Promotion Comes Alive

The promotion of CSI as a dynamic and professional organisation is important to gain both the confidence and respect of our customers to secure our future market base.

We are fortunate to have recently gained the services of inmate Warwick Gibson of the Correctprint business unit at Parklea Correctional Centre. Warwick has an impressive background in the advertising industry with over 20 years experience in graphic design, pre-press production, publishing and commercial photography.

Already Warwick has developed a range of promotional material which provides a common and professional theme through all our literature. In future months, Warwick will also be enhancing and developing our range of promotional material generally.

BOOKCASE UPGRADE

As the leading product in Corfurn sales it is critical that the bookcase range be regularly upgraded to meet customer needs.

Overseer Stuart Hartley of the Corfurn business unit at Parklea has introduced a design enhancement to the doors of bookcases. This provides improved durability and features an attractive decorative moulding.

The improved door provides savings in raw materials and reduces production time by around two-thirds.

Stuart Hartley has been commended for his commitment, innovation and contribution to maintaining sales of Corfurn bookcases.

Training Centre Changes

For some years the Comet business unit at the Training Centre has encountered production difficulties due to inadequate facilities. These difficulties have been exacerbated by the generally poor market environment associated with metal products.

The Comet business unit was therefore recently closed. This has enabled expansion of the Corfurn business unit which will provide an improved production workflow leading to increases in efficiencies. This rationalisation will facilitate the continued development of the Corfurn business unit to provide custom services to major customers including TAFE and the Police Service.
THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTION

Is Correctional Industry conducted to rehabilitate inmates or is it simply there for profit?
That is the most commonly asked question by staff about CSI.

The truth is that Correctional Industry in NSW exists to serve three clear policy objectives. Firstly, to provide development opportunities for inmates to enhance their opportunity for post-release employment which serves as a fundamental component of inmate rehabilitation. Secondly, to reduce the destructive influences of inmate idleness and assist effective Correctional Centre Management. Thirdly, to provide cost effective inmate programs and to provide a progressive expansion in the level of Correctional Centre overheads absorbed from income generated.

Our important task is to provide an optimised and complimentary implementation of all three objectives. In practice this is not necessarily a complex task to achieve. The crucial factor however is to provide inmate development opportunities within commercially based work environments.

This ensures that inmates are exposed to ‘real world’ work expectations and disciplines so they develop skills and competencies to gain and retain employment upon release. In providing commercial based work environments both Correctional Centre management and economic objectives are automatically embraced.

There are however several unique features which necessarily impact upon the structure of Correctional Industry programs in fulfilling the three policy objectives. The principal features include:

- Inmates generally possess limited education, vocational and work experience skills. This necessitates that complimentary training programs in employability, commercial and technical skills be provided.

- Inmate turnover within Correctional Industries is very high. This occurs through the overall short sentence duration and through security tracking.

- The combination of skill deficiency and turnover has a central bearing over the technical and commercial competencies of Correctional Industry business units. This must result in the development of realistic marketing strategies. Generally this results in marketing opportunities at the lower end of the technical competency scale - an important factor to consider when criticism is made of Correctional Industry accessing ‘process type’ work opportunities.

- Again, the implications of inmate skill and turnover require high components of education and training which impact greatly on increasing production costs and reducing operating efficiencies. Education however is not an interruption to production but rather an important part of achieving production.

- The structure of Correctional Industry programs deliberately maximises labour intensity and minimises capital technology. This is to ensure that maximum levels of inmate program activity are provided. Naturally, this also has important implications over the efficiency and competitiveness of Correctional Industry programs.

Thus, the success of Correctional Industries is tied to the achievement of Correctional Industry staff in developing and implementing a satisfactory and optimised mix of all of the above factors. That is our primary goal. In a later article I will cover our experiences, our successes and our intentions to progressively consolidate and enhance our achievements over the last five years.
Three views over furniture from prisons:

'We have lost much business'

This is a part of a letter I sent to the NSW Attourney General on the issue of prison furniture and its effects on small businesses.

"I wish to bring to your attention, in your new capacity as Minister for Justice, an outrageous situation which is destroying the NSW furniture industry."

I refer to unfair trading practices by CSI. For over 12 months this company has battled the business practices of CSI.

They have targeted the traditional customers of small furniture manufacturers with an aggressive marketing campaign to steal contracts by massively undercutting prices.

As a result of the continuing outcry by various industries affected by this situation, your government, in 1992, commissioned an inquiry into CSI operations which was conducted by Mr. M. Easson, Secretary, NSW Trades and Labour Council.

That report was most scathing of CSI operations and administration, recommending major reforms to be implemented immediately. The report was adopted by the then Minister Mr. Merton and publicly announced on 2 January 1993.

Despite this, your department and CSI in particular have been in no hurry to implement these reforms.

A new pricing policy has not yet been developed by CSI which continues to massivly undercut private-sector manufacturers.

This company has lost several contracts to CSI over the past 12 months in the order of $300,000.

Documentary proof of this has been forwarded to the three previous Ministers (Messrs. Griffiths, Pickering and Merton) during this time and never contested.

The Consultative Council which was supposed to oversee and control CSI’s activities has only met twice in the five months since Mr. Merton's announcement.

Our industry is not even represented on the council.

Minister, no one has any objection to prison rehabilitation programmes, the teaching to inmates of a worthwhile trade.

What I object to is that this has been turned into a massive money-making exercise to redress the cost of prisons at the expense of small manufacturers in the private sector, who incidentally are the traditional supporters of the Liberal Party.

I urge you, Mr. Attourney-General, to immediately implement all the Eason reforms and to end this pernicious situation.

Furniture Manufacturer
(name and address supplied)

'No foundation to allegations'

I refer to an article appearing in the March/April, 1993 edition of “Furniture Retailing Today” under the heading “Unfair Competition from Prisons Continues”.

