

**Lessons From Life #12  
Who Are We...Who, Who...**



**Donald Cooper**  
International Management  
Speaker & Business Coach

A few weeks ago, as part of our Annual Sales Conference, we had a guest speaker DONALD COOPER, come and talk, not just to our Sales and Marketing people, but also to many of our Chemists and Support Staff. Alex, Tina and I first heard Donald talk at a PMA Conference, a couple of years ago. Alex was so impressed, that we just had to have him, pass on some of his business wisdom, to OUR people.

As part of THAT exercise (which was a tremendous success by the way), the younger members of our staff, the next day asked, WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE STAND FOR, and most importantly of all, where we are headed, and how we are going to get there.

Some of this stuff, as you would appreciate, is company confidential, so I can't share those bits with you... but, I can share SOME, of George's philosophy. This is a modified version of what I wrote.

"Our company is about 90 people strong. It's nearly 26 years old. It has become during that time the largest PU player in Australia (according to DAVID EVANS... thanks David, for that). Keeping in mind, of course, that we are a broadly based systems house, supplying not just ELASTOMER prepolymer systems, but also FOAM systems. COATINGS. MEMBRANES, the whole 9 yards! We have a NEW ZEALAND Division. A BRAND products division (stuff that we sell, but do NOT make). A TOLLING business, and also a MACHINERY division.

AND, as ANDRE RIEU, is fond of saying:

" I remember very well Ladies and Gentlemen ,when I was a little boy"  
... Sitting in my pyjamas, in 11A Beach Street, calling any, and EVERY-body I could, to grow a business from a zero start, to get my family out of a mess, of "no job, no future".

I remember cooking prepolymers, in a 4 litre paint can with an \$80 Black and Decker drill and a cheap paint stirrer, in my garage, with the TDI wafting upstairs, ( if I had forgotten to close the door, leading into the kitchen!) The cooking was done at 12 -3am, long after Alex and Niki were dreaming of dinosaurs and fairies. I couldn't afford a fan or a mask, so I had to make do with a PAPER mask...

So, this business, like many others, started in a garage!

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*From all the  
Era Polymers Family,*

*thank you for your continuing  
support and for letting our  
company be a part of your  
company's life.*

*We wish you all the Very Best  
for Christmas and the Holiday  
Season. And we wish you and  
your families, Good Health,  
Happiness, and even some good  
old fashioned Prosperity, for  
2013!*

**Era and Samos Polymers  
Christmas Closure**

***Closing: 24th December 2012  
Opening: 3rd January 2013***



It's time to articulate, the vision.

I'm also mindful, when I start to collect my thoughts, that I agree with what Donald said last week, that MOST companies have in their foyer, a Mission and Vision Statement. And have paid somebody, \$30,000 for these cute words, that they have framed, and stuck on their wall. Donald doesn't like them. Neither do Richard and I.

I'm also mindful of what my American Brother, LARRY, tells me:

"George, you spend too much time working, IN the business, rather than working, ON the business".

YEP, I do both. I'm a working class Managing Director... Just have a look at what I have on my walls, in my office, to define who I am. But sometimes, the emails, and the meetings, get a hold of my soul... which doesn't leave much time for articulation!

So, let me tell the story, by saying... Every company has "catch" phrases, mantra, that define who they are, right?

Well, when Tina and I kick started this company, I too felt that I had to come up with a couple of cute phrases, to DEFINE, the two of us.

**The first one:**

**"A NEW ERA IN POLYURETHANES"**

Made sense, at least to me. It was indeed a new Era in Polyurethanes. We were, definitely, the new kids on the block.

Positively, it was a new Era, in Tina's, and my, life. Furthermore, it was play on who the company is named after ----- "HERA" (The "H" is silent in Greek), the Greek Goddess, born on Samos, like yours truly. Perfect.

So, people would, and still, NOW, read it (with the Era logo inserted in the line) and say: "E.R.A. Polymers...what does E.R.A. Stand for?" - Ahhhh! Twenty six years later, it still grates.

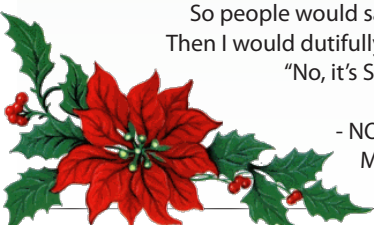
**The second one:**

A few months later, we had some folders made (there are still some lying around somewhere). And I wanted a title, to more accurately define, what we did for a living, so I came up with:

**"SPECIALITY POLYURETHANES"**

Cute huh!

So people would say SPECIALTY.  
Then I would dutifully correct it to:  
"No, it's SPECIALITY"...  
- SPECIALTY?  
- NO, SPECIALITY!  
More irritation.



