You are in business to make a profit. At least, that’s what the repeated message is in any business school. Making a profit involves making decisions day in and day out. The quality of those decisions will determine your profit level. There is an old adage that says “Good decisions come from experience…… experience comes from bad decisions.”

In order to make good decisions, we must have quality information in a timely manner and we have to act on that information. How much time do you actually spend improving the quality and timeliness of your information? There are many avenues to better information. Nothing has enhanced our ability to quickly gather information like the internet. Unfortunately, the internet is filled with information that has little reference to our particular needs. Finding the juicy morsels that can provide better decision can be time-consuming. You can spend hours on Google attempting to locate information only to become frustrated. You can also pay for private subscriptions to services that bring information together for your particular market, which is a topic for another time.

Many people don’t use the free sources that are available because they just can’t find them. Here are a couple of interesting sites to look over when you have time:

- Presents access to all of the construction related data in one place.

- Directs you to a page with all of the economic indicators. You can also sign up for receipt of economic indicator reports.

- The Bureau of Economic Analysis is responsible for analyzing the use economy. Information can be gathered by industry, state, and region.

- The U.S. Census bureau provides statistics on many forms of construction.

Information can be gathered by industry, and real-time updates on the status of shipments.

The Belden Brick Company provides a wealth of tools that help you manage your business with our company. Using you can view available inventory, special inventory, offload unwanted inventory, and pick up available inventory. In addition, you can receive notifications about important events at Belden and real-time updates on the status of shipments.

If you have any requests or ideas about how we can improve the quality and timeliness of the information we provide to you, please contact your sales representative.
Dear Employees and Friends:

We are well into the construction season and it is no secret that the severe housing slow down has had a major impact on our operations. Struggling is permanently closed, and Plant 3 is down for the summer. Fortunately for us the non-residential sector still is active and our diversified line of products is keeping the other plants busy. Hopefully this will continue until the housing sector bottoms out and starts growing again. In my opinion, that is going to be well into 2008.

In the meantime, it is not getting any easier to manufacture products in the USA. We know what the cost of natural gas is doing brick makers. How about the part of manufacturing that is maybe the most essential supplier to all other manufacturers: the chemical industry. Thousands of companies make everything from rayon to computers with chemicals made by American manufacturers. 25% of those chemical companies say they will move a third of their operations offshore if natural gas prices do not get lower soon. Everything from food packaging to metals processing depends on chemicals (polymers, adhesives, etc.). The importance of this to be truly manufacturing companies is evident, yet it remains a great challenge for all of us to produce products in our country. Energy policy drives competitiveness in chemical production; sound familiar?

As we know, the chemical industry is currently planning 80 new large scale chemical plants on the drawing boards around the world ($1 billion each with thousands of high paying jobs) will be built some place other than in our country. Energy policy drives competitiveness in chemical production; sound familiar?

In the meantime, it is not getting any easier to manufacture products in the USA. One must see an end to the current housing boom, and an increase in the number of housing units built. It will take at least a year for the industry to see an upturn and that will be a slow process. The external environment for the housing industry has been and will continue to be tough. The residential sector is one of the most important parts of our economy and one that is not yet in recovery mode. In my opinion, that is going to be well into 2008.

This is enough complaining for now. Maybe the next time we'll talk about global warming! With all our challenges, it's important to remember that we are still a great country and we will muddle through. Have a great summer.

Sincerely,

Chairman and CEO
William H. Belden, Jr.

Joe Rice Honored as Volunteer of the Year

President Reagan once said, “It’s easy to volunteer. It’s a lot harder to make a difference.”

With this in mind, BIA has established a new honor – the Volunteer of the Year Award, which will be given annually to an individual for the time and energy he or she devoted to helping BIA achieve the industry’s strategic goals. Judging for this year’s award was done by BIA Presidents and senior staff; nominations, which were provided by BIA staff members, were based on the degree to which a member helped advance the strategic initiatives in 2006. For the inaugural award, BIA proudly recognized Joe Rice. Joe’s contributions to BIA have significantly propelled the industry’s efforts forward through his active participation:

- A member of BIA’s Board of Directors;
- A member of BIA’s Distributor Council;
- A member of BIA’s Materials Council;
- A member of BIA’s Distributor Council;
- A member of BIA’s New York/New Jersey Brick Distributor Council;
- Chairman of the MAI NRS’s Board of Directors;
- A member of the Architect Task Force;
- Serving on numerous ASTM committees.
- Chairman of the New York/New Jersey Brick Distributor Council;
- Chairman of the New York/New Jersey Brick Distributor Council;
- Chairman of the New York/New Jersey Brick Distributor Council;
- Chairman of the MAI’s Distributor Council.
- Chairman of the MAI’s Board of Directors;
- Chairman of the MAI’s Board of Directors;
- Chairman of the MAI’s Board of Directors.

In addition to those elements shared with ISO 9001, Shauna Ross has been leading BIA’s OHSMS program since 2004. This year, the program is due to be certified under ANSI Z10. The OHSMS is designed to help improve safety performance. ANSI Z10 is the new American National Standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management System and, much like the ISO 9001:2008 standard, it requires the implementation of a total quality management system that includes creative and preventive actions, internal audits and management reviews. Since the systems are similar in their approach to improvement, it is natural that we are utilizing resources already in place for ISO 9001 as a basis for a Z10-compliant program. The Quality Policy Manual, Standard Operating Procedures, Work Instructions, Exhibit and Forms are all undergoing a thorough review and revision in order to include provisions necessary to meet Z10 documentation requirements.

In addition to those elements shared with ISO 9001, Shauna Ross has been building a framework to address the unique requirements of ANSI Z10. Before we seek certification, a Job Hazard Analysis must be performed for each work process. When identified, the hazards will be thoroughly documented. Training for all affected personnel will then focus on the existence of these hazards, and defined safe work practices will become part of an individual’s records.

All involved agree there is a lot of work ahead to build a system that will meet the requirements of ANSI Z10. Whether or not this culminates in the certification of our OHSMS in a primary goal, organizing our approach to safety using Z10 methods will ultimately pay dividends. This activity, along with many other activities, is the reason we remain the Standard of Comparison in the Brick Industry.

http://www.beldenbrick.com