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I recently came across this quote from Thomas Edison, and it made me reflect on my own capabilities. If I started each day, task, or project with that perspective, what would the results look like? What a refreshing perspective!

So, why don’t I do this? Why don’t I work to my full potential? There are a thousand different answers:

- I’m too busy.
- I worry about what could go wrong.
- I aim for perfection instead of progress.
- I get distracted.

Yet, there is one common element within each answer: me. Perhaps that was Edison’s point. We may be the problem, but we can also be the solution. To achieve astonishing results, we must first get out of our own way by leveraging our capabilities. We also need to worry less, trust ourselves, and lean on others. In the end, it’s often best to just go for it.

If we can start thinking like this, we might just astound ourselves and, ultimately, make a huge impact on our clients, projects, and teams. Now that is the Interstates way!

Scott Peterson
CEO
Interstates

“ASTOUND YOURSELF”

“If we did all the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves.”

- Thomas Edison
A change in perspective can often lead to new solutions. In order to fulfill goals across multiple projects for St. Louis-based Bunge North America, Interstates had to zoom out and look at the big picture. To achieve consistency across numerous sites, Interstates had to consider the entire operation as a program instead of as individual projects. This perspective, along with frank feedback, careful scheduling, and a solid team, has resulted in success for both parties.

Bunge wanted its grain handling and barge load-out facilities to have standardized control systems and improved safety. Initially, the various sites from northern Iowa to southern Louisiana varied widely in automation. Interstates developed a plan that would give them all the same level of control and a similar ‘feel’ so that operators could go easily between sites. “We created a standard that Bunge approved, and we applied this standard to all the sites,” says Randy Best, Project Manager at Interstates Control Systems. “This is unique because, even though each site had very different levels of automation starting out, now they are at a place where operators can go to different sites to help out, especially at harvest time, and fit right in with the control system and be able to run it,” he says.

While Interstates had done jobs for Bunge previously, this series of projects was the first time Bunge had taken advantage of Interstates’ Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) service. According to Jake Keller, Project Manager at Interstates, “It was new to Bunge to use a contractor that could offer everything, a turn-key solution for the various needs on these projects. It was a benefit for them because, instead of using various contractors who were constrained to certain locations or service capabilities, we could offer consistency across all these projects and, really, a partnership.”

In order to offer a seamless, consistent approach across the entire program of sites, Interstates adopted a big-picture approach to project management. “Keeping standards across all these sites presented some logistical challenges,” says Keller. “It was hard to not just focus on the project in front of you and to really consider the bigger picture. Some sites had issues where we would have to spend more time, while others went more smoothly. We had to focus on finding the ‘wins’ and rolling those into improvements, resulting in success on the whole. Mistakes happened, but we did our best to learn from them and create a culture for continuous improvement opportunities,” he says.

Since Interstates was able to iron out a lot of the design and implementation details that were crucial to the project in the beginning it allowed them to not get bogged down in details as much during the execution phase. Keller and the Interstates team had to think about broader milestones in scheduling. “We had to be very flexible with scheduling,” says Keller. “We had to consider the business of the operations of the facilities and how that hinged on commodity markets and availability to transfer products during prime times. There were often times where we would have to consider adjusting shutdown and startup dates, but given our overall size and ability to accommodate those changes, we could be flexible in order to meet their needs,” he says. In addition to flexibility, Randy Best says keeping the same people on the Interstates field and project teams was key to success. “We kept a solid team together for the last year and a half. Interstates allowed us to keep that strong core team, and that gives you the best possible results,” he says.

According to Keller, “It was kind of remarkable to have a team like ours, and a partner like Bunge, willing to take on these projects as a program and find a new approach. There were some sacrifices, and a lot of flexibility was needed, but I think we learned how to make this work. And, as the industry continues to demand broader updates and changes, I think this program approach will be utilized more and more.”
#5 Things You Didn’t Know About LED Lighting

LED lighting technology has made immense strides in recent years. Today’s LEDs can go years without maintenance, are able to turn less power into visible light, and have excellent color rendering. Read on for some new insights into the possibilities of LED lighting in grain handling facilities; you might be surprised by what you didn’t know.

