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## **PURCHASING DECISION MAKERS**

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- Mat Mgr \_\_\_\_\_
- Production \_\_\_\_\_
- Marketing \_\_\_\_\_
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No Spotlight Feature Story this month. We expected two would come in, but they were not quite ready, so we opted to bring some thoughts from our purchasing experiences to you. Whether you are in Purchasing or a business owner, the message is very applicable. *The Gateway*



## A GATEWAY EDUCATIONAL ENLIGHTENMENT ARTICLE

**Subject: PURCHASING DECISION MAKERS**

Assigned the task of purchasing materials and services for your company is a serious process and a tough job. You are not only responsible for making good decisions for the company you are employed by, but you also have several other responsibilities that may NOT be listed in your job description. Your primary job involves obtaining the **very best VALUE** as possible for all products and services.

**So your first decision is what represents value?** Value, in purchasing definition, should be based on **Quality, Availability, Supply, and Price**. A good purchasing professional will evaluate EVERY purchase on that criteria, plus one more important factor. That factor is sales representatives knowledge, honesty, and integrity. Lots of sales are made because of free lunches, sports tickets, gifts and other gimmicks. If the company doesn't have rules curtailing that, then establish your own. If a sales rep takes you out for lunch to discuss business, then you should take them out in reciprocity. Either paid for by the company you work for, or by yourself. But, never, ever, take gifts and make it known to your company that it should be company policy. Life is so much better when you, or your company, are not in debt to others. Nearly every sales rep is encouraged to buy your business, and it is not necessarily because they really like you. They often do it to improve their sales results. We also evaluated any rep that visited us, or we did business with, as a team. After each buyer did this for 6 months, we determined over 80% of the sales reps calling on us were quite poor in their product knowledge. Less than 20% were truly knowledgeable and considered valuable to our company. Pay attention to who you spend time with.

Next, really look at every, and all, representative that come to your company trying to get your business. I had a letter given to each first time visitor, and a copy posted on a wall in reception area that read something like this:

### Sales Representatives, Welcome to XXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXX, Inc.

If this is your very first visit, please ask the receptionist who you should be talking to in Purchasing. We want to meet you and learn what you can do for us. If the buyer is in a meeting, one of the other buyers will meet with you, or tell you when the buyer you seek will be available. You are very important to us. However, if we don't see a need for your product, we'll let you know so you can spend time reaching other customers who you might help. Our time, and yours are very valuable so it will help both of us to do what we each do best. If you feel you didn't get a fair interview, you can ask for me, and I'll listen to you personally.

If you wish to visit another department for the purpose of sales, without going through Purchasing, please follow our proto call first. We do keep an active list of approved vendors.

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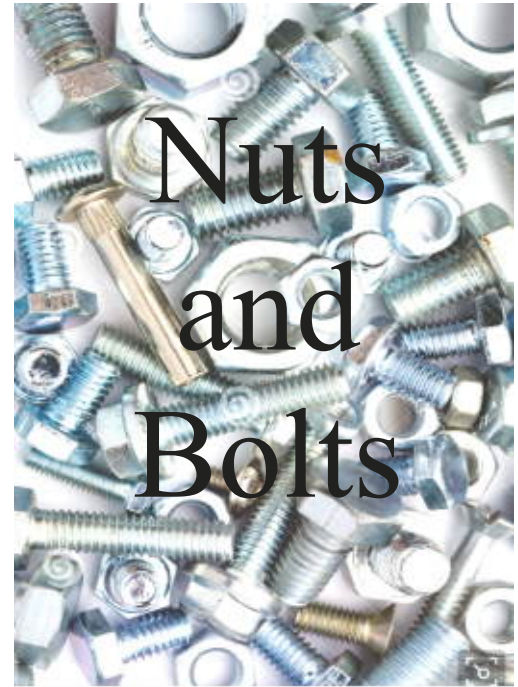
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Back to the main issue. Quality always needs to be the most important criteria, and the product or service must be readily available based on when it's needed. Also, every supplier's company should be examined and approved or disapproved for doing business with your company. That is a major subject in itself and we may cover it in another article.

