



# Q+A

## Boyd Barnwell

Profile Data: Boyd Barnwell is the Chief Operating Officer for Triad Technologies, LLC and is responsible for sales, marketing and operations. He is also the Past President of the Fluid Power Distributors Association (FPDA).

**Q: When and where did your career in the fluid power industry start?**

**A:** I started as a shipping and receiving clerk for a fluid power distributor in Cincinnati, Ohio at age 17, right out of high school. From there I moved to inside sales and to outside sales by age 22. Starting at the bottom is a great way to give you the proper perspective later on, when you are somewhat removed.

**Q: What is the most memorable moment in your fluid power career and what did it teach you?**

**A:** I don't think I can distill 38 years in this business down to one moment. Each success or failure, opportunity or challenge, combines to give you a better ability to deal with the next one. I guess I've learned that if you don't work hard to laugh a little, be a little irreverent or just figure out a way not to be too serious all the time, long careers in one industry could become just work.

**Q: What do you feel is the most important achievement in the fluid power industry?**

**A:** I'm fortunate to have been given the opportunity to be a part of a transformational moment in FPDA's history. History will judge if the Forward Motion Plan and the new FPDA Motion & Control Network is the right change at the right time. I think it is extraordinary. It's like when you think you have a secret that is so exciting that you can't wait to tell everybody. You selfishly want to keep it to yourself, but you know others will be better off if they only knew what you know.

**Q: How and why did you get involved in the FPDA?**

**A:** My first involvement was as an occasional attendee while in outside sales. I still have the program information from my very first meeting. At the time, it was considered a perk for people at my company and in my position to go along with the first generation of distributor owners. However, I immediately understood the value of networking and the education I received by attending meetings. When I joined Triad, I requested the opportunity to become more active in FPDA as I was in a better position to practice what I learned from other leaders in the industry.

**Q: Why do you feel the FPDA is important, and would you encourage industry professionals to join?**

**A:** It is very difficult to gain wisdom and knowledge fast enough in a leadership role today and remain competitive without professional development. And while formal education is extremely important, it does not come close to equaling what you can learn from others who have come before you and proven their success by longevity and achievement. It is somewhat naive to assume that our narrow view of the world from inside our businesses is adequate to prepare us to deal with the complexity and pace of today's business world. FPDA is a fantastic network of professionals who are eager to share and help on whatever level fits the individual's or company's need to continuously improve.

**Q: What have you personally gained by being a part of FPDA, and how has it helped your career?**

**A:** I know there are a whole lot of people in this world who are a lot smarter than I am and who are also great people to get to know. If you know enough to

know what you don't know, you can't help but learn and improve, even if all you do is copy them. Luckily, I think I have been able to take a few pieces of what I've learned or observed and make them work for me.

**Q: Where do you see the fluid power industry heading in the next 10 years?**

**A:** The direction of the industry clearly will continue its pace of consolidation. We must be prepared for channel consolidation and technology consolidation, as well. Value providers will need to expand proven formulas to other technologies to remain viable. Commodity and logistics experts will get better at doing what the small guys do best. Markets are changing, moving, dying and being born much faster as globalization becomes a factor for even the smallest of players. Adaptation, speed and flexibility are more important now than ever to keep up with change unlike we've experienced before. Large opportunity exists in the fluid power industry to get rid of waste in the channels using technology while leveraging our rich history of delivering high value the old fashion way. Some things change and some stay the same. The key is knowing which one is which.

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