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# Professor visits 'real world' of advertising

## 3 weeks at Ross Roy

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

Vince Blasko figures he just might have earned a little respect for the academics in the world of advertising during his recent three-week stint at Ross Roy Advertising in Bloomfield Hills.

Blasko, an associate professor of advertising at Arizona State, was here as part of the Advertising Educational Foundation's visiting-professor program, which is designed to close the gap between what is taught in advertising schools and what is actually needed on the job. Fourteen professors participated around the country this summer.

"PEOPLE IN agencies think teachers are just academics. I hope I've opened up some eyes. We're not just book oriented," said Blasko on his last week on the job, much of which was spent assisting Ross Roy's biggest account, K mart. The agency has handled K mart for more than 20 years, and it contributes more than \$100 million in revenues a year.

Blasko had his work cut out for him. The first paragraph of the press release about his arrival at Ross Roy began: "Some say comparing advertising theory to advertising practice is like comparing apples to oranges."

Ouch. Blasko thinks it may be more like oranges and tangerines.

And in his first week on the job, Adweek ran an editorial piece titled: "Colleges get 'F' in Advertising."

"It really is exaggerated," said Blasko, who has taught advertising for 10 years after working for three years for an agency in Phoenix.

"Of course there is a gap between the two. There are always going to

be some problems taking what you read in a book and putting it into the real world."

JANITA GAULZETTI, Ross Roy's director of management training, sees the gap between what is taught and what is needed on the job from the perspective of an on-campus recruiter looking for talent. The gap is very real, although not nearly as bad as portrayed in Adweek, she said.

"We know first-hand that most graduates of advertising schools in the United States can be better prepared before beginning their advertising careers," said Gaulzetti.

"That is why we participate in the visiting-professor program, and why we pioneered the development of a comprehensive training program of our own."

SAI GAULZETTI of the typical advertising student trying to enter the job market. "They're well educated, very bright, but they're not getting as much practical, hands-on experience as we'd like."

Many entry-level jobs require technical knowledge of type-setting, photography, graphic design, printing — they have to know how to get ads produced, but too often they don't."

She said that often those teaching in school are either doctorates with little practical knowledge of the business or retired advertising executives who teach what no longer is valid.

Gaulzetti said that Blasko's stint at the agency "has been very good for everyone, particularly some of the younger people in the agency who are just a few years out of school and have a clearer picture of what they were taught and what they could have used, instead. Not to



Carl Gunderson (left) and Yalonda Busbee of Ross Roy work with visiting advertising professor Vince Blasko during his three weeks at the Bloomfield Hills agency.

mention that he's a heck of a softball player."

BLASKO SAID that the three-week stay taught him lessons he will be able to pass on to students.

"One thing I'll bring back is it's important for students to realize

that while advertising can be glamorous — working with ideas and fun and interesting — but it's also a tremendous amount of hard work.

"And you have to be able to deal with people. We need to cover more in class about office and corporate politics. How creative people view

account people. How account people view the media. And I'll bring back an awful lot of examples.

"As a professor with tenure, you have job security. But in advertising, if you lose a client, you may lose a job."

"That's got to be in the back of

your mind. I found myself holding back a bit, watching what you say and who you say it to.

"I'm more sensitive now, too, knowing when to shut up, and that's interesting. When you're in a university, you spend all your time talking."

# Expo helps subcontractors get some more respect

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

Pat Witherspoon of Troy runs the largest subcontractors' show in the United States, with 700 exhibitors who will fill 200,000 square feet at Cobo Hall this October.

Yet, he says the Contract Manufacturers Expo and Conference "is the Rodney Dangerfield of shows. No one knows who we are or what we do. Subcontracting doesn't get any respect out there, and yet it's the biggest industry there is."

What Witherspoon does is represent all the little job shops that fill the suburban industrial parks and line such streets as Eight Mile, Groesbeck and Schoenherr, the little shops that hang the signs out front listing jobs vacancies such as jig grinder, lathe operator and millwright.

And what the show does is bring these small manufacturers together with original equipment manufacturers and larger subcontractors in an effort to co-ordinate supply and demand in the increasingly complex and technological world of manufacturing.