Another area that should be involved in the purchasing decision, is early involvement in any new product evaluations by designers. Designers, Engineers and even Owners are not always trained in evaluating sources, or looking for that often elusive 'VALUE'. That's where purchasing should be involved and moved up and out of the clerical paper shuffling work. Even a poor buyer should be able to save more than their salary every year just through proper shopping for better value. The old axiom of: '*You only get what you pay for*', really is true. And never lose sight of the fact that savings is not always based on the price. Savings has to be viewed from the Value standpoint.



Through all this, it is very important that savings needs to be recorded. It's fine to talk about saving money, but it is finer to record every savings made for your company. First, so there is a documented record to refer back to. Especially if a product costs more, yet value is added. That should be a record that shows what was gained, how and why. An example: If the company buys a power tool that is used to assemble a product for \$60 and it lasts 6 months, then if you buy a better valued tool, and it lasts a year or longer for \$80, then your value purchase is a savings to the company. Second, if you record your actions you will know you're doing your job and doing it well. That will help your confidence and add wisdom and your own value to your employer. Lastly, you need to record your cost reductions to back up your actions and position. The record will be there for other buyers that come after you to aid them to know that spending \$20 more, actually saved more money.



You shouldn't need to prove your value, but being able to show you care, and that you know what you are doing, is worth a lot. But always remember, your job in purchasing isn't about shuffling paper off your desk. It's a job that should have you focused on making your company's product better. I think it was Neil Armstrong who was once asked by a reporter of his thoughts about blasting off into space. Neil said something to the effect of how would the reporter feel about having to sit atop an aircraft made of 80,000 parts, all coming from the cheapest bidder.

*Continued on page 9*



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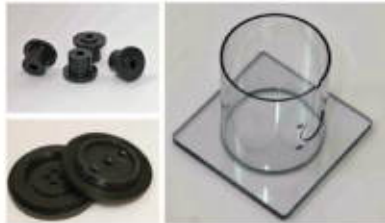
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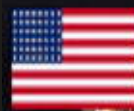
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Another area to watch is never get complacent in areas that don't seem to be worth your effort. It's sometimes easy to overlook some very simple wasteful money drains. When promoted to Purchasing Agent, it was an eye opener to start reviewing potential money drains. It was a monumental task but looking at how we were buying over \$1.6 million in fasteners a year on a Systems Contract set up caught my attention. The prior PA had set up the system and it did work to a point, but it also came with a huge premium. The vendor's salesman visited every week, checked inventory levels and shipped in fasteners for our inventory.



To evaluate the program we first needed a quality review of what we were buying since fastener quality is so varied. Then we needed a supplier that could provide equal, or better quality fasteners. It took months with one of our buyers to work out the entire list and set up our program, but we reduced the cost by over 50% and actually improved some of the quality. Prices were frozen for a year at a time, the stock room was restored to controlling the quantities stocked, and we saved more money with the same staff.

That was just one small area of taking back control of our suppliers and quality. Combined with several buyers' strong efforts, the company realized savings of over \$750,000 the first year. The buyers saw the benefit of buying value and not always just price. The company recognized the improvements of not just a bunch of paper shufflers, but a staff of procurement professionals.

As time went on we got all of our buyers involved in ferreting out areas to effect sensible cost reductions and we saw a \$4 million reduction in spending the first year. Even in subsequent years the savings were impressive, but the obvious areas to reap the big reductions were covered. But we never interfered with product improvement as our engineering staff was focused on. The key to getting that purchasing/engineering cooperation was to take part in engineering/vendor meetings so our buyers understood where engineering was going and worked as a team to improve our products VALUE. Full circle, it works.