In the article you make a number of accusations against CSI which in my view have no foundation. Further, you have not verified the accuracy of those allegations with a member of CSI staff.

I would like to take the opportunity of clarifying a number of the issues raised in the article:

- On 2 January 1993 the Hon. Wayne Merton M.P., Minister for Justice announced changes to the operation of Corrective Services Industries arising from the ‘Eason Review’. Those changes have been implemented and in this context your assertion that the reforms have not been put into practice is not only incorrect but is deceitful.

- The Corrective Services Industries Consultative Council (CSICC) which monitors the development and operation of CSI on behalf of employer associations and the Labor Council of NSW has been reconstituted.

- A revised CSI Marketing Policy has been developed and implemented which formalises CSI’s commitment to not unreasonably impact upon other businesses.

- A revised grievance handling mechanism has been implemented.

- An independent review has concluded that the CSI cost structure conforms with applicable standards and correctly accounts for all applicable costs.

- CSI while maintaining a commercial promotional presence has not aggressively marketed its products. Rather CSI continues to take a passive role in relation to market endeavours.

- CSI had promptly and comprehensively responded to all representations from the NSW Guild of Furniture Manufacturers. Further, a constructive meeting was held between the president of the Guild, Mr. Peter Van Toot, the general manager, Mr. Rodney Sheaves together with a member of the Furniture Trades Society, where at the request of the Guild, CSI provided a comprehensive outline of its operations for distribution to Guild Members.

I note with some interest that on page five of your publication, the Australian Furniture Exhibition is promoted. You might be interested to learn that CSI was invited by the NSW Guild of Furniture Manufacturers to participate in this exhibition. In this context there does appear to be a certain degree of hypocrisy on the part of the Guild.

CSI has been a manufacturer and supplier of furniture over many decades. Like other players within this industry, our market share over recent years has been in steady decline. Further, CSI takes an extremely sensitive and sensible approach to its marketing endeavours within the furniture arena.

I look forward to a future edition of your publication providing an honest and balanced reporting of CSI operations in order that we might have some confidence that our continued subscription is justified.

Wayne Ruckley
Director
Corrective Services Industries,
Unit 2, 391 Park Rd,
Regent Park, NSW, 2143

'But little has changed'

In response to Mr. Ruckley's claims: The fact is that six months after the Minister of Justice finally accepted hard-sought reforms to end CSI’s unfair trading practices, little has changed.

The reforms have not yet been fully implemented, and at the time of your March issue, had not been implemented at all.

Meantime,CSI continues to use price cutting to gain advantage.

The Consultative Council which is supposed to be a watchdog to police CSI activities, has not met twice in six months. The furniture industry is not represented on the council.

The meeting between the Guild and the CSI which Mr. Ruckley mentions, took place 18 months ago. It was a complete waste of time.

None of the industries affected by CSI activities has been able to establish any serious dialogue with the Department Corrective Services.

The Government has failed to purge Corrective Services of its entrenched practices, and this is evidenced by the fact that in the last 12 months there have been four different Ministers in the Justice portfolio. Wayne Merton, the most recent, lasted only six months.

The new Minister, John Hannaford, must break through the "Yes Minister" cocoon which the Department likes to weave round its Minister, and find out the true facts for himself.

He must discover why this ongoing issue is contributing to the erosion of the Liberal Government's popularity among its traditional supporters, the private sector.

The Guild will be keen to help him.

Rodney Sheaves
General Manager,
NSW Guild of Furniture Manufacturers,
76 Penshurst St,
Penshurst, NSW, 2222
REGIONAL NEWS

Northern Region

During a recent visit to Grafton Correctional Centre, Regional Commander, Ken Middlebrook, Director CSI, Wayne Ruckle and CSI Business Manager, Rob Steer paid tribute to the efforts of CSI staff at Grafton for the performance of all business units during 1992/93. CSI business units at Grafton provided the best overall financial contribution within the State. All business units also maintained an excellent customer service record which included a commitment to on-time deliveries and quality products. Our congratulations go to Governor Foxwell and all CSI staff at Grafton.

South West Region

Berrima’s Gencor Business Unit has been given a boost with the introduction of a new semi-automatic screen printing machine. The new equipment will greatly improve productivity and is expected to lift employment in the unit from twenty-five to thirty-one inmates. The unit will also be kept busy manufacturing a huge order of signage for CSI. Once completed, the signs will be distributed to all business units statewide, and used to enhance our corporate image.

Central Region

The Cormet Business Unit at Silverwater Correctional Centre has just received an order from Container Engineering for the manufacture of two skid mounted transport containers. The units will be used by the Royal Australian Navy to transport computerised firefighting command modules from ships in dry dock to those at sea. The order is valued at over $13,000 and will take approximately six weeks to complete.

Eastern Region

Senior Overseer Mark Ferguson from the Hard Rock Bakery recently visited the Bread Research Institute at the CSIRO for a seminar on food law and product labelling. Topics covered in the discussion included food hygiene, food inspection activities, obligations of the industry, the power of inspection, the food act and food standards.

CSI IN LEGAL EXPO

CSI recently participated in the annual Legal Expo held at the Downing Centre in the heart of Sydney. Exhibitors featured a range of themes including law reform, consumer affairs, ethnic affairs, legal aid, road safety, privacy, victims’ compensation and of course, Corrective Services.

In addition to general public attendance, the Expo attracted over fourteen hundred school children and a large contingent of senior citizens.

CSI’s window exhibit featured high quality samples representing each of our business divisions, and was so popular that we were asked to extend our stay from one to four weeks.

Many thanks to the Correctional Centres who contributed to the success of the display.

CSI products on display at the Legal Expo