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The Ideal Almanac

The Official Information Source of Ideal Jacobs Corporation



Xiamen, China

Issue 53

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Welcome

Hello and welcome to the April Issue of the Ideal Almanac

Update:

Business: It is nice to be home for a while as I have been traveling and will begin again the end of this month. Right now it is cold and rainy in New Jersey with a possible big storm coming this weekend. As long as it is rain it should not be too bad, the flowers and trees will not be hurt by snow and the moisture will help fuel the explosions of incredible colors that denotes our spring. It is a wonderful time with thoughts towards warmer weather and being outside more.

Sales have been good, our new product line show tremendous potential, our operation in China is expanding and we are having a great deal of fun creating new products and with life as a whole. I wrote the article below regarding the constant requirement to move forward or lose ground and

4/12/07

Afternoon-my office New Jersey

My Dad always told me that the "best" sales people are those who started out very shy and had to re-define themselves as assertive, outwardly aggressive people. This may sound like a desperately, difficult process but unfortunately that is really an understatement. In my case I had to "re-wire" my reactions to the events of the world which meant making a huge amount of mistakes, often in public, that gave me large dose of embarrassment, trouble constant questioning of my worth and wondering if the end this would justify the trial of getting there.

In most life situations, when looking back, things don't often seem as bad as they actually were, there are some notable exceptions with childbirth being one and changing your personality being another.

Unfortunately, undergoing a transformation like this is not simply flipping a switch that is inside your brain. Instead, it is a process that continues indefinitely, with the memories of the failures staying fresh while the successes often diluted in time. Signs of the "old Andrew" still come out from time to time which I was reminded of yesterday.

From birth we have all had

the same "rules" beaten into our heads. For instance, if you are not trained in a particular field and don't have a formal diploma from a "recognized" institution than your thoughts cannot possibly worth as much, or anything as opposed to someone who has. I run into this type of thinking when I am teaching my course about how to start and run your own company at our local University. I diagram for the students how they, from a local college have a much better chance to land a lower level entry job than someone from and Ivy League School. Going to a "better" school means very little out in the real world.

The same thing clouded my own view of my worth in engineering and design. I took no engineering course in college because I did not want to face the match and science requirements. I took no design courses because I felt I was lousy in art, nothing I drew ever looked like the subject I studied. Inventing however has very little to do with being an engineer, designer, doctor, lawyer or anything else. Inventing, and I already have one patent with more on the way, comes from recognizing a problem or a need and figuring out a way to deal with it in a positive way.

I like to use my first patent idea as an example. My wife hated to have blood tests because the nurses could not easily find the veins in her arm. I created a sleeve device that would separate and lift the veins in her arms to make it much easier to be able to locate and tap into them. As I said, a need arises and the idea comes out. I have no medical training but I did have an unhappy wife and I cam up with a solution. By the way she would never use the invention but that is another story.

About six months ago we came up with an idea of how to convert certain types of metal panel parts, that go into telecom cabinets, from metal to injection molded plastic. The design, which is now patent pending, could revolutionize the telecom industry and create a huge market for our new product line.

These panels all need latches in order to connect to the cabinets they populate. We came up

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My Road to China

Chapter Fifteen December 2005

12/01/05
9:48pm EST

Pete's wife went home yesterday. Things appear to be okay. All right!!

12/02/05
10:03pm EST

The month ended well.

We need one more piece of equipment, which is a C&C routing machine, to be able to customize the metal/plastic faceplates for each customer's need. Once we have that, we can make customized faceplates for customers within a week—probably much faster than the rest of the industry. This will help to give us the opening we need in terms of delivery times.

12/03/05
10:48pm EST

It turns out that some of our people had the same idea about buying a C&C router. We all agree that we need it, so now it is just a matter of finding the best one—whether it is in China, the U.S., or both. We will probably have to hire a technician to run it. We already have 27 employees in China; one or two more probably won't make that much difference.

I also spoke to Vinnie about putting in a die-making operation into Xiamen. If my plans pan out, then there will be a massive amount of die-making work coming in there. We might as well get used to making our own tools now instead of going through the continuous hassles of buying them locally. Maybe we can send Dave, our master die-maker, over there for a week to offer training if needed. Once the die-making ability is in Xiamen, that means the only outsourcing will still be needed for making film positives to make our screens.

We saw our friends, Abi and Laura, tonight for dinner and a movie. They are good people and said some very nice things about our kids. We returned the sentiment for their eldest son, who goes to school with Ben in Cleveland. We are close enough where I refer to their son as my third son, and I don't give that designation to anyone else.

