

(Sample article from from employee newsletter)

STRIVING TO BE WORLD CLASS

Early next week we expect to receive an order for 108 SC 10's from China Xiamen Instrumentation and Meter Corporation. This is the second major order we have received from China, and is a promising sign that our efforts to develop the Far East markets will pay off.

Pursuing sales in foreign countries is a complex business, but rich in opportunity. One of the complexities lies in the fact that our products must be modified to be compatible with most foreign countries' power system requirements. One of the major modifications that must typically be made is to provide our products with 50 hertz (vs. 60 hertz) ratings. While the U.S. and nearby countries which have followed our lead utilize 60 hertz systems, the Far East, Europe and the countries which have had a strong European influence use the 50 hertz systems.

Another need arises frequently due to our differing systems of standards. In the U.S. we meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved standards. In the Far East or in Australia, if you refer to an ANSI standard, the next question is "What does that mean in terms of IEC standards?" IEC is the European equivalent to ANSI; again, we must demonstrate that our products meet the standards that the customer recognizes.

Rivalling the complexities of making technical modifications and translations, is the challenge of sorting through the legal and operational requirements of exporting products. First, our products must be licensed for export by the U.S. government. In an effort to protect advanced technology, certain products (especially those with microprocessors) are evaluated for their overall capacity to be altered and used in a way that they were not intended, and for their possible military applications.

In addition to these licensing requirements, specific requirements on the receiving end must be met. For example, products must be packaged and categorized properly so that the correct duty can be assessed. Finally, we must understand the different systems of payment and how to properly make currency conversions, and must also address the entire package of legal and procedural decisions and actions that accompany an international sale.

Enter Bill Jones. Bill joined SC last year because of his expertise in coordinating sales between the U.S. and other countries. Having never worked in our industry, he was taken under Al Leatherman's wing for lessons in electronics. Armed with the fundamentals, he has familiarized himself with the functions of our products and

has proceeded to work both in-house and outside to match our product capabilities with international customers' needs.

One of Bills' main goals has been "to help Scientific Columbus develop world class products by working with engineering in the design phase to see if we can build in the features necessary for international acceptance from the start, while also examining existing products which have the potential to be redesigned to meet these requirements.

"Additionally", he continues, "we must constantly investigate international markets to discover new opportunities. We have to understand their commercial and industrial practice to judge the true potential for sales of our products. Once we've done our homework the next step is to select the best manufacturers ' representative to serve the market."