

# Value Proposition... and What it Means to Us

**I**n thinking about “value propositions,” I did what most of us do: first, I “googled” the phrase, utilizing the massive search engine started in January 1996. (Actually, Google was the result of a research project of PhD candidates at Stanford University, Larry Page and Sergey Brin. Their research project, as of today, has 450,000 servers racked in clusters located in data centers around the world and handles one billion search requests each and every day. Google’s index is the largest in the world, comprising of billions of web pages.)

My search request of “value proposition” scanned an immense collection of web pages in less than half a second. I would say that is a very impressive value proposition to offer the Google customer base. My “google” of “value proposition” resulted in many theories and meanings, but as I read the many pages of text, one of the interesting and most intriguing was the following statement: “A value proposition is not usually determined, it is discovered. It grows out of need. If you set out to create the best possible business, you may or may not end up with a great business. If you set out to solve the needs of your customers, your business will naturally evolve into something very valuable.”

The FPDA Motion and Control Network, like the *Fluid Power Journal*, is focused on meeting the needs of fluid power integrators and distributors. On a macro level, most of our companies utilize the *Fluid Power Journal* to grow their businesses. The value proposition is to provide readers with a platform that is consistent, informative, and easy to use. Articles on emerging technologies and applications, innovations in the fluid power and motion control industry, as well as professional development and career advancement, provide readers with a well-rounded experience in every issue and keep them reading every month.

The FPDA Motion and Control Network is not a branding proposition, but rather with close to 300 distributor and manufacturer members, FPDA is a trade association on the move, representing motion solution providers who offer fluid power, automation, and electro-mechanical technologies (the so-called “tri-technologies”) and distribution services to enhance customer performance and profitability. Years ago, the FPDA leadership recognized that the Association’s customer base (its Member



distributors and manufacturers) were facing customer demands to expand beyond simply providing fluid power components. Customers were demanding new motion control solutions, and needed their suppliers to provide the expertise and support to make them as productive and profitable as possible. To keep FPDA’s value proposition in step with its membership base, FPDA has taken on new initiatives to drive this industry dynamic.

According to Tim Armstrong, Google’s VP of Advertising, “Our search index is the value proposition that we offer to our users. The reason people come back to Google every day... is that we offer them non-paid, relevant information, both quickly and totally objectively.” That simple message, based on a clear understanding of customer experience, has provided the company with its growth opportunities in advertising. Sometimes the simplest ideas are the easiest to execute. Google’s idea was to “be the best search engine.” They succeeded because, even though there was competition, they did create the most useful search engine, producing the most relevant results and clear from clutter and ads. When Google said they were the best search engine, that statement in itself was no guarantee that they had a strong value proposition. Every other search engine was saying the same thing – the difference is that Google *is* the best search engine!

The FPDA Motion & Control Network, like Google and the *Fluid Power Journal*, focuses on the ever-evolving needs of its members/customers/readers to create its value proposition. By providing unique and valuable resources that keep members in-step with customer needs, we keep them coming back every day.

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Fluid Power Journal (ISSN# 1073-7898) is the official publication of the International Fluid Power Society published bi-monthly with four supplemental issues, including a Systems