

# Eaton keeps door open for new ideas

By JACKIE KLEIN

Eaton Corp.'s formula for success is "anticipate, innovate and communicate."

To Derek Dawson, general manager, the emphasis is on "communicate."

"We have some of the best engineering talent in the country," he said. "But unless we can draw their heads together, they can't perform effectively and neither can the Eaton Corporation. We believe in the open door policy because it's important we all know our objectives."

"Interrelations, open communication, motivation, challenge and working together in harmony are the only ways to go. They all meld to generate improved products and profits."

ITS NO simple task to describe what goes on in the 165,000 square foot engineering and research facility on Northwestern Highway.

"We have such a broad base of operations, it's difficult to explain them all," says Dawson who's been with the company 18 years and doesn't simply manage it from his desk. He maintains it's important to participate in

every phase and mingle with the nearly 300 employees.

"You might say Eaton makes parts of someone else's products," said Dawson in his still discernible British accent. "The company designs valves for engines, transmissions for trucks, axels, brakes, timberskidders to pull logs—the list goes on and on."

The Southfield facility represents 22 per cent of the total corporate and engineering efforts. Eaton Corp. headquarters in Cleveland, has more than 50,000 employees and 130 operations in 24 countries where thousands

of engineered, precision-made products are developed.

EATON CORPORATE Research Center moved from Detroit to Southfield in 1961 with a 37,000 square foot laboratory. In 1971, the facility was completed and expanded to provide engineering and research. The administrative and marketing center next door serves as the company's Detroit area headquarters.

The waning economy has hit the giant corporation, said Dawson, but not all operations were affected at one time.

"We're diversified and serve so many markets that some are riding high and others have been affected," he said. "We operate four groups in the center which is the coordinating hub for Eaton's research and engineering system."

The groups include materials handling, industrial and security products, automobiles and controls and truck components. Eaton primarily de-

pends on engineering in its field operations to serve existing products and assigns research to the center.

The Southfield corporate research center concentrates on new products investigations and assists in coordinating and supporting research and engineering in the field operators.

Among products tested and engineered at the center are car heaters, wash machines, drivers, coke dispensers, all weather golf grips, Yale door locks and other security systems, air bags, crash barriers, differential locks to help start cars in mud or ice and skid systems for truck brakes in the interest of safety. Many products are invented by engineers.

"TODAY, WE have more than 300 identified research projects ranging from improvements in existing products to products that will extend Eaton know-how into new and growing markets," said E.M. de Windt, chairman and chief executive officer of the corporation.

"Our corporate purpose is to enhance the quality of shares for Eaton shareholders by providing needed products and services for our customers throughout the world. We also maintain a desirable working climate to motivate and challenge our employees. Anticipating change and helping it happen through innovation is the big idea."

The will to work and innovate is what free enterprise is all about, Dawson said. Free enterprise thrives on competition and legislation and being told what to do suppresses it, he believes.

"Without government intervention, products are improved and the cost is down," he said. "It takes years for engineers to design and develop products. Legislators think engineers walk on water but ideas aren't transferred from paper to reality overnight."

"When new products are generated, it creates new employment, more business and corporate growth."



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