*About the author: Bill has published The Gateway Magazine monthly, since 1999, which is dedicated to helping purchasing buyers, and metal or plastic related manufacturers to do business with one another. Prior to this he was employed by a large printing press manufacturer for 13 years moving up the ranks to Purchasing Agent. Later he moved into sales in specialty steel for a distributor, then for a USA mill for 12 years. Later, he did all the direct sales work for a 25 man machine and fabrication shop in Vermont and took them to 175 people in 5 years, plus did their metal purchasing. He has presented 300+ seminars on heat treating to major, and smaller corporations, across the USA, plus spoken at many SME, SPE, ASM groups. He has written two books on Heat Treatment and one on Cryogenics that were published by Hanser Gardner Publications, and the last book by Hanser Publications.*



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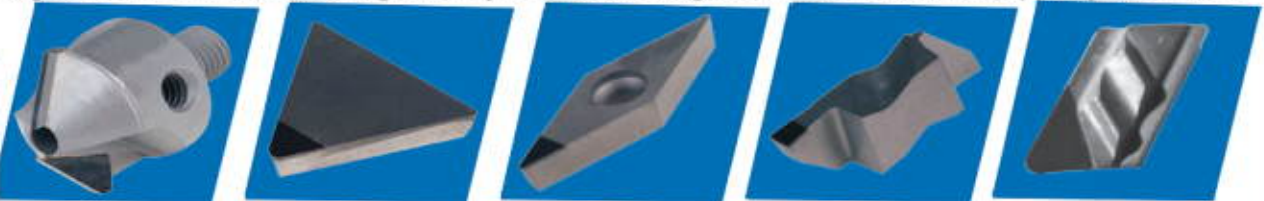
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## Uncle Willy's Funny Bone Gateway Humor

### Handy Engineering Conversions

- Ratio of an igloo's circumference to its diameter: Eskimo Pi
- 2000 pounds of Chinese soup: Won ton
- 1 millionth of a mouthwash: 1 microscope
- Time between slipping on a peel and smacking the pavement: 1 bananosecond
- Weight an evangelist carries with God: 1 billigram
- Time it takes to sail 220 yards at 1 nautical mile per hour: Knot-furlong
- 16.5 feet in the Twilight Zone: 1 Rod Serling
- Half of a large intestine: 1 semicolon
- 1000 aches: 1 megahurtz
- Basic unit of laryngitis: 1 hoarsepower
- Shortest distance between two jokes: A straight line (think about it for a moment)
- 453.6 graham crackers: 1 pound cake
- 1 million-million microphones: 1 megaphone
- 1 million bicycles: 2 megacycles
- 365.25 days: 1 unicycle
- 2000 mockingbirds: 2 kilomockingbirds
- 10 cards: 1 decacards
- 1 kilogram of falling figs: 1 Fig Newton
- 1000 grams of wet socks: 1 literhosen
- 1 millionth of a fish: 1 microfiche
- 1 trillion pins: 1 terrapin
- 10 rations: 1 decoration
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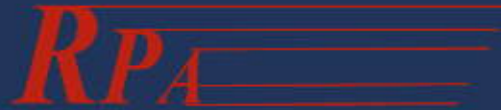
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## CTMA APRIL 10<sup>th</sup> MEMBER MEETING

ASNUNTUCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ENFIELD, CT 3-4:30 PM

Our next member meeting will be held at Asnuntuck Community College. 3-3:30 pm is networking with light refreshments followed by speaker Dr. Lombella, President of the College and a tour of the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center. A new 27,000 square-foot addition combined with the existing space provides 50,000 square feet of dedicated space for manufacturing training. 11,000 square foot Machining Lab with 9 CNC and manual machines, additive manufacturing lab designed and equipped to handle both plastic and metal 3D printing, Metrology Lab and computer labs.

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# PRESS RELEASE

## Bearings Industry Experiences Growth as Consumer Demand Increases

In the last year, we have seen an up-tick in orders for tooling and gages for the bearings industry. This appears to be a trend that will continue to grow. According to an article on [bearingtips.com](http://bearingtips.com) from last year, the global bearing market is likely to reach nearly \$85 billion by 2020.

One reason for this increase is that so many things are made using bearings. From consumer merchandise like roller blades and automobiles to farm equipment and wind turbines, bearings are in a wide variety of products. As the economy improves and consumer/corporate spending increase, so does the need for these products.



