

SURVIVAL STRATEGY



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You're Not Alone

I'm a fan of The History Channel's survival competition TV series *Alone*, where contestants are left in the wilderness to fend for themselves with limited resources in extremely harsh conditions. They have to build their own shelters, find food and survive. The last one to tap out wins.

One of the show's regular themes is the calorie equation. Contestants constantly have to make decisions about whether they should expend energy for a given task, because their calorie intake is extremely limited. High-energy tasks like building a sturdy shelter or actively hunting big game might have a high energy cost but also provide the best chance for staying in the game long-term. It's a risk-reward gamble with extremely high stakes.

To make matters worse, the competition is usually set as the season shifts from fall to winter, which means that the resources that are here today won't necessarily be here tomorrow.

Sometimes the winners are just lucky in finding the right resources at the right time: a good fishing spot or access to game trails can make all the difference. But the calorie equation almost always comes into play. You have a limited number of calories, and you have to decide where to spend them.

Surviving in the wild is a little bit like surviving in the world of manufacturing: Limited resources, challenging environment and constant decisions about the best way to sustain your existence long-term.

And unfortunately, it looks like manufacturers are starting to play the starvation game. By most measures, the manufacturing economy is struggling.

Just like the contestants on *Alone*, you're constantly deciding how to survive, and there just aren't enough resources to go around. You know you need to invest in automation and technology, but that choice is hard when you know you're facing increased costs across the board. Inflation has ensured

that the pressures to increase wages and benefits will continue. It costs more to buy supplies, to move goods and keep the lights on.

How do you make the decisions about where to invest your resources? Unfortunately, I don't have a crystal ball, and besides, the answers will depend on your situation anyway.

“ But I can tell you this: the more information you have, the better-informed your decisions will be, and the better your chances of making the right ones. ”

One of the best resources for information for the gear industry (aside from this magazine, of course!) is the upcoming Motion+Power Technology Expo (motionpowerexpo.com). The founder of our magazine, Michael Goldstein, often used to say that this show is the single greatest collection of gear knowledge, all gathered under one roof at the same time. And he was right. Every phase in the life of a gear is represented there, and the suppliers who exhibit run the gamut from the software to design gears to the machines and tooling to manufacture them, not to mention the many gear manufacturing exhibitors themselves, as well as the fact that the show runs concurrently with ASM's Heat Treat 2023 and AGMA's Fall Technical Meeting. That's a lot of gear knowledge.

So if you're looking for the best information to make your decisions about surviving in the manufacturing wild, you can't go wrong by attending MPT Expo. I hope to see you there.

Randy Stott