

Executive Musical Chairs

CHANGES...

Have you noticed the game of musical chairs being played at the executive level of late? Some recent shuffling at the top include:

Chip Lacey, from Ingram Micro to the board at Entex and now onto MicroWarehouse.

Ron Rittenmeyer, from Merisel to "wherever is appropriate".

Jerre Stead, from Legent to Ingram Micro.

Michael Norris, from COMPAQ to Intelligent Electronics.

Tony Ibarquen, from Entex to Tech Data

We have seen a lot publicized about these executives and their career moves but the question remains: what changes? What happens? For certain we know that the only obvious changes are; new business cards, new voice mail numbers, new executive assistants and a new signature on their pay check. Then what? Not claiming to be experts but with 14+ years of experience in the Computer Industry and seeing many, many executives shuffle from Corporation to Corporation what has really changed?

We have seen that the shareholders are kept quiet through the new executive's transition with high hopes that it will fix something Wall Street is told that the problems will be fixed, with hopes that the stock will make a marked improvement and the Board of Directors are lulled to sleep with the assurance that this will change something. When? What integral player is missing in this equation? Doesn't the customer need to be reassured that they are the most important piece of the puzzle?

Isn't it about time that the Resellers, Manufacturers, and Distributors worked together hand -in-hand to try and really change something? Our Industry is so fragmented that the customer really doesn't know who to go to and for what each of these really delivers. For instance; IBM sells directly to customers and distributors. Intelligent Electronics sells to their franchisee's but also sells to customers as XL Connect or XL Source. Confused? The customer certainly is. Do these changes impact day to day business? Not in any way. Does the new President or CEO really impact the bottom line? No. The only thing that changes the bottom line is the customer and those employees that service the customer.

Perhaps we should clarify a few things.... A Master Reseller/Franchisors customer are the Resellers/Franchisee's. A Manufacturers customers are the Distributors and Resellers. In the perfect world if these groups concentrate on their own customer base, everything else should fall into place. It really isn't as convoluted as the Industry has made it out to be.

The only people who really care about the changes are those employees that are changing desks. The customer doesn't really care who sits at the top.