

Trade Mark Points to Leadership Issues

Peter Berg

As noted elsewhere in this issue, the notification that the Institute has been successful in obtaining registration of the trademarks "Registered...." and "...Recognised Forestry Consultant" is an important step forward for the Institute.

We should congratulate Bruce Manley for his perseverance on behalf of NZIF in this respect.

Associated with this achievement is another important aspect, that of responsibility for the proper use of these words. The Constitution identifies the mechanisms of registration, review, consideration of complaints about the performance of registered members and such other matters as use of these words might reasonably require.

For the public it signifies an existing capability on the part of practitioners, and a formal overview of practitioners by the Institute of at least a level provided by other equivalent professional organisations. For members it is tangible

recognition of capability to practice and of course requires close adherence to the codes and standards established from time to time by the Institute.

For both it represents another major step by the NZIF towards providing professional standards for New Zealand forestry, and is further evidence of the NZIF's ability to lead in this regard. Accountability for this rests with our Registration Board, who both maintain formal procedures and closely monitor other organisations to ensure standards are being met and maintained.

Members might well reflect upon the implications and cost of providing such leadership to both the forestry and wider community, and the benefits that flow back to them. I have no doubt that in both respects (ie cost and benefit) these will be significant, I also have no doubt that for the NZIF the roles are appropriate.

"Big Picture" Required by Leadership to Provide Wider View

Peter Clark

The pressure is on. Log prices are half what they were in 1993 in real US\$ terms and listed forestry company share prices are depressed. Log and timber prices are largely outside the control of any NZ forest owner. The only place to go to enhance shareholder returns in the short term is to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

This drive to reduce costs, together with on-going and substantial changes in forest ownership, have created a period of unprecedented disruption for forest management personnel in NZ. The widespread anecdotal evidence is that the main casualty has been a common sense of direction and inadequate staff resources to implement cost efficient process control over operations.

Improved technologies are enabling foresters to get more efficient at their work. We have excellent estate modelling tools, better breeds of trees, E-mail on the desk, laser rangefinders for inventory, real time log stocks data transmission, GIS, and wide area networks to name a few. We have people skilled in using all these tools. What we don't appear to have is leaders able to galvanise their staff into dedicated teams to solve problems and manage risks well. To me that is hardly surprising when staff are subject to

the uncertainties associated with constant restructuring. Why would anyone want to share information or take any initiative that could backfire when the boss's perception of his or her performance was so critical in the next restructure? Adoption of rapidly emerging new information technologies that are not yet bedded down and providing the promised efficiencies is adding to low morale in some quarters.

The forest industry needs a period of stability (and I'm talking 4 to 5 years) for management, staff and contractors to settle into understanding how they can best contribute to the overall company vision, and find their own ways to do it more efficiently. To get this stability would probably necessitate the dismissal of external management consultants and the relegation of Human Resources Departments to clerical support functions for line managers, rather than initiators of change.

Adequate staff resourcing must be provided for. The losses being experienced now through logistical problems associated with logging, log tracking, transport and ship loading are big. These types of losses are management issues, and they have an overall cost greater than the cost of well-trained and motivated staff working as a team to avoid them. Electronic data capture and in-

formation systems cannot completely replace staff. The systems we have now are a big leap forward in process control. On-going enhancements will give managers better information on which to base important decisions. But these tools are still useless to manage many of the issues picked up by staff



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Future leadership is in the hands of our young people.

Peter Clark, Chief Executive Officer,
PF Olsen & Company Ltd.