

Where do we go from here?

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America finds itself at a juncture of many roads, with no clear map on which way to turn. The role of government, health care, energy, race, and disruptive technology have presented us with a myriad of choice on which road to take to the future. The important thing to remember is that we are all in the same boat together.

We have a great deal of difficult challenges ahead as an industry, a marketplace, and a country and we will never achieve the best possible results if we do not cooperate. The problem is, every ideological discussion is cast as a political battle to score points instead of find a solution. We are relay-race team members who trip our mates because of internal disagreement, hurting the one we dislike but causing the team to lose in the process.

Our economy is in a shambles, and instead of exploring ways to bring industry back, we look for more ways to dump costs. Our health-care system is falling apart, and we pay upwards of twice the costs of any other western nation, and yet we are treating the debate as a political game where showing off for the camera is more important than moving the ball down the field. Our energy systems are in thrall to hostile interests who just happen to control easily-recovered energy deposits, and we balk at spending more on alternate technologies that will enable us to significantly reduce the transfer of wealth to those hostile against us.

We must remember that we are Americans, and that in order to participate in the world society positively we must pull together as a nation to address our problems and create solutions. As the sports great Andrew "Rube" Foster once said, "We are the ship, all else the sea". If we cannot pull together as a nation and reach intelligent compromise to develop real solutions to the problems plaguing us, we are truly lost.

On a smaller level this applies to any team. ECN is a team effort; if everyone isn't pulling their weight, the publication suffers. No individual can rise at the expense of the others and expect a quality product. We tackle problems head-on together for we know if we don't all hang together, we will all certainly hang separately (okay,

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that last part was from Ben Franklin, I just like my quotes I guess).

This also extends to the design team in a collaborative engineering development effort. Team rivalries and petty jealousies can undermine the best of intentions and prevent everyone from achieving their goals. Don't let personal issues cloud the team's purpose and drain effort, and remind everyone involved of the mutual dependence and support needed to achieve the goal.

We are in the midst of some of the most challenging times we have every faced, but as long as we remember we are all in this together, we will have a chance to properly address, solve, and eliminate our problems. The path we take is up to all of us.



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