



# Strategic Planning Site Visit

By Dick Hedahl

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## Hedahls Headlines

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Hedahls reaped a benefit last week. It's a benefit that comes from our membership in Uni-Select USA and PartsPlus. We had a strategic planning site visit from two members of the PartsPlus headquarters team out of Memphis. Executive Vice President Alan Bostwick and Marketing Manager Bob Barstow both visited us for three days, September 30 to October 2, to study our operation and give an interested outsider's view on what we are

doing right and what we could be doing better.

This kind of assessment can be tremendously valuable to a company because these men are able to see us with fresh eyes. Just as importantly, they bring with them a broader perspective of the auto parts industry than we are able to have, a perspective based on their experience with all kinds of different sizes and shapes of auto parts operations all over the country.

Some of you may have met Alan when he visited us just after Uni-Select USA chose PartsPlus as our marketing program about a year and a half ago.

They gave us some new insights into doing business and helped us prioritize some of the bigger issues that we are facing. But they also reaffirmed what I have long believed: they said one of the greatest strengths of our company is the knowledge and professionalism of our employees. Not news, but always great to hear.

Our thanks go out to Uni-Select USA and to PartsPlus, especially Alan and Bob. Uni-Select USA paid the fee for the visit, and of course, being a member of PartPlus enables us to draw on their expertise in the automotive aftermarket from a national point of view.

Dick

### *PartsPlus Jobbers Council*

Dick Hedahl has been appointed to a three-year term on the PartsPlus Jobbers Council. The appointment comes partly as a result of the recent strategic planning site visit. This advisory council is made up of seven jobbers from across the country, all members of PartsPlus. Meetings are held twice a year in various locations, usually hosted by a supplier or at the site of one of council member's company. The next meeting will be held in Chicago and hosted by Council Chairman Mike Mudjer of Alko Parts Plus, another member of PartsPlus and a new member of Uni-Select USA. When Hedahls has representation on such national boards and councils, we benefit both by helping to influence policy and decision making within the industry and by learning from the experience of other auto parts jobbers nationally.

# Safety First!

## Fire Prevention

Fire can cause tragic loss of life and property. We all need to work to prevent a fire from occurring. The Summer 2002 issue of WORKlink from the North Dakota Workers Compensation Bureau includes these tips on preventing fire:

- ??Keep storage and working areas free of trash.
- ??Place oily rags in covered metal containers.
- ??Don't refuel gasoline-powered equipment in a confined space.
- ??Keep flammable liquids stored in tightly closed, self-closing, spill-proof containers.
- ??Use flammable liquids only in well-ventilated areas.
- ??Look for and repair old wiring, worn insulation, and broken electrical fittings.
- ??Prevent motors from overheating.
- ??Investigate any piece of electrical equipment that smells strange.
- ??Don't overload wall outlets.
- ??Don't misuse fuses.
- ??If you see smoke coming from a computer or another office machine, unplug it immediately.
- ??Avoid using space heaters. If they are necessary, keep the area around them clear of anything that could catch fire and remember to turn them off when you leave the area.
- ??Never put extension cords under carpets where a fire could smolder.