Tomorrow Kayla is taking me to see the movie, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. It may snow, so we will probably take Alex's new car with 4-wheel drive, which he can't drive by himself yet anyway. I did tell him I was taking it—after all, we bought the car—

and said I would give him money to get it washed if I got it dirty. He was happy with that. Snow is predicted for tomorrow; it is coming early this year.

I went biking with Dave today. It was very cold, almost freezing. I wore a mask and goggles the whole way. It took a while to warm back up once I got home.

Yesterday the head of the printing department from Kean University came in to ask me if I would teach the same course about being an entrepreneur and starting your own business that I did last year. I happily said "yes" and hoped it would be a little easier to prep this time since I saved my notes. I look forward to seeing a new group of faces.

12/04/05
9:46pm EST

The day started with emails from Ben in China. We were talking about our new injection molding line, the necessary finishing operations, and my new book.

After shoveling the snow and playing tennis with my brother, I then was off to pick up Kayla at work. She had gone in late because of the snow, and we were scheduled to go see a movie. But when I got there, she said we could not leave because a stray dog had wandered onto the property. She was afraid to leave him because he could have been hit by a car. How can someone turn that down? My daughter is being a good person, so I parked and helped. It turned out the dog was in very good shape and obviously had broken free from a tie somewhere. He was barely wet, a full-grown Husky male who my daughter called "Eddie." We spent the next half hour trying to find "Eddie's" tracks in the snow to find his home. But that was not suc-

Welcome

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with a unique design that worked on a snap-fit basis but some of our customers were concerned that they would not be secure enough. They wanted to go back to the major manufacturer in the industry and have them make a latch for our product. I had already designed an alternative but did not pursue it because we were not "latch" manufacturers and we had no history in the market. The fact that we were not panel manufacturers before six months ago did not stop me then and yesterday I was kicking myself for letting it stop now.

This spurred me into action. I started designing yesterday morning and by this morning we were ready to present our new design both to our customer and send it to our Pat-

cessful, so we took him to the temple where one of the members offered to take him for the night until we could find his owner. My daughter wanted to take him home, but we already have a dog and were not sure they would get along. Kayla and I then went to my office to make a large poster saying that "Eddie" was lost. We put it up underneath the large temple sign in the front of the building. My apologies to the heads of our temple—our sign was probably more noticeable than theirs, but we did find him on temple grounds so I figured they had a stake in this.

After that, we stopped off at our friend, Phoebe's. She is an 81-year-old widow. She wasn't there, but her driveway wasn't shoveled so we took care of that and went home. I was very proud of my daughter today; she would not leave until the dog was okay and took responsibility to help and make sure it was done. She is an incredible person; instead of just having a pleasant day at the movies, we shared an adventure that we both will never forget.

12/08/05
10:13pm EST

One of our customers may be going through a logo change. This is music to the ears of any printer because it means that everything with the company logo will probably have to be reprinted. In this case, they may need our help with art design and modifying art masters, which we can supply in the form of putting another one of our designers at their site. We already have one working there two days a week.

A lot is happening. I need to get back to China and Europe by early spring.

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ent attorney so he could add it to our existing patent application for the panel design. That was all it took, two days and we have the potential to be in a new industry. Two days and I could have done it a month ago and had it already being reviewed except I felt I had no "right" to be in this area because we had not been there before.

I was wrong to doubt myself; even if my design is lousy it is no reason to stop creating. I can't get to the next level, whatever it is until I am willing to risk failing, look stupid, be ridiculed and made to feel inadequate. That is the price to pay for growing and when I am no longer willing to risk that then it is time to retire.

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My Road to China

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12/09/05
10:57pm EST

I publicly acknowledge that I am an email addict. I am supposed to cut off at 9:30pm, and I keep missing my deadline. I am always trying to get one last message from Ben in China before going to sleep. I will try harder to keep to what I should do.

Alice's mom died tonight; she sounded very sad. The funeral is probably a couple days from now. Death has such finality; I hope she is okay.

12/10/05
10:51pm EST

I got confirmation today I am going to Guadalajara, Mexico next month. It will be for one day. I will fly out on Sunday and leave there Monday for Arizona and for another meeting Tuesday. Then I will leave Tuesday and get back to Newark hopefully by midnight. It will be a tough, short voyage but necessary. It sounds like we may have to put a depot into Mexico, but we may be able to tag it onto one of our customer's sites, so it will only cost us money. This is a much easier way to do things as opposed to our own distribution center or a plant.

