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# Brief

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## Change, Adjust -- or Lose Out

**How do business executives and strategists broaden their knowledge of their industry?** According to Richard Dennis, President of Die-Tech, they attend global summits, forums, and conferences, which identify trends and technologies that shape markets.

Dennis recently returned from a global summit conducted for senior executives by the Global Connector Research Group, Inc., d.b.a. Fleck Research. As the core of industry knowledge, Fleck has provided an information bridge among industry leaders whose collaborations have profoundly affected worldwide business.

Dennis relates that three issues dominated the Summit: wireless technology, energy and globalization. While none of these were surprising, each has an impact on how Die-Tech and other manufacturers will serve their customers. Better, faster, cheaper applies. Traditional cellular, cordless phones and laptop computers are merging into the "handheld identity" that keeps people always connected and always responsive. "These 'smart phones' are much more accessible in Asia than here in the United States", explains Dennis. "For many US manufacturers a T-1 line and fiber optic broadband is a luxury. Wireless in areas of the US remains a vision of the future."

Dennis points out that consumption of oil is now surpassing new oil discovery. Without an energy policy and alternative affordable sources of energy, costs will continue to escalate and profit margins decline. "We manufacturers need to step up to the plate and be a voice for change--perhaps start an initiative to be oil independent within ten years."

Globalization was the third dominant theme of the

conference. Dennis cites a recent Fleck survey: one manual task in building connectors is to strip wires. The benchmark in Asia was 3500 per hour and in Mexico 1500 per hour. In a US plant, assemblers stripped wires at the rate of 700 per hour. More than half of China's exports now come from multinationals taking advantage of low-cost labor.

"Competing on price is basically dead," adds Dennis, "and US manufacturers must respond with new ways to compete." "The good news is that US firms have found ways to survive. We improve our lead times and manufacturing flexibility. We slash costs through better design, reduce shipping time and improve equipment maintenance."

Dennis explains, "At Die-Tech, our engineers and designers innovate and push stamping technology as small as it can go. Miniaturization, precision forming, micro machining and micro stamping are common strategies." "We also compete because we have the capability to quote jobs, often, on the same day requests come in," adds Dennis. "When our customer needs it immediately, price is less important than speed, service and quality."

This global summit, reflects Dennis, was a strong reminder, "We all must change. The market will demand we find ways to do it." Contact a Die-Tech Business Development Engineer and find out how we can help.

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