**The third one:**

Somewhere along the line, Tina and I let our natural personalities come to the fore. We saw most of our customers (and more importantly, our employees) as family... as part of our... EXTENDED FAMILY... So we need another catch phrase to define, and quantify, that CLOSENESS, for now, and into the future. So again, thinking cap on, I came up with:

**"LET'S IMAGINE THE FUTURE TOGETHER"**

Alex loved it. We still use it.

Then we started to write about our GLOBAL agents and distributors. So we need a "header" to define our position and relationship...

**"GLOBAL REACH, FAMILY VALUES"**

It works. You CAN do what we do for a living, with the strong moral, values, of our Era family.

**The SECOND last one.**

As you all know we exhibit at the odd show, per year. We do our own stand design...Some of our competitors, come up with the modern, sterile look. The sort of look, you see in a McGrath House catalogue. To me, EXHIBITIONS are "show and tell". You have to have stuff that the potential customers, can touch, and see. So we have lotsa nice colourful pieces, on display. The problem becomes, that some, think we are a CASTING shop. So, we needed something to more accurately define us;

**"EXCELLENCE IN POLYURETHANE CHEMISTRY"**

THAT defines us, true!

**AND THE LAST ONE:**

Dave and I, have some great tete a tete's. One we had, a couple of weeks back, had to do with Nike, and THEIR mantra "JUST DO IT ... swoosh"

So, my counter is,  
**"EXCELLENCE AND PERSISTENCE"**

There you go SIX phrases that quantify, and define, us.

**SO, WHERE ARE WE HEADED?**

As my five year old grandson, ADAM, says  
**"TO INFINITY AND BEYOND"**

**AND, HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?**

The family will continue to invest in our businesses. The physical structure is the easy bit, to invest in. More importantly, we will invest, in our PEOPLE.GOOD people.... People who want to SHINE. Who bring their BRAINS, and MOTIVATION, to work...? EVERYDAY.

It's the QUALITY of our people that defines us, and differentiates us. MY ROLE is firstly to let our people shine. And to do that sometimes, oftentimes, I have to get out of their way.

THEN, as I've always said, my role is to define the "music" that we will all play. It is then, to conduct the "orchestra". AND, in playing that beautiful music..... We will indeed achieve:  
**"To Infinity and Beyond"**.

Don't you just love Andre Rieu?



**CRYOGENIC TESTING UP & RUNNING**

*Era becomes the first and only company in Australia to have Cryogenic Testing for Foams AND Elastomers.*



**Jose Diaz | Era Polymers Testing Engineer:** Using the Cryogenic Testing Equipment

This new equipment will now allow Era Polymers to expedite and simplify Cryogenic testing in Australia.

The new machine is fitted with Trapezium Lite-X software and is capable of testing Rigid Foam and Cast Elastomers at very low and elevated temperatures (-180°C up to 320°C) using a nitrogen blanketed thermostatic Chamber.



## Era Tough

We constantly get asked "How long do your polymers last..." i.e. what is the shelf life... Well, how's this for a story:

A month ago, we got a call from a local town, south of Sydney. They informed us that they found one of our drums by the side of the road, leaning against a telegraph pole. The label had faded, but there was enough information on there to trace it back to us. It turns out that the product was NINE YEARS OLD! It begs the question... How on earth did the drum lie there for NINE YEARS before anyone thought to have a look at it!

Eventually, we got the drum back — and guess what?! It was in specification! The viscosity, the % NCO, were still OK... 9 years later. The grade of the product... EMD73RB (it is a rubber binder).



The next question is WHO lost the drum? Who was too embarrassed to tell the boss "Shucks boss, I lost a drum off the back of the truck... somewhere!"

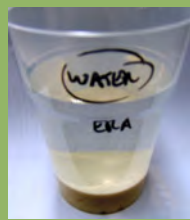
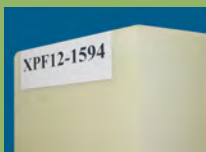
## Eco-Friendly Water Blown Foams For Extreme Environments



Water blown foams offer many advantages in terms of being eco-friendly but they are also very functional in some extreme conditions for mineral exploration, under ground mines or engineering applications where some cavities, voids or holes need to be blocked.

Water blown foams can be viewed as friendly foams if formulated to key applications requirements, for processes that consider the mixing of the isocyanate and polyol. This is in terms of speed of reactivity depending on application and the viscosity of the polyol. A poorly formulated water blown foam may well have issues of delamination, voids, and shrinkage. The issue becomes slightly more complex when the rigid foam is exposed to more extreme environments, for example, reacting in conditions where water is present, so the hydrophobicity and open cells of the foam are a key consideration. Smart foam formulations are designed so that as the foam expands past it's gel point and the exothermic reaction starts to cool, the foam will retain its shape as when it was used to fill a cavity.