Word about a possible pandemic continues. If it happens worldwide, borders may be closed and millions may die—especially those who are already hindered by being extremely young, old, sick, or in adverse conditions. This does not even address the potential problems to the global economy. I will try to stockpile flu medicine and get the vaccine as fast as possible, if one is offered. It is a scary thought from all perspectives.

Our China operation is doing well. The injection molding line is now waiting for a test mold. I have been trying to get a drawing to make such a mold for weeks.

Most of the Telecom industry is close-mouthed about their designs, so I am having trouble getting something to prototype. I will keep pushing!

I am looking forward to getting back on the road soon.

12/11/05
9:50pm EST

Alice's mom was buried today and there was a viewing service later that evening.

The rest of the day was spent playing tennis with my brother, walking with Bruce who is feeling better, editing, and eating. It was sad to see Alice's dad who is 89 years old and alone for the first time in about 68 years, without his beloved wife. He seemed reasonably okay; Gregory, Alice's oldest son, told me that he would be getting married the last week of January in Turkey, his future wife's homeland. This means that Alice can now go to Asia during the first or second week of January. I will try to book her trips tomorrow. But since she is out until Wednesday, it is liable to be pretty hectic. Anna, one of the students I taught last year, comes in for an interview as a part-timer tomorrow. I think she has a lot of potential.

While walking with Bruce, we spoke about the possible pandemic coming. We both agreed the world would probably not shut down if it happens. The media is always looking for a news story. This one has the potential to be a good, long-lasting one (for them), so they are hyping it up now to get the most news they can, even if it doesn't actually occur.

Our cash crunch continues; people owe us a lot of money. Hopefully a bunch comes in by tomorrow afternoon for payroll and bills. If not, I always have other options. We are growing, and I would not have it any other way. It does mean the company needs more money for cash flow. The banks seem happy to help us in any way we want, but I do not want to take on more debt. The ultimate in business freedom is to owe nothing, and I will strive to reach that end as soon as possible.

12/12/05
9:48pm EST

It was a crazy day. The good part is that we are being forced to utilize the new database system so it will be in use right away. The bad part is it keeps me from focusing on the other things I need to do. The system must be put in now, and it will be done. I am very grateful the work is there to keep us busy.

12/20/05

I am on my way to Toronto, Canada. Since I had an early flight, a 6:15am EST takeoff, I decided to get up at 3:00am so I could get to the office and answer any email. It was good that I did because once there, I not only had a lot of email but also got two phone calls from the same person in the Netherlands.

It was good that I was there because she wanted to place an order and had questions.

Vinnie is getting ready to leave in China in less than two weeks. The Chinese government just changed the vacation schedule for Christmas and New Year's, so part of the emails this morning was discussing whether to put off his trip. He is going there for multiple purposes which include:

1. Refining our die-procurement procedures in China to make sure our suppliers there are giving us the best product possible.
2. Checking out our new injection molding system and learning as much about it as possible.
3. Going to see machining suppliers to check on their capabilities, so we can either use them and or put in a system ourselves to customize the faceplates we plan to make.
4. Going to visit some of our material suppliers.
5. Seeing one customer in Hong Kong.
6. Making sure that our new tenant is on schedule for everything they need to launch their new operation in January.
7. Checking our printing operation to make sure everything is running smoothly and seeing what else is needed.

This is a lot to do in the span of ten days, but I am sure he can accomplish everything needed.

When I got to the airport, I realized in the waiting line that I had my pocket knife with me. So once again, I had to throw it away before getting to security. This is at least the second time this has happened, but I am so used to carrying it that I am not upset. I did like the knife, however, and was sorry to see it go. With the holiday season, the airport was a little crazy, but I made it through security with enough time. We seem to be on schedule for takeoff. I am not sure of the weather in Toronto, but I hope it will not be a hindrance.

We plan to have our first mold reading for our new injection molding line in January with samples to be ready by the end of the month. We will then have them tested and see where we are regarding their properties, strength, rigidity, etc. Having the ability of being able to mold and machine products, make and adhere labels and packages is a big plus, especially for short runs. I believe we have a giant potential market.

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My Road to China

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12/20/05

9:13am EST

I am waiting in a conference room at Celestica Corporation where I have been before. This is one of the places where they beat up on the suppliers to get what they want. I wonder how I will do.

It is lightly snowing outside. I do not think it is cause for concern. I wonder if the planes will be on time since coming up was great. I met a woman named Glenda on the plane. She lives here in Toronto but spends a lot of time traveling on the road. I gave her a copy of my latest book, and she mentioned she was trying to launch her own clothing line. As we went through customs, the agent said I had not filled in the flight number on my entry documents. I did not have my ticket stub readily available, so I yelled down the customs line to ask Glenda our flight number, and she called it back. In retrospect, it was an odd thing for me to do; but no one seemed to mind, and she did know the answer. I hope she does well.

