

### People

They should be acknowledged as our most important resource. Everyone brings a lot of valuable experience to the table. Is it being used and appreciated? Even the most routine task avails itself to change, modification, or improvement. Some people have a knack for implementing better procedures or related benefits. Is it being encouraged?

Sometimes we look but don't see. Is everyone, based on involvement, consulted for their related input? Is active participation encouraged and cultivated for growth and expansion? Education is a most important factor. Being on the job on a daily basis is "priceless." The learning curve is enhanced by investing in expanding responsibilities through promotion and a sense of pride. Related industry courses and seminars can bolster and supplement what is being experienced "on the job." Professional courses, offered by AESF, do measurably improve the understanding of what is done in the technical profession. These include at home, on-site, regional courses and seminars, and accreditation exams. All of these benefits and more

cannot be realized unless the opportunity exists. Interwoven with this is the importance of people being willing to "be hungry" and as one famous CEO said: "I want to see fire in the belly." It cannot happen unless good people want it to. They are the ones planning for tomorrow, and will make it happen.

### Technology

It's a big word, describing a dynamic process that is on-going, from day-to-day. If technology stopped, so too would all forward progress with it. This is the life blood of industry. Treat it that way. We have amassed many levels and degrees of technology in metal finishing. They can be separated or generalized into precursor, initial, past, present, and future.

It is hoped that finishers and suppliers are immersed in present technology, with a strong background in the past. We learn from the past. This is our stepping stone along the present into the future. The future brings only what the present demands. Our experience, handling, and expertise with the present allows us to develop future technologies, meeting the needs of worldwide industries. How do we accomplish this? By listening to what is requested and required, in tandem with a turbulent or moderate change in methods.

Most driving forces for new technologies and improvements to existing ones may be related to improvements in field performance and meeting environmental regulations. Field performance encompasses critical factors such as corrosion resistance, reduced friction, aesthetically pleasing finishes, replacements to hazardous and toxic processes. Stringent environmental regulations include lower concentrations of trace metals and grouped chemicals in effluent and accumulating less sludge. Field performance and environmental regulations are drivers for

developing new technologies. Two strong contributors towards this end are economic feasibility and recycling. Both of these items are intrinsically bound, making one heavily dependent on the other. The bottom line or cost effectiveness keeps us all in business, allowing for and maintaining a reasonable profit margin. This is very important. It makes new technology and contributing factors so critical to success.

Bear in mind the ever changing economic scene. Prices as a whole continue to go up. When have the costs of industry staples such as fuel, raw materials, insurance, health care, utilities, compliance, insurance, taxes, and real estate gone down or stabilized? They really have not. For the most part the costs of all these and other expenses continue to creep upward. This is what bites into profit margins. That is why developing new technologies and improving existing ones makes real economic sense. The challenge is to not only improve systems, but to make them more cost effective, thereby helping to hold the line on the cost of doing business.

### Today Into Tomorrow

As I write this article, it has been a long time since a barrel of crude oil cost over \$51 per barrel. Our industry, like all others, is dependent on this commodity. Alternative energy sources, such as nuclear (fusion), cleaner burning fuels, harnessing wind and heat, are not just field evaluations. They have become permanent fixtures, undergoing continual development and improvement. Metal finishing, too, is progressing to meet new demands. Our resilience and drive, forging a partnership among finishers, researchers, and suppliers, will keep pace and be ready to meet tomorrow's challenges. What happens today affects tomorrow. *P&SF*