*Era Polymers can supply water blown foams that maintain their shape in extreme applications. For more information on these specialist foams please contact us.*



## Extremely Moisture Tolerant Elastomers

As part of Era Polymers customer service we are always working alongside customers and research institutions to develop unconventional materials for specific applications.

Such a project is currently underway in the Elastomer Lab. The main requirement is that the elastomer must be able to be poured into water and cure properly without foaming. As most will know Polyurethanes and Water do not generally go together because of the propensity to foam. Era has developed a material that can indeed fulfil these requirements.

The material is still in its early stages but we are able to vary the potlife anywhere between 8min and 30min without the sample foaming at all. The current hardness of the system is 70 Shore A but this is able to be modified. Demould depends on the potlife but is between 30min – 3 hours. You can click [here](#) to watch a video of this material being poured into water.

If there is any interest on something like this please contact your sales rep for more information. Furthermore, if you have a new project idea please discuss with your local rep and we can look at working together on such development projects.



## "Global Reach, Family Values"

### Era's Distributors:



[www.rejenmor.com](http://www.rejenmor.com)

They say being at trade shows is good for exposure. Back in 2007, Era was exhibiting at UTECH North America in Orlando. As it happened, Rejenmor was there also, looking for a supplier of pre polymers for their Canadian customers.

Our countries both have Prime Ministers, and our currency has the same Queen on the back, so it already feels like a home away from home.

Rejenmor is run by Warren and his daughter Jennifer out of Toronto, which is also the city we keep stock in.

Michel is their energetic salesman based in Montreal, who traverses across Canada looking after the Era business there. It has been a great partnership, and in case you are wondering... yes, they do serve real maple syrup in hotels for breakfast.



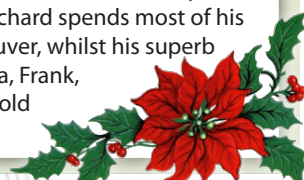
傑地有限公司

JASDI CHEMICALS CO., LTD.

[www.jasdi.com.tw](http://www.jasdi.com.tw)

About 12-13 years ago, I went to Taiwan for the first time to see Mr Chiu, of Johnson Chemicals. He was my only customer in that part of the world, back then. I fell in love with the Island, and especially Mr. Chiu. He spoke 20 words of English. I spoke ZERO Taiwanese... yet we spent most of the day with each other. Such is the power of body language, and especially a SMILE. I needed somebody in Taiwan to push our products, so Mr Chiu introduced me to Richard Kao, the owner of Jasdi. Richard's English was pretty good... His table tennis is much better. His, is a family business, just like ours. He had the same smile as Mr Chiu... so we hit it off

straight away. In the early years we would visit customers with an entourage of Richard, Jimmy, and 3-4 of his staff. It was "question and answer" sessions with customers... Sometimes the sessions would last for HOURS. During ALL this time, the Jasdi team would write EVERYTHING, everything, down... After more than a decade of meticulous note taking, they've published a book in Taiwanese: "Polyurethanes 101, Taiwanese Style" These days, Richard spends most of his time in Vancouver, whilst his superb team, of Terrisa, Frank, Jimmy, et.al. hold the fort.





## What is Waterproofing?

It is simply that - a process designed to ensure that no water enters into whatever it is you want to keep dry. That includes roofs, bathrooms, balconies, podiums, tanks, parking areas and so on. If you pay attention, you will see waterproofing everywhere around you and in your home.

Polyurethanes are perfect for waterproofing applications! Why? Simply because it is resistant to stagnant water, able to withstand cracks and substrate defects thanks to their incredible flexibility from -20°C to 60°C and it ages very well. The magic of polyurethanes is that you can use a liquid product, easy to apply anywhere and let the chemistry do its job to make a tough and durable coat.

Are you in a hurry? Go for a spray membrane, in a couple of minutes after application your area is water proof. You'd rather use a roller? We can offer the products you need, single-pack or 2-pack. Tiles, UV stable finish, high or low hardness... all options are possible with Era Polymers polyurethanes.



Feel free to contact our Era Sales Representatives, we would be very happy to get you in touch with our customers.

## A Christmas Treat

### Santa Hat Brownies

#### Ingredients:

1 pan of your favourite brownies, cooled & cut into round shape  
Strawberries, cleaned & hulled (one per brownie)  
Vanilla-mascarpone buttercream

#### Mascarpone Buttercream

##### Ingredients:

~ 1/2 cup unsalted butter  
~ 225 grams mascarpone cheese  
~ 2-1/2 to 3 cups powdered sugar  
~ 2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
~ pinch of salt

#### Method:

Using a stand mixer with a paddle attachment, beat butter and mascarpone cheese until light and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add vanilla extract and salt. Add 2-1/2 cups of sugar, half a cup at a time & continue beating until smooth. Add more sugar to reach desired sweetness.