## SUGGESTION

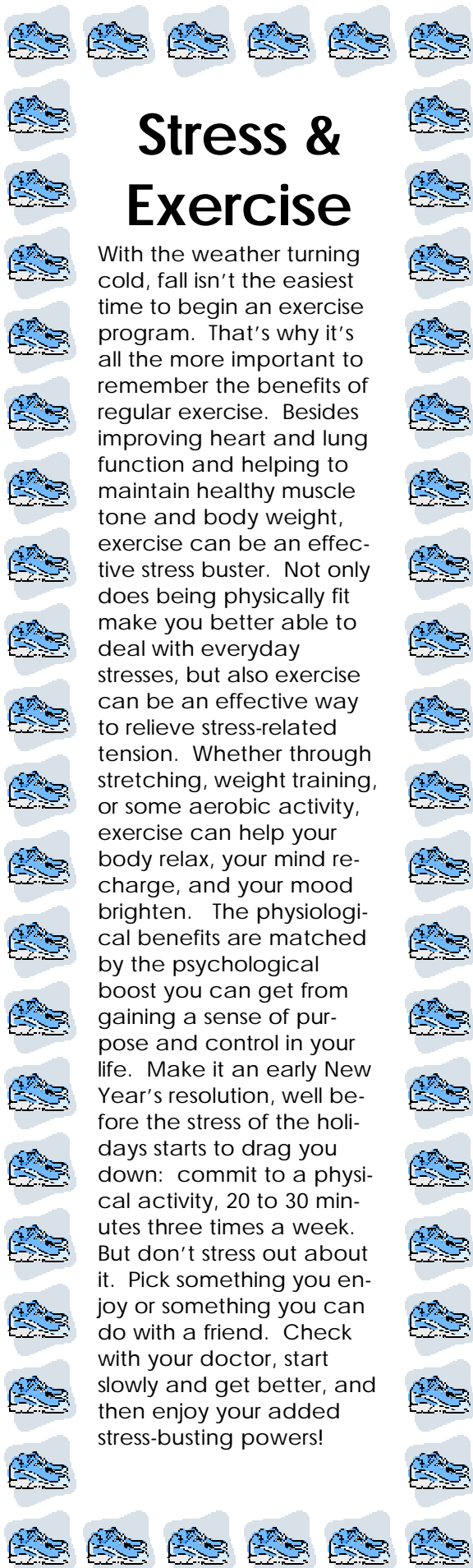
This month's good idea comes from Darlene Birney of Headquarters, and she thinks it's such a good idea that she willing to work to get it implemented. Darlene's suggestion is to have emergency contact numbers on file for every employee. So she's gathering that information and adding it to the employee files. She'll keep it on file at Headquarters and also send each store a list of their employees with the emergency contact numbers. Good idea, Darlene, and enjoy your \$100.

Please send your good ideas to Larry Lysengen or Dick Hedahl at Headquarters. If we implement the suggestion and you're picked in the drawing, you'll be awarded \$100.



## Stress & Exercise

With the weather turning cold, fall isn't the easiest time to begin an exercise program. That's why it's all the more important to remember the benefits of regular exercise. Besides improving heart and lung function and helping to maintain healthy muscle tone and body weight, exercise can be an effective stress buster. Not only does being physically fit make you better able to deal with everyday stresses, but also exercise can be an effective way to relieve stress-related tension. Whether through stretching, weight training, or some aerobic activity, exercise can help your body relax, your mind recharge, and your mood brighten. The physiological benefits are matched by the psychological boost you can get from gaining a sense of purpose and control in your life. Make it an early New Year's resolution, well before the stress of the holidays starts to drag you down: commit to a physical activity, 20 to 30 minutes three times a week. But don't stress out about it. Pick something you enjoy or something you can do with a friend. Check with your doctor, start slowly and get better, and then enjoy your added stress-busting powers!



# Don't be afraid!



The way returns tend to pile up in our stores, well, it can be down right scary! Whether they are core/warranty returns, 30 day returns, or our annual stock returns back to the Uni-Select warehouse or manufacturer, returns are a lot less frightening when they are done in a regular, timely way. We do returns throughout the year, but over the last couple of months, we have made even a bigger push to get slow moving or non-selling stock out of your stores.

We have been working very closely with all manufactures and Uni-Select to see that this happens, and they are coming through for us. Now we have to make these returns a priority in our stores. Most of you are doing a great job, but it's important that everyone follows through. We all hear about parts proliferation, and we are working every day to put new numbers into our system, but to do that, we need this slow moving inventory out of our stores. This is a big task, and it takes everyone working together to get it done. Our goal is to have most of this merchandise returned before the end of the year. For that to happen, we need everyone's help. When a return authorization is sent to your store, you need to put it on top of your priority list. The box below reminds us that we're heading into inventory season. Get these returns out, and everyone will have less to count. Let's not be haunted by

*"The Ghosts of  
Returns Never Made."*



## *'Tis the Season*

We have hunting season, fishing season, baseball season. Now it's inventory season. Fergus Falls did their inventory on October 4-5. Here is a list of the other dates we have scheduled by store. Remember with this computer system we can do more than one store at the same time. Call Larry Lysengen when you pick out a date for your inventory.

