

As we kick-off our Employee Spotlight series to provide a little glimpse into the team at Olympus Control, we started at the top. This month we feature Scott Hendrickson, CEO of Olympus Controls.

Scott, what is your title at Olympus Controls?

My business cards say...Engineer, Founder, CEO. There are times when I feel like the character in Good Will Hunting – solving differential equations during the day and cleaning the kitchen at night. Being a small business owner there is no task that I would ask someone to do that I wouldn't do myself.



How long have you been involved in Factory Automation?

I got started in the automation industry in the mid-80s when I worked for Osram Sylvania in their robotic manufacturing center in Exeter, NH. After graduating from the University of New Hampshire I was hired by Parker Hannifin. I went through the Parker cATCh program in 1989 and was employed by them until 1998 when I left to start Olympus Controls.

Give us a little history of how you got involved with Olympus, did you found it or buy it?

I worked for Parker Hannifin who is a leading player in the machine automation industry for nearly 10 years both as a field Business Development Manager and later as a divisional Product Marketing Manager. In the late 90s they approached me about leaving the “mother-ship” to start my own Parker Automation Technology Center (ATC) in the Northwest where they were having challenges with their incumbent distributor. Due to our success in the Northwest, in 2004 Parker encouraged us to expand into Western Canada. In 2009 we were again asked to replicate our business model into the Gulf region, shortly after establishing ourselves in this market we made the strategic decision to acquire Texonics who was an incumbent player in the Gulf market. In 2010 we had the opportunity to expand into the Bay Area to help our supplier partners more effectively penetrate this strategic market.

What was your first job ever?

I had dozens of jobs as a kid – newspaper routes, lawn moving, snow shoveling, supermarkets, dish washer but the most impressionable job was working for a custom home builder. Building houses was the most gratifying work because you saw the tangible results of your efforts at the end of every day.

Have you lived anywhere exotic?

My father was a Navy Pilot so we traveled extensively when I was small boy. I had more stamps in my Passport by the age of 10 than most people accumulate in a lifetime. I attended elementary school in England, wearing knickers and playing cricket left quite an impression on me. We moved back to the Northeast where I attended junior high, high school, and college. My parents later moved to Asia and then back to Europe where I had the opportunity to travel with them around these exciting areas. My last position at Parker was working with one of their European divisions in Germany where I cut my teeth on Fieldbus networks.

Describe some of your hobbies – what do you like to do outside of work?

If you look at my garage in Hood River you would think I am an adrenaline junkie – windsurfing, kayaking, mountain biking, skiing, surfing, and motor cross. Unfortunately being a Dad to two young daughters most of my toys have at least an inch of dust on them. Most of my time is spent playing Super Dad but when I can get the hall-pass you will find me skiing at Mt Hood or mountain biking in Post Canyon.

What are some key lessons you have taken from your career thus far?

One of biggest gifts I ever received was from my parents and their amazing work ethic and compassion for others. Their “Under Promise and Over Deliver” attitude is a great value to live by.

Do you have a favorite Sports Team?

Sorry to my Northwest friends and associates but you can take me out of New England but you can't take the New England out of me – I love the Red Sox, Patriots, Celtics, and Bruins.

Describe your typical day.

We make the joke that we live the Discovery Channel every day. We are engaged into the most fascinating client applications – from potato chips to silicon chips...Most of our new Engineers cannot believe that they actually get paid for working on the cool projects that our clients challenge us with. I have been doing this job for 20+ years and still can't believe how excited and energized I still get walking into the office!!

What is one thing you customers might find surprising about you?

Being a right brained Engineer I am intrigued by the left brain topics of Psychology and Organizational Development. In any business the lowest common denominator are the employees, I am surprised on how many companies want to be an A-Level company but they hire C and D-Level people. Bottom line, culture in any business is the most powerful performance factor however culture is also the most difficult organizational factor to scale and duplicate. We have worked with an Industrial Psychologist to develop a “glass slipper test” that looks at a prospective candidate's cultural, skill set, and behavior fit as it applies to our unique business model and company culture. We make this investment in every new hire because once you create the All-Star team it continues to attract more All-Star players. Focusing on the psychology side of business (aligning values and mission) we have found new ways to continue to raise the bar against the competition. My proudest accomplishment is the team of A-Level people that we have assembled on our staff over the last 13 years.

- Thanks to Scott for sharing a little about himself and we look forward to spotlighting his co-workers in the month's to come.