**MYTH:** LEDs Are Too Expensive for Grain Facilities

**FACT:** Payback Can Be Quick

With LED technology improving and more competition in the marketplace, LEDs are now more accessible because of the diverse retrofit and new construction options available, in addition to rebates and incentives.

For a new construction project Interstates completed in Nebraska, 122 nonhazardous-rated and 150 hazardous-rated fixtures were purchased. The initial cost of the LEDs was over twice that of the metal-halide equivalent; however, when considering the energy cost and maintenance cost differences, the payback period for the owner was just 2.7 years.

**MYTH:** Retrofit Options are Limited and Difficult

**FACT:** There are Retrofit Options for Every Budget

In many retrofit applications, a complete LED fixture unit is used to replace an existing HID, incandescent, or fluorescent fixture. If cost or downtime is prohibitive, some fixtures can be upgraded to LED by replacing the housing and light source but leaving the existing splice box and conduit in place. Several manufacturers offer a retrofit kit that uses much of the existing fixture housing, conduit, and wire, while adding only an adapter and new light source.

**MYTH:** LED Fixtures are Not Suited for Grain Handling Environments

**FACT:** LEDs Can Work Well for Grain Facilities

LEDs do especially well with vibration, water, and dust. Many LEDs have a rated minimum operating temperature of -40°F. Heat is still the greatest enemy of LEDs, so operating LEDs in a cold environment helps alleviate this limitation. Additionally, unlike fluorescent and metal halide lamps, LEDs are instant on and produce their full lumen output immediately in all temperature conditions.

**MYTH:** LEDs are Just a One-for-One Replacement of Traditional Lamps

**FACT:** LEDs Provide Flexibility in Controls

LEDs require less power, resulting in smaller cables and allowing increased flexibility in lighting controls. The instant-on and instant-restart characteristics of LEDs give them superior flexibility in operation impossible with traditional lamp fixtures. Cycling and switching does not affect the lifespan of the LED node; switching a fixture off will only extend its life. This characteristic allows LEDs to be easily controlled with traditional switches, occupancy sensors, timers, or in an office or loadout control room.

**MYTH:** LEDs Create a “Spotlight” Effect

**FACT:** There are Wide-Ranging Options for LED Optics and Output

Though LEDs are directional, precision optics and varied lumen packages allow us to direct light only where needed. You can avoid spilling light onto the wall or ground behind a fixture or off the edges of a catwalk. LEDs can be manipulated using small lenses surrounding individual LED nodes, and any number of nodes can be mounted on a single board.

The light quality of LEDs is higher than other traditional lamp technologies and can provide more visible light for less lumen output, power input, and energy cost. Human eyes prefer to see the type of light provided by LEDs, so we need less light output to believe we see better.
Our control system support team has been busy developing the next generation of support services. We’ve restructured it to supply our clients with much more than just standard break/fix type support.

We totally revamped our support offerings and added in proactive services including:

- Remote system health and status monitoring
- Error log monitoring
- Data and system backup solution monitoring

The goal of these proactive services is to detect potential issues early and fix them before they cause a process upset or a plant downtime incident. We know that downtime is extremely expensive and can seriously impact your ability to provide product to your own clients. We make it our mission to help you with all your support needs.

Our team also offers some new on-site services including:

- Critical PID control loop tuning
- Control system obsolescence auditing services
- Auditing for proper use of the control system
- Providing operator training services

Our on-site team can also be utilized to make minor changes to the system to help it operate more efficiently or to improve product quality.

We have now increased our full-time dedicated staff to almost a dozen support professionals. These individuals are capable of supporting most hardware and software platforms currently on the market, as well as many legacy systems for which support is difficult to find. We support all systems designed and installed by our team as well as systems that were designed and installed by others.

Our specialty is digging in and finding the root cause of the issue so we can keep the problem from cropping up again. We do hard things day in and day out … the impossible may just take us a little longer to accomplish!1

We offer a variety of support services to our clients including 24x7x365 support. Whatever your needs, we are sure to have a plan that will consistently exceed your expectations.