The article at [bearingtips.com](http://bearingtips.com) goes on to discuss some of the challenges the industry recently faced and future opportunities. In the midst of an economic downturn the industry was flooded with counterfeit product and faced with a soft automotive market which makes up about one quarter of all bearing sales internationally.

The future of the bearings industry will be a combination of industry-specific solutions and innovation including integrated mechatronic products. The bearing industry has come a long way from the caged-roller bearing that was invented in the mid-1740s.

Located in Aerospace Alley, we're keenly aware of the need for "smart" bearings. Smart bearings provide greater energy efficiency and improved safety. [Bsahome.com](http://Bsahome.com) offers more detail on the subject. As the global aerospace market grows, so does the need for smart bearings.

The challenges for bearing manufacturers, like all other industries, are providing a quality product in a timely manner while consistently searching for a qualified workforce. That is why it's critical to partner with key suppliers who can help.

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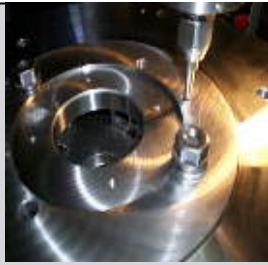


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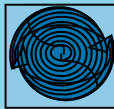
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The Starter Kit includes a wheel guard for discs up to 5" diameter and the patented EASY-LOCK clamping nut and spindle lock button, which allows the user to change discs in seconds, without tools. The spindle thread connection is a standard 5/8"-11 UNC.

For complete information on the VARILEX® WSF 1800 and its accessories, visit CS Unitec's website at <http://www.csunitec.com/metal-surface-finishing/professional-rotary-grinding-blending-and-polishing-systems/varilexr-wsf-1800-professional-electric-blending-and-polishing-tool>



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- BUSINESS FOR SALE**
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- EQUIPMENT USED**
- EQUIPMENT WANTED**
- HEAT TREATING**
- HELP WANTED**
- MACHINING & FABRICATION**
- METALS, PLASTICS**
- METAL SCRAP WANTED**
- PLATING, COATINGS AND FINISHING**
- POSITION WANTED**
- PROPERTY FOR SALE**
- RIGGING, HVY EQUIPMENT, STORAGE**
- SPECIALTIES SERVICES OR PRODUCTS**
- TOOLING**

Additional headers will be considered

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You receive free classified ads (details below). **BUT, in order to make sure our classifieds are kept up to date, we request that you either update your present ad, or tell us to REPEAT every 4 months. The #4 on the present ads are expiring in April and unless we get an email, it will disappear in MAY.**  
Contact us at [thebuyersgateway@gmail.com](mailto:thebuyersgateway@gmail.com)

### AD SPECIFICATIONS AND GUIDELINES

- Classified ad space will be a 2.4" wide column.
- Type Face will be 7.5 point Arial Narrow.
- **Submissions in unformatted Word, email, or plain text is requested.** Submissions must be in our hands no later than the 28th of each month. *We do not take ads over the phone.*
- The number at the end of the ad indicates the month the ad needs to be renewed by, or it will be deleted. That is to keep the listings up to date.
- All ads must run for a minimum of 3 months.
- Cost for non-advertisers \$2.50/line/month. **ADVERTISERS:** Read more below. If not sure of cost, submit by e-mail and we will respond with the price and sample. Photos, graphics or logos may be used in any ad space.
- Request for a new category is subject to our approval.
- **WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AD. ADS MUST BE RELATED TO THE METAL OR PLASTIC WORKING INDUSTRIES WE SERVE. NO PERSONAL ADS ACCEPTED EXCEPT JOB POSITIONS WANTED.**

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To estimate the space your ad will use, one single line of type offers roughly spaces, per line. Bold type is larger and uses more space. Again, if you send us your proposed wording, we'll set it and return it to you with pricing for your edit.

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## **APOLOGY**

A couple subscribers voiced their disapproval to a joke we published in the March issue titled ENIGMAS. It was sent in to us by a friend and I didn't take the time to think about the political implications. So I do apologize and we will endeavor to refrain from any future inclusion of this nature.

**Bill Bryson**  
Publisher



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