

Back to Basics:

The Key to Future Performance



J. E. Boyer Company, Inc.
John E. Boyer, President

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by John E. Boyer, President, J. E. Boyer Company, Inc.

Introduction

The objective of this paper IS NOT to treat or assess the long list of improvement paths, awards, and certifications that we already know about (JIT, Lean, ERP, ISO, Six Sigma, the Shingo Prize, and so on). I'm sure you have your own perspective and don't need any help making sense of what is good about these and what isn't.

The objective of this paper IS to point out fundamentally basic principles and practices that this author feels have been overlooked in many popular improvement strategies. These "back-to-basics" concepts, as I will call them, provide the fundamental underpinning for significantly increasing the chance that other improvement strategies ... no matter which ones you choose ... will result in a more competitive and profitable company.

Much of the content in the following paragraphs and in the presentation will seem obvious ... simple ... matter-of-fact. You may wonder why even mention these things ... they are so obvious! Actually, my hope is that you do view these basics as simple ... uncomplicated ... common sense ... straight forward ... and in the spirit of 'why in world wouldn't a company do these things?' That's a wonderful first step.

Don't get me wrong. What I have written in this paper is not all you need to survive, grow, and dominate your market. Far from it. There are many many things a company must do with regard to strategy, products, markets, customers, finances, labor and benefits, technology, and other issues that aren't addressed at all in this paper. But in my experience, the presence of these back-to-basic principles significantly complements other things that you are doing to compete. The absence of these back-to-basics puts the others at risk!