Having spent the last 12 years as a member of AME, I have seen many companies demonstrate how to become profitable and grow profitably against all odds. The common elements are leaders who had a vision for the business and are not afraid of change. These leaders passionately lead their people to a mind set of continuous improvement, and elimination of waste. They are not afraid to surround themselves with other change agents in every area of the enterprise. The tools used in these companies tend to be similar, but are modified to suit each specific company.

I have met with those leaders as part of the Champion’s Club. Almost all of them are touting their growth and how busy they are. The companies I am personally associated with are seeing significant growth. Our strategic metrics are all trending in a positive direction.

Why is it then that all we read is how bad the economy is, and that American manufacturing is losing jobs to China and other so called third world, low wage countries? The United States has the largest developed market. It has most productive labor force in the world. It has one of the lowest tax structures in the western world.

My only conclusion is that we have too many leaders who are satisfied with mediocrity and are happy to maintain a drowning company as long as they can personally live at their desirable life style. They do not want to rock the boat. They do not care to develop a company that will have greater value for all the stakeholders. These non-caring leaders are driving our economy down the tubes. It’s not the government, the labor unions, the Republicans or Democrats. WE, the owners, and/or CEOs have no one to blame but ourselves.

AME provides us with a forum to learn the tools. AME provides us with many companies who are willing to share their knowledge and achievements, to demonstrate how well the process works. The results are amazing. They help free up the financial and human resources to start and maintain this journey.

I wish I could go to every bank in the United States, and sit on their loan committee meeting, just once, to point them in the direction of AME for every one of their risky accounts. Ask them to mandate CEOs of those bank clients to join AME so we can help turn their companies around. I wish President Bush would take time out to read this, and then ask us at AME to help reverse the downtrend in manufacturing in the United States. We can make a difference. This is the value that AME can provide, not just to companies in North America, but anywhere we can reach.

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