2:03pm EST

I am at the Toronto Airport as it looks like we are delayed getting home. I got through the first stop at Celestica and then went onto Sanmina-SCI, where I finally met some of the people I had only been emailing or calling for years. It is a good place and looks profitable. I ended up at Mara Technologies. I saw the buyer who is a very nice man, wished him a happy holiday, and moved on. It has been well worth the trip and I am very tired. I will edit for a while here, call the office and maybe take a nap.

It looks like we may need to set up a distribution hub in Mexico. We will have to see if it will be profitable before we make the effort. I look forward to being home tonight.

12/26/05

I got back from Celestica last Tuesday and decided that what they want in a contract supplier is probably more than I am willing to give. Therefore, after a few days and considerable thought, I emailed that I was not interested in pursuing that goal. The world is getting smaller; certain areas of large business will be left to those who are willing to work on razor-thin profit margins. In the event of an economic slowdown, they will be sucked into a global meltdown of bankruptcies that will shake the world. Since I have no plans to participate in that area, or that meltdown for that matter, I will hopefully leave that downward stampede to others and move my company's efforts to different

areas. Part of the fun of all of this is trying to figure out where the niche areas of profit will be; it is like multilevel chess where the stakes are usually much higher than going to the racetrack. I wonder if I will be right in the course we are taking.

12/29/05

10:58pm EST

We have been here at the Berkshires since Tuesday (12/27/05), after Alex successfully completed his driving test. Now he can take care of driving himself and hopefully his sister—another milestone in the Jacobs Family. I have spent the last few days vacationing with my two sons, my daughter, and one of Alex's female friends. Ben left this morning, and we go home tomorrow morning. I miss work, which I know sounds crazy, but I like the action and being able to make things happen quickly. I feel out of the loop when I am here, even though it is calm and relaxing. I have already had a few panic attacks worrying about cash flow, next year's sales, marketing, and China in general.

When I get stressed like this, it is like living in a pressure cooker that boils over every

Welcome

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Home:


I am proud to report that my son Alex has gotten into and will be attending Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri come the fall semester. He has worked extremely hard for a lot of years and his reward is huge in that this is an extremely good school. He plans to major in art and business and the world will be his where-ever he decides to go after he graduates. I have rarely met a more focused individual and I would not want to be the one standing in the way of something he wants.

There are moments in a father's life when there is an obvious passage of time. I had one of those last week as I gazed at my beautiful daughter sitting in the driver's seat of my car ready to go out after just getting her learner's permit. How could this be, I wondered, she was just a little kid seemingly a few days before and now she is driving? She is competent, intelligent and I am sure will be a great driver and I look forward to the time we will spend together over the next year until she gets her license.

My eldest son Ben is finishing up his junior year at Case Western Reserve University and his talents in music technology will be coming in handy again soon as we will need him to record, edit and compose music for a new CD we plan to put out for a friend of mine.

once in a while. I am still exercising a lot which helps a great deal, and tomorrow I am also due to play tennis with my brother after we get home. The year ends in a few days. We had a record for sales at Ideal Jacobs, U.S., and I am very thankful. I will try to go to sleep in a little while, but if that doesn't work I will go back to editing.

The new book should be off press by the second week of February, which also marks the end of the big Chinese New Year holiday in Asia. I will begin the book launch by my traveling in person to see customers and potential buyers. I will also be sending the books and new product samples by mail.

A new book always means a lot of selling work by me and generally a large churning of the market for new business for both companies. The full launch will probably take about six months, which means I should be busy until about July when I will take some weekends in the summer to be back up here with my wife and dog, ride my bike, and watch the lightning bugs come out as night. 

Books/CD/Game

I have finished the first edit of my latest book and hope to have it finished and out to everyone in May. At this point it will probably be called "My Road to China and Beyond." The next excerpt from my book "My Road to China" is below. If you would like a copy of that or my new CD, just released, based on my book "How to Start and Run Your Own Company or sex, money and power It Is All the Same Thing" then please email me at ACJ@IdealJacobs.com.

Our new game "Ideal Challenge" is finished and we have a limited supply here so if you want a copy please email me immediately because there are not many left.

Last thought:

It is nice to have good people around here in so many areas where I have no talent. As I always say I want to hire people better than I am. I can sell, run a company and put my ego aside which gives me the freedom to hire the best to help me.

I hope your spring/fall is going well!

Regards,

Andrew 