

C&D Technologies, Inc.
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C&D Technologies, Inc. is a technology company that produces and markets systems for the power conversion and storage of electrical power, including industrial batteries and electronics. This specialized focus has established the company as a leading and valued supplier of products in reserve power systems and electronic power supplies. C&D's success in these key markets has been supported by dedication to customer service. The company's core business focuses on reserve power systems supplied to leading operators of telecommunications, data transmission, infrastructure computer systems and utilities to enable them to maintain critical operations during power outages. C&D has manufacturing facilities in North America, Mexico and China and is truly a global company.

Jeff's career began as a metallurgical engineer. He also worked in the aerospace industry during a very exciting time at Rockwell with projects such as the space shuttle and the B1-B Bomber. Jeff joined General Electric in the early 1990's and worked for them for ten years. His first assignment was in the R&D laboratories near Albany, N.Y. Following the G. E. path he relocated to Greenville, S.C. to join Power Systems, about a 100 year old business and G.E. was pursuing a major initiative in modernizing the business that would take a massive turnaround of an old established business. The experience was a great foundation for Jeff's future role with C&D Technologies; there were many similarities with the two businesses. G.E. a world class organization and one of the most admired companies in the world taught Jeff great fundamentals on how to build an organization and run a business. Lessons learned at GE still hold true today and Jeff applies them at C&D Technologies.

In late 2000 he left GE and went to run an electronics company, to help turn the company around, Kemet Electronics based in Greenville, S.C. where Jeff was living at the time. The change from GE was dramatic, but he had a chance to be President and CEO. After moving eight times in twelve years it was a chance to settle down and live in a nice community and raise a family.

Along came C&D Technologies in 2005, the company needed to reinvent itself and it was quite clear that Jeff had been preparing for this for many years and he was ready to take on the challenge. C&D needed someone with an engineering product background and who also understood the electronics industry. C&D was invested heavily into the electronics industry a diversion from their core business expertise of power conversion and storage of electrical power, a business they had been in for 100 years. The timing of the move into the electronics industry proved to be unfortunate since the market went soft and commodity prices went up significantly resulting in a most difficult position. The appeal for Jeff was the “turnaround” and he knew he could lead C&D and he readily accepted the position of President and CEO in 2005.

Jeff liked many things about C&D, they had just turned 100 years old when he joined, had a great reputation and brand recognition in their core business. They had taken a hard turn in trying to diversify into the electronics industry and he had to revisit the company’s identity; who did they want to be? How would they get there? What would the team look like? Amongst the uncertainty came one huge fact; this company was committed to making the necessary changes to be successful. Even in the face of adversity and the pressure C&D was feeling with the continuing rise of the price of lead, an integral component for their batteries Jeff welcomed the challenge.

The management and staff he inherited had gone through many changes, it was a bit chaotic, in addition as a public company you have quarterly reports and time is limited in making the correct changes to move the company forward. Jeff quickly rebuilt the team and revisited the business strategy and where the company was headed. Jeff calls it a fairly classic approach to turning the company around. They achieved very measurable progress rebuilding a team with strong morale and a clear idea of where they wanted to go and involving the team in the strategic decisions. As tough as things got, in retrospect it was a great time with a very open and supportive board of directors, without their support it would have been impossible to drive the degree of change they made in the time that they accomplished these changes.

The strategy Jeff followed was to get business segments, the battery business and electronics business in balance. The electronics business was very different from their core battery power supply business. The electronics industry had moved to Asia, very high R&D fast evolving products with manufacturing, design and customers all in Asia. The two business segments were very different businesses. The battery power business was big heavy products manufactured regionally with most of their business in the North East United States and Canada. Jeff spent his first year trying to get both businesses integrated within themselves and running better on a solid footing. His recommendation by the end of 2006 was to divest one business, they had the long 100 year track record in the battery and power business and Jeff recommend they sell off the electronics business and use that money to reduce the debt and reinvest in the core power business. In 2007 they sold the electronics business. They also sold off a piece of the battery business, batteries for fork lift trucks. They wanted to focus on stationery batteries.

When Jeff finished with the divestitures, true to his G.E. heritage they were number one in market share for all of their core segments. This included UPS batteries the energy sector, and telecom. By 2008 they had returned the company to profitability. In 2006 Jeff hired a new engineering leader and doubled the size of the engineering group and increased spending for R&D. By the middle of 2008 they started rolling out new products.

In 2008 the recession hit and the first quarter of 2009 was bad for C&D as customers froze their purchasing. Things started improving in the last two quarters of 2009 and they are now on the right track. C&D built a \$ 40 million dollar factory in China that was finished in late 2008 to serve the Asian market, an aggressive move in a soft market that was supported by their board of directors. They are now rebounding out of the recession with new products and a clear direction for the company.

The time frame that you have to perform as an executive of a public company is very short. There is a lot of pressure quarter by quarter. Jeff feels that he is a transparent person and that is to his advantage. If he does not know something he is not afraid to say he does not know. As an engineer Jeff follows a logical path to explain to people where they are going and why it will work. Transparency is instrumental in getting people to understand where you are going with the company.

One of Jeff's biggest challenges has been commodity prices for lead; he has no control of the market and realizes that this is a new world with regard to all commodity prices. How you deal with this in terms of pricing your products

means the difference between success and failure. Jeff has two main concerns, he is sensitive to the economy, and this recession during his life time has amazed him with the level of impact, to see people lock up with fear, afraid to make a decision. This is frustrating to him; he is powerless to do anything. The other issue is the volatility in the world today, like commodities, the price of oil, lead, etc. has become so globally impacted in today's world. Your ability to control and predict costs is critical and very complex.

Jeff believes in hiring energetic and passionate people. You pick smart bright motivated people that will work together. His role is to set the overall objective and direction of the business. To prosper and grow you have to surround yourself with the best and brightest people. You want people smarter than you and willing to work hard. As long as you set clear objectives on where you are going as a group and give people some freedom and flexibility in getting there, this works like a dream in building your organization and moving the company forward. The team has evolved into a high energy, collegial team that will challenge each other. Everybody has the same goals and timeframe, moving in the same direction at a full sprint. Yes, mistakes will happen but everyone will back each other, learn and move forward. It is a lot of fun coming to work every day.

The big challenge is people, getting the right mix and skill sets of the business. He spends half his time on the people side of the business. This part is not really trained or taught in college. If anyone wants to run a business you need to be proficient in managing people or you will fail.

Advice that Jeff would give a young person coming out of college is to pick something in your heart, a career you are passionate about. Decide which area you want to focus on and be good really good in this area. Excel in this and push yourself to broaden your skills. Business is global today and you need to be passionate, excited about being there. The people and organizations that can do this are the winners.

Pick a piece of the business you can be passionate about, aggressively learn skills to broaden your responsibilities. Practice your skills building teams and working with people, this is critical in being successful. You have to work as part of a team and build teams or you will never progress. Training in college is not always great in this area. Surround yourself with the best people you can, this is an absolute. They will lift you higher than you can ever believe you can possibly go.

Things have changed so fast in the last ten to fifteen years; the world is changing fast, China and India. People coming out of school need to understand globalization. It impacts your job, nobody is exempt. You must think globally there will be problems and opportunities. You need to embrace it and there will be opportunities and a brand new world. It is a fascinating world.

The future for C&D Technologies looks bright. Jeff's people skills, optimism and years of business expertise combined with a supportive board of directors will ensure continued success and future growth for the company.



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