



Taking Care of Your **"BEST"** Customers

When you've been in business for a number of years, it's easy to take some of your best customers for granted. In *Gear Technology's* case, we've been publishing since 1984—26 years and counting. Some of our subscribers have been loyal readers since the very beginning.

In our business, we're constantly on the lookout for new subscribers, advertisers and authors. I'm sure it's similar in many of your businesses. You need new customers to grow your business. You need new suppliers to make you more competitive, and so on.

But what about those old-timers—the ones who've been with you so long you might tend to forget about them. You assume they'll always be there because they've always been there. Are you taking care of those customers the way you used to?

We recently e-mailed an informal survey to 1,000 of our most loyal readers, each of whom has been a subscriber for at least 15 years. We were hoping to hear that our magazine is just as important to them today as it was when they first signed up. It was gratifying to find out that with most of the respondents, that was the case.

For example, a 17-year veteran of an industrial speed reducer manufacturer told us: "I still receive *Gear Technology* and have a drawer full of every issue that I ever received just in case I need to reference an old article...I have no criticisms at all and thank you for all the magazines through the years."

An engineer at a manufacturer of electric motors said, "What I like about *Gear Technology* is that I can relate many of the articles to my everyday work. I've often used past issues as technical references."

Many others offered similar opinions. They've saved every issue. They've found the magazine useful. They've learned from it, "it's an unbiased technical resource for people searching for solutions and ideas."

And time and time again, readers mention the importance of the information in our advertising as a way to keep informed about products and services available to them.

But there were also many, many useful suggestions for improvement. For example, those who specialize in a certain area tend to want to see articles in that area. Some want articles on small or fine-pitch gears. Some want articles on heat treating. Some want to see more design-related articles "with more graphics," while others want to see more practical, hands-on manufacturing articles. We do our best to provide a wide variety of types of articles, and our goal is to have something for everyone in each issue.

We're taking a close look at the suggestions from our readers. Over the next several months, we'll be developing some of those suggestions into articles, columns or regular departments.

Quite a few of our respondents suggested that they would like to see more "Back to Basics" type articles, and we agree. New gear engineers—or engineers new to gearing—often need a reference on some of the fundamental concepts, and our intention is to provide that basic information. Such articles were a staple of *Gear Technology* for many years, and although we've covered most of the subjects in previous back-to-basics columns, we intend to bring some of those subjects back, refreshing them and publishing them for today's audience.

One reader suggested that we start a column to help explain gear standards. In fact, we have already begun that process, with our AGMA Voices column. Over the coming issues, we intend to use AGMA Voices as a forum for the various technical committee chairmen to communicate with the gear industry, giving our audience a better understanding of the standards-making process and the significance of those standards.

Another reader asked that we try to publish more articles from overseas technical conferences that our readers don't have the opportunity to attend. When I started *Gear Technology*, I knew that very few individuals actually got to attend technical conferences, and when they did, they often came home from the conference and put the binder of presentations on a shelf in their office where none of their colleagues and coworkers ever got the benefit of them. One of my goals when I started this magazine was to make that educational reference material available to a much wider audience. With that in mind, we'll continue to make every effort to bring you the best possible technical papers on gearing, from all around the world.

Communicating with our long-time readers in this way has been an important exercise for us. Not only was it personally gratifying ("The industry needs you! Thanks for doing what you do so well."), but it also reaffirmed our mission and gave us an opportunity to find out how we can strengthen our product to ensure that all of you will be reading *Gear Technology* for many years to come.

Michael Goldstein,
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

P.S. If any of you have suggestions for *Gear Technology*, please send them to publisher@geartechnology.com. We're interested in your feedback whether you've just read your first issue, or you've been with us since *our* first issue.