Ready to get started? Our skilled support professionals are standing by to answer your questions and help you deploy the best support solution for your unique needs. Interstates support is offered 24x7x365. To learn more about our support services and find out how we can help you, contact our support professionals today at: 712-722-1663 x2119 or icsi.support@interstates.com

1US Army Corp of Engineers
When Interstates was awarded the project at Novozymes in Blair, NE, it was already 22 days behind schedule. Starting off so far behind is never optimal, but with some extra help from its preplanning department and an emphasis on time management, the Interstates team managed to meet the original deadline and secure the award of the second phase of the project.

Novozymes, a Danish company with North American headquarters in Franklinton, NC, specializes in industrial enzymes and microorganisms. At the facility in Blair where it makes enzymes for ethanol, Novozymes hired Interstates to install new fermenters, concentrate tanks, and a harvest tank. The entire project would be split over three phases. According to Joel Cook, Project Leader at Interstates, “To get the new fermenters online, we had to bring in new 4160v VFDs and a lot of gear. We also had a considerable amount of instrumentation to do at this site.”

Complicating matters, two cooling tower fans and a cooling tower pump motor were added to the scope while the project was underway. In order to meet the already tight deadline while adding on more work, Interstates tapped its preplanning department for aid. With approximately 1,000 feet of wire to pull for the cooling tower pump and three sets of 500 tray cable, it was critical to find the best way forward. “It was not just a straight pull. There were plenty of bends and turns in it,” says Cook. “Our preplanners came out and helped us find the best way to do it. They told us where to put our feeders, found the right place to put the tuggers. They showed us the best way to start, and where to end. With their help, we ended up only needing five guys for what could have been a significantly more difficult pull. It was a really big win for us,” he says. With the help from Interstates preplanning, what would have typically taken over a week was accomplished in just three days.

Despite the time saved through smarter processes, it was challenging to make up the lost days and get back to the original schedule. “We had to man up to make it work,” says Cook, explaining that, at one point, Interstates had 24 people on site and everyone was working 10-hour days, six days a week. Delays in some materials being delivered were also an issue, but Cook and his team were able to plan ahead on other elements (like using prespooled wire) to get back on track. “Basically, a lot of preplanning is what got us to our end date on time,” says Cook.

Thanks to the hard work of a dedicated team and some thoughtful planning, the 22 lost days were regained. Novozymes awarded the second phase to Interstates based on this success, and that portion of the project is currently underway.
“Yes, and…”

Not long ago, I participated in a brainstorming demonstration that challenged us to design the most awesome tree house in the world. The only rule given to the participants was that we needed to use the words “Yes, and…” when suggesting additional features to include in our fabulous tree house. Our team’s enthusiastic response to “Yes, and…” was amazing. Had our tree house been built, we clearly would have been the envy of ten year olds everywhere.

Most of us do not have professional responsibilities for new feature development in tree houses, but we do have an opportunity to benefit from the positive impact of using the words “Yes, and…” to build enthusiasm and creativity among those we lead. Leadership occasionally requires us to choose between two good things. Sometimes leaders need to say no to one thing in order to focus on something more important. Still, in our roles as leaders it is also important that we not fall for the sucker’s choice. Not every decision is an “or” decision. A sucker’s choice suggests that we have to choose when that may not be the case. It suggests that we are facing an “or” when we may need to choose “and” instead.

Should we speak the truth or should we be considerate of others’ feelings? This is a sucker’s choice. We need to speak the truth and be considerate and respectful of other people’s feelings. Do we need to pay attention to the details or focus on the big picture? This is another sucker’s choice. We need to pay attention to the details and understand how those details fit together in the larger system.

As a leader, I encourage you to avoid the sucker’s choice. We need to recognize those situations where the ideal response is “Yes, and…” rather than assume we have to choose.
COMPANY NEWS

In celebration of our newly expanded office in Sioux Falls, we hosted a Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting. Our Sioux Falls team recently moved into the 18,000 square foot expansion which will allow for more than 70 additional employees and double the size of the original office!

BRAINERD STREET FEST

This summer, our Minnesota Regional Office was a sponsor for Street Fest, which was organized by the Brainerd Jaycees. Interstates donated labor, parts, and material to hook up all the temporary power for the Cub Foods Ribfest where proceeds went to the Brainerd Area Habitat for Humanity.