To assemble, pipe a ring of vanilla buttercream on top of each brownie. Cut off the base of a strawberry so it is flat and place it upside down on each brownie, pushing slightly to secure in place. Top the tip of the strawberry with a dot of buttercream to finish the santa hat.



## The Boys From Brazil

Richard and I had the pleasure of being invited by UNIVAR, our Brazilian agent, to the recent FeiPUR Show in Sao Paulo. This was my first time there, not so for Richard. Richard also had the pleasure of presenting a paper, on Hybrid Polyureas. He effortlessly, in giving the paper, switched from Portuguese, to Spanish and to English.. And in doing so, kept the translator well and truly on her feet, as to which language he was going to use next. We then doubled up and had a training session on spray systems at Univar's excellent facilities.. Lots of good prospective customers, asking lots of good questions.

Henrique Bavoso, and his people, run a highly professional, focussed and dedicated team.. It was a pleasure to see them work, even though I didn't have a clue what they were saying most of the time (it is situations like this, when watching people's body language, becomes supremely important). The Show, and the stands (booths), were extremely well done.. Equal to the best that you get in Maastricht.

And it was good for me to finally see Richard in action, even if he occasionally got his languages confused, and started talking to me in Portuguese... then again, it could have been Spanish.



## Melbourne Cup – International Lunch

This year, like every other year, we celebrated Melbourne Cup day in style. Apart from the excitement of the race, picking sweeps, cheering on our horses, counting our wins and losses, we like to add an extra flavor to this festive day. Our office is filled with staff from all corners of the world. So we decided to make our Melbourne Cup celebrations, an International Lunch day. We all brought a dish inspired by our origins. Just to mention a few... the delicious dishes varied from corn fritters, souvlaki, curry, Guacamole, Gado-gado salad, Galaktobourekko, Tarte Poire-chocolat and Gingerbread, to the true blue Aussie sausage rolls and Anzac biscuits.

After some lucky wins, some losses, and our bellies full, it is safe to say that overall the day was a success for all!



2012



## Meet the Era Team



**Leigh Symes**  
Machine Specialist & Development Chemist, Elastomers



**Sharon Falke**  
Production Coordinator & Safety Officer

I made the mistake of calling Leigh, English, one day. Not on your life, Leigh is a very proud WELSHMAN.

He has served in the British Navy and has the aplomb, clear headedness, and methodical nature that comes with military training.

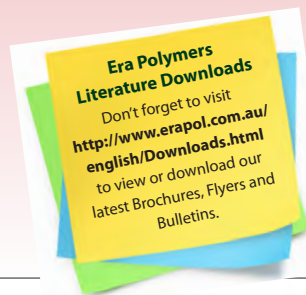
The first time, I saw Leigh in REAL action, is when he gave a talk at one of our Sales Meetings... Very professional, very clear headed.

Alex has taken him overseas to an Icyne Sales Meeting... So this weekend, Leigh is off overseas, by himself, for the very first time, to do some machine commissioning. And being the good, caring boss that I am, I've even given him some of my Tylenol PM, to stop him waking up at 2 am!

He really is one of the people who shine... and I dutifully stay out of his way, and let him get on with it.

The production crew can only watch in awe of Sharon's multi-tasking abilities... whilst the men are struggling to balance a coffee and donut, Sharon is gracefully scheduling production batches, weeks in advance.

If that alone doesn't impress, then guess who looks after the safety of our operations? TWO sites, 30,000 sqm of floor space, holding lots of mixing tanks and staff, we needed a person with great passion and determination to drive all aspects of OH&S she is the perfect person for the position, and keeps everybody, even the boss, safe.



## BABY NEWS

### Jeff & Toni - Had a Baby Boy!



**Hunter Harvey Ryan**  
Born: 20th Sept 2012  
Time: 7.50 am  
Weight: 3.2kg  
Height: 54cm



*Wedding Bells!*  
Congratulations to  
Emilie & Enguerran  
And to  
Manisha & Jatinder  
on their engagements!

## Who's new to the Era Team?

Foam Chemist:	Linda Liu
Exports:	Maria Stevis
Marketing:	Zorana Brnovic
Coatings Chemist:	George Zavras
Accounts:	Kim Newton
Accounts:	Nickel Q. Sutisna

For more information on any of the products featured in this Newsletter please contact Era Polymers on +61 (0) 2 9666 3788 where one of our representatives will be able to assist you. Alternatively email [erapol@erapol.com.au](mailto:erapol@erapol.com.au)

### Strategic Alliances

