by T. L. Fair

Men in any field can become “old foggies” from a business standpoint long before accumulating years have had a tendency to create attitudes which lull them into satisfaction with their ways of doing things. The syndrome has little connection with age itself.

Keeping that fresh viewpoint alive takes care and planning; one never acquires the asset automatically. We have asked a number of contractors, noted for their continuing young approaches to their work, how they achieved this worthwhile attitude.

Here is a summary of the suggestions they offered to others not content with the status-quo in which they find themselves.

No matter how successful you become find some time each week to look for other steps you can take to improve your business. There is never a point where improvement is no longer possible. The man who believes this true in his own case has definitely built up his chance of possessing a fresh viewpoint toward what he is doing.

Reserve a definite amount of your time each week for thinking about the other things you could be doing in your business. This can never be left on a “hit and miss” basis for those rare occasions when one has nothing else to do. It must be a planned part of what is happening in one’s business life.

Listen to people and their ideas—both inside and outside of the field. Some of the best ideas which will come your way will emerge from unexpected sources. If that listening ear is not kept attuned to catch those good ideas there is little chance of continuing with anything but a fixed and “old foggied” viewpoint.

Pursue Ideas

Pursue the ideas which come to you from any source and particularly those that are a result of your own brain exercises; don’t just develop them and let the whole thing wait for another time. There’s only one way to know whether or not any of your business ideas are good ones; the test of their application in usage.

Give part of your spare time to reading in your business publications and don’t stint the number to which this attention is directed. That hurried skipping through any one will result in missing something of top importance to your business, especially the “New Products” section. None are so voluminous that giving them complete checking will require any great length of time.

All of us tend to associate with fellow business men in our own age group most of the time. It’s a natural thing to do but not necessarily a good one. Break the habit (Continued on Page 17)
now and then and make contacts with the local newcomers or with those in younger age groups who are in business within your area. The freshness of their approaches can rekindle your own energies.

Try to avoid judging the merits of everything new that comes along solely on the basis of old standards from past experiences. The latter often does not apply because of the nature of the new development. If nothing but the old standards are used one invariably misses out on things of value.

Hear Customers

Take a different look at your customers and their current ideas. Listen more to what they have to say while their needs are being taken care of. While most of these will have little value to your business all of them may contribute toward keeping a fresh viewpoint present.

Hang onto that inquiring frame of mind you had when you were first starting out in business. It’s value is even greater today, for you now possess more background to give better understanding to everything such curiosity will develop.

Fight each one of those negative attitudes that crop up now and then. No other one condition can cause your fresh viewpoint to fade away quicker than this type of approach to everything with which you come in contact every day.

Beware of forming patterns for application to everything in your business life. They keep thought in fixed forms and make a fresh viewpoint impossible to maintain.

Look for opportunities to try something new. It will surprise you how, in the long run, so many seemingly inconsequential ideas turned out to be productive by the time they had been fully developed. New Products and, yes, advertisements help to stimulate new ideas and new outlooks toward your business.

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Outsiders’ Ideas

Pay closer attention to the news that is brought to you by supplier salesmen, business visitors and others. True, some of it will be gossip, but a worthwhile portion can often provide you with other new ideas and new outlooks toward your business.

Save some relaxing time in each day’s working schedule. Nothing can wall off those fresh viewpoints more quickly than day-after-day jammed with work. There is never, under such conditions, time left for anything but keeping up with that work load.

Keep your news absorbing channels open in general areas beyond your business reading. This assures