



Operational Excellence Is Critical Even When Growing

Desmond Griffiths, President and CEO of Electromac, and Bill Remy, CEO of TBM, talk about operational excellence and related topics. Desmond Griffiths notes how difficult it is to maintain discipline and operational excellence during strong growth periods. He says they've learned the hard way that they need to spend more time on operational excellence when orders pick up. That starts with training and developing people.

Last month Desmond Griffiths, President and CEO of Electromac, and I had a great conversation about operational excellence and related topics at their headquarters in Windsor, Ontario. We recently posted the [full recording](#) of our conversation on TBM's website.

When we spoke, Desmond made the point that Electromac has been growing steadily since he joined the company 20 years ago. They've pretty much always been in growth mode, with the exception of the 2008-2009 recession. During periods of strong growth, he noted how difficult it is to maintain discipline and operational

excellence, the very attributes that enable any company to grow to begin with. It's easy to start taking shortcuts to get orders out the door. Contrary to what typically happens, he said that they've learned the hard way that they need to spend more time on operational excellence when orders pick up. That starts with people, with training and development, he advised, so that the people moving into new positions really understand what the customer requirements are.

To make sure they're staying on top of things, his management team on the stamping side of the business closely watches equipment uptime. When uptime starts to slip that means that the operational support team—toolmakers, maintenance, quality people—are getting pulled in too many directions. Desmond also conducts skip-level conversations with the people who report to his reports to make sure they're clear about the organization's objectives, and that they know what the top priorities are when it comes to daily execution.

The purpose of that exercise, from an operational excellence point of view, is making sure that everyone is vertically aligned around the right priorities and the goals of the day.

As I said at the time—whether your company is growing or going through a period of retrenchment—leadership can never take their eye off of daily execution. That means following standard work and established best practices. If managers continue to pay close attention to daily execution, everything else—like hitting the monthly and quarterly production and financial targets—tends to take care of itself.



Bill Remy, Board Member & TBM Alumnus

Bill Remy is the former CEO of TBM Consulting Group and currently serves on the TBM Board of Directors. His career expertise includes deep knowledge of operational performance improvement, site transitions, acquisition integration, new product development and supply chain management.