Pat Witherspoon  
running exposition

ONCE UPON a time in the Detroit area, it was a cut-and-dried business running a small job shop. There wasn't a wide range of materials, there wasn't a lot of emphasis on

high-quality production standards, there wasn't a lot of complexity, and "just-in-time delivery" was something that applied to babies, not manufacturing. You got a contract to cut X amount of steel rods and that's what you did.

Now, though, the auto companies have turned over much of their engineering and design to what are called Tier I suppliers, who often build complete systems instead of individual parts. There is a greater emphasis placed on quality, with plastic or composition parts and computer design and manufacturing. And contract manufacturers have branched out into aerospace, electronics and medicine.

Tier I contractors demand more of their Tier II subcontractors, which is where Witherspoon and his Contract Manufacturers Expo come in. "It used to be a word-of-mouth business," said Witherspoon, a Troy resident whose Contract Manufacturers Association is also located in Troy near the K mart headquarters.

"They never had to do trade-show selling before."

At the show, job shops can present their wares and meet purchasing

agents, engineers and specifiers, who in turn are looking for better prices or, increasingly, better quality than what they are currently getting.

WITHERSPOON USED to write brochures for job shops and began to realize "that they didn't need brochures. They needed a show. They needed a better way to get the word

out about what they do. Individually, they really couldn't afford to advertise properly."

Five years ago, Witherspoon began the Contract Manufacturers Association and in 1984 held his first show at Cobo. It drew 60 exhibitors and 1,000 attendees. By 1987, the show had grown to 600 exhibitors and 10,000 attendees; more than 200

of the exhibitors were out of state and about 60 were from overseas. This year the expo is sponsored by the Michigan Technology Council and several national trade associations.

Witherspoon envisions growing to 1,500 exhibitors in the near future.

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## At subcontractors expo

WHAT: Fifth annual Contract Manufacturers Expo and Conference. About 700 manufacturers will have exhibits, including about 60 from overseas, including Singapore, Taiwan, Mexico, China, France, Spain, Australia, India and Canada. Contract manufacturers are often the small shops you see in industrial parks or along Eight Mile road; they supply parts to original equipment manufacturers or to larger subcontractors who, in turn, use the parts to

build larger components for the OEMs.

WHY: To allow sub-contractors to show their wares and pitch new clients. To allow manufacturers looking for better quality or price to find a wider range of potential suppliers.

WHERE: Cobo Hall.  
WHEN: Oct. 25-27 (Tuesday-Thursday). With 200,000 square feet of space and 700 exhibitors, the show is the largest such show in the U.S. and second largest in the world only

to MIDEST show in Paris, which attracts 2,200 exhibitors.

COSTS: Tickets for the expo are \$15 at the door. Buyers, executives and engineers wishing to represent their firms at the expo in the search for suppliers and sub-contractors can arrange free tickets by calling 643-6807. Booths to display your wares or dispense literature about your plant and products cost exhibitors \$1,675.

# Lear Siegler division making 100 all-plastic racing seats

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

When a race car finishes first, those in the know might have about

the fuel-injection system, or ooh and ahh over the tires and how they performed in the rain, or rave about the latest engine modification.

People get excited about the tires

that carried the car to victory, the engine that propelled it and the engineering the put it all together. But nobody seems to notice the seat that carried the driver.

So, why is it such a big deal to Lear Siegler Automotive Group that it got the contract to make the 100 seats used this spring and summer in the 1988 Corvette Challenge series, 10 sanctioned races that test drivers by matching them in identical Chevrolet Corvettes?

For one thing, engineers love a challenge; for another, the innovation of today becomes the common technology of the future.

"This allows us to push the technology and see what the spinoffs might be," said Eric Kozlowski, manager of product engineering for Lear Siegler at the Southfield offices of the Livonia-headquartered firm. "We got involved because we wanted to develop a seat better than any in the market."

THE CHALLENGE? To build an

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Technology of lightweight all-plastic racing seat developed by Lear Siegler may filter down to consumer automobiles.



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