Sidney	November 1-2
Redfield	November 2
Aberdeen	November 8-9
Beulah	November 15
Linton	November 22
Glendive	November 22-23

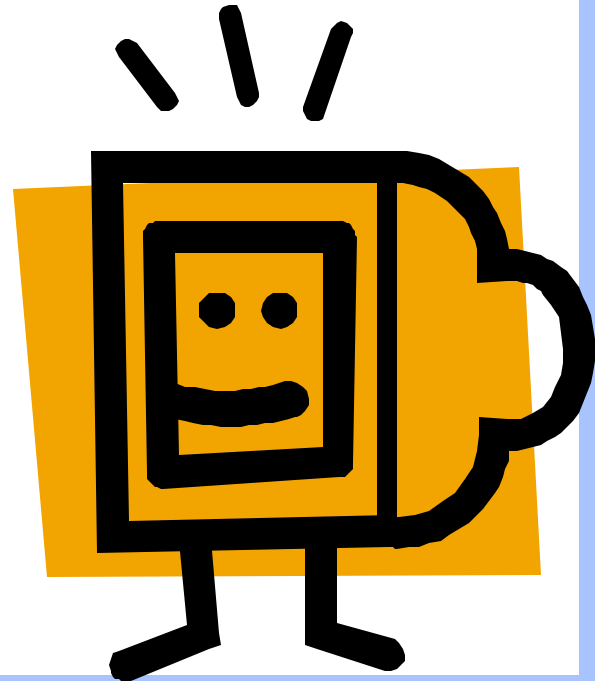


**CALL  
PAUL**

## Do not turn your terminals off and on

When your terminal comes to a halt for some reason while you are working on an invoice or other process, DO NOT try to get it going again by turning the monitor off and then on again. This can, and has, caused problems because to the computer this turning off and on of the screen is just like you are breaking out of what you are working on (an invoice, for example) without completing it. Then the computer has a partially completed piece of work to deal with and that is not good. In fact, it's real bad.

Please give me a call instead of turning your screen off and on. Remember, call Paul!



## Life Insurance Rate Reduction

Good money news for some employees! If you elected to purchase life insurance through our flexible benefits plan, you'll be happy to know that the monthly rates on the Voluntary Group Life Insurance are lower than expected. Darlene will be making payroll adjustments to credit the amount that was deducted in error and she'll correct the monthly premium deduction.



## Holiday Party

Hedahl's Holiday Party in Bismarck  
Saturday, December 21

Colony Room of the Kelly Inn in Bismarck

Social 6:00 – Dinner 7:00 – DJ Music 8:30-12:30



# SALES TOOLS

IDEAS FOR BETTER SELLING:

In today's fast paced business, it's getting real easy to think of quantity instead of going just a little extra for quality. Let me tell you a story that will explain what I mean.

Recently I thought it would be a good idea to forward my cell phone to my office phone so I'd have only one voice mail to check. After trying it for a day, I decided I didn't like it and wanted to change it back. So I followed the instructions and disabled that feature and got a recorded message that said my feature update was successful. I called my cell phone from my home phone and it forwarded to my office. Ok, so I tried it again and got the same recording saying that my feature update was successful. I called my cell phone again, and it still forwarded to my office.

Hmm, I studied the manual a bit and decided that maybe what I

needed to do instead was forward the cell phone back to itself. Tried it twice and got—you guessed it—the same recording twice that said, "Your system update has been successful." Wrong!!

Now anyone who knows me knows that stuff like this drives me absolutely crazy. I ranted and raved to the two family dogs for at least 10 minutes (I had to—my wife and daughter were gone).

I decided that maybe whatever was wrong would reset itself overnight and the phone would probably work in the morning. Not!!

The next day I called the local office in Bismarck and immediately got a recording that said I had reached the Bismarck office and their business hours are 9 am to who cares.

The phone began to ring again. I looked at my watch—9:20 a.m. So where are they?

After about 4 or 5 rings I got another recording that told me the name of the company and asked me to push 1 if I wanted help in English and 2 if I wanted help in Spanish. Ok, I pushed 1 and got a recording that gave me several other choices. I picked the proper one for technical assistance. The phone began to ring again and I got the same recording as the first time, telling me what company I called and asking me what language I wanted and which department I would like to talk to. After making the choices again, the phone rang several times and was finally answered by a real person. She asked me my phone number,

## Be Somebody's Hero

name, and billing address. After she was convinced I was who I said I was, she asked if I cared if she called me Dale (I'm thinking, call me whatever you want, just fix my problem). I explained the problem to her, and she told me to try what I tried the night before. I explained that I tried it two different ways twice. She asked me to please try it again and then turn the phone on and off. I did and then she called my cell number, and guess what, it transferred to my office phone. She asked me to hang on for a minute while she talked to a technician. I waited maybe three minutes. She came back and said the technician checked it out, understood the problem, and was going to fix it. All I had to do was wait about 10 minutes and try it and it would work. I thanked her and said farewell. **(continued)**

**(continued from previous page)** I waited over 30 minutes, and my phone still forwarded to my office. OH NOOOO! That means I have to go through all that stuff again, including being asked twice which language I would like. I finally got to another real person, but this time for whatever reason I got the accounting department, which I realized after explaining the problem and the sequence. So they transferred me to technical, and I told them my phone number, billing address, and name and assured them they could call me Dale.

The gentleman on the other end transferred me to a technician who asked me to explain the problem and right in the middle of my explanation I got cut off. I'm not kidding. After all that, we lost the connection. Maybe they'll call me back. They have my number, my name, and my billing address. I know they'll call me back, and they'll call me Dale. I mean, I told them they could call me Dale. Please call me back. Talk to me in Spanish. No, German would be better. I understand quite a bit of German. Please, please call me back. I waited about 20 minutes and no call.

So I called the Bismarck office for the third time, and after the two recordings asking what language I wanted and giving them my cell number, name, billing address and I think this time they asked me for my selective service number, I finally talked to a gentlemen named Ron.

Ron asked what he could do for me. Suddenly I remembered a line I heard from one of the speakers we had at a meeting—either Jerry Wilson or Bill Murray. I said, "Ron, I'm gonna give you a chance to be a hero." I explained every frustrating detail to him as nicely as I could, and he

laughed at the end when I said, "And I don't care if you fix my problem in English or Spanish. Please, just help me."

Ron said, "Dale—you don't care if I call you Dale, do you?"

Noooo, I don't care.

Ron explained that if I would bear with him, he would fix my problem before we hung up. I believed him because before he started to work on the problem, he asked for the phone number I was at and also verified my cell number again. Ron came back three or four times and asked me to turn my cell phone off, and then he called it and it still forwarded to my office phone. Ron apologized but asked me with a smile to please hang on, and he assured me that he wasn't giving up until my problem was fixed (It's amazing how you can hear people smile on the phone). He finally came back and said the technician working on the problem thought maybe this time he got it. Ron asked me to turn my cell phone on and off and then he called me. Fantastic! It forwarded to the voice mail on my cell phone.

I explained to Ron that I really appreciated his help and that he was the hero of the day, at least in my world. He laughed and said, "No problem, Mr. Helfrich, I'm glad I could help. Have a nice day and thanks for choosing our company as your cell phone service."

Hey, who said he could call me Mr. Helfrich?

Long story, but important point. Next time somebody—maybe a customer, maybe a co-worker—says to you, "Please help me," step up and be their hero.

Thanks and just call me Dale

# Counter Sales Training

We held a successful training conference for our counter sales personnel on Friday and Saturday, September 20 and 21, at the Kelly Inn in Bismarck. It gave our counter people an opportunity to hear presentations on over 20 different products. More than that though the conference provided an opportunity for discussion and shared experience about counter sales.

Those in attendance included John Cozby, Kevin Kramer, Calvin Schmidt, Allen Bosch, and Chris Balzer (Bismarck), Eric Eckroth and Pat Ramsey (Mandan), Brad Barnett (Dickinson), Greg Huiner (Hettinger), Jim Roe (Glendive), Larry Stevenson (Sidney), Rod Kono, Gregg Nelson, and Rodney Schick (Aberdeen). Al Steinheuser (Redfield), Aaron Heberlie (Detroit Lakes), Gregg Rudnick and Reggie Bethel (Fergus Falls), Nathan Engebreston, Nolan Lidner,

and Shawn Galford (Watertown), Jason Johnson and Jeff Fryer (Sisseton), and Barb DeWitt (Beulah).

Presenters among the factory and agency reps were Dawn Degan (Tenneco), Casey Deedon (Goodyear), Terry Gregory (NorthPro Reps), Bob Jamie (Sem Products), Doug Froehlich (Standard Motor Products), Ed Thier (Permatex), Al Lunde (Ridley Blair & Associates), Brian Turner (Gates Rubber Company), Eric Glatt (Dupont), and Dick Joritz and Doug Schneider (BENCO).

Friday evening included a tour of Bismarck-Mandan facilities for those who were interested. Thanks to our tour guides: Dick Hedahl (Headquarters), John Cozby (Bismarck store), Don Gross (NEMAC), Dan Schreck (Main Street Tire), and Darrold Frerking (Mandan store).

See [www.hedahls.com](http://www.hedahls.com) for pictures of the event.