

BETTER BE RUNNING! TOOLS TO DRIVE DESIGN SUCCESS

In his well-organized book, *Better Be Running! – Tools to Drive Design Success*, Ronald Hollis evokes the forces of nature to convey his message that manufactured parts matter.

Every morning in Africa, Hollis writes at the outset of his 210-page tome, a gazelle wakes up and knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or be killed. And every morning a lion awakes and knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or starve to death.

His mini-fable underscores the need for speed in an increasingly globalized economy. Maybe Hollis should have titled his book, *Better Be Running Fast!*

Finding the right manufactured parts for your product, and finding them quickly, are keys to outpacing your competition, Hollis argues.

Hollis opens the door to the world of manufactured parts – one of the costliest yet often least understood aspects of the product-development process.

His book shows rather than tells you how to quickly determine and order the right parts for your product. Doing so reduces inefficiencies and boosts the bottom line.

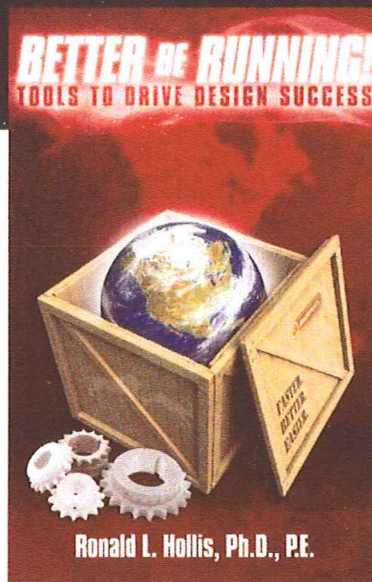
Each section emphasizes the central theme: when it comes to producing parts, you have to think in terms of “faster, easier, better.”

Better Be Running! demystifies the vocabulary of the parts industry.

You’ll learn that “stereolithography” for instance, allows manufacturers and rapid-prototype shops “to print in three dimensions,” sort of like the replicator device on *Star Trek* shows. And “selective laser sintering,” or SLS, creates solid 3D objects by fusing or sintering particles of powdered material with a laser. SLS is good for making thick, heat-resistant parts, such as engine blocks.

“The purpose of the part,” Hollis says, “should determine the manufacturing technology used.”

Hollis is CEO of Atlanta-based Quickparts.com Inc., an online system that allows individuals and companies to procure low- and high-volume custom manufactured



plastic and metal parts. Naturally you’d suspect the book is a marketing vehicle for his company. And it is. The fictional character he uses to demonstrate part-procurement scenarios is named “Johnny Quickparts.”

It’s also a handy reference book. Although *Better Be Running!* targets engineers, managers and executives, it’s accessible enough for the rest of us. Hollis says that while his book is filled with useful technical information, it’s “provided in a way that does not require a Ph.D. in engineering to understand.”

Hollis, it should be noted, has a doctorate in engineering.

The book spends a considerable amount of pages showing how to navigate and save money in China. However, China’s position as the world’s favored manufacturing center may be shifting. Recent changes in business regulations there are driving many manufacturers to India and other parts of Asia.

Likewise, Hollis bills the book as a way to keep up with the latest technology. Yet technology, by its very nature, is constantly evolving. So what’s true today with regard to, say, plastic injection molding, may not be true a year or two from now.

That said, *Better Be Running!* offers many lasting truths and is well worth the read for those interested in discovering the role manufactured parts play in modern business decision-making.

“Manufactured parts are the center of the universe,” Hollis says. “The power of the parts influences the expanding spiral of our interconnected life on this increasingly small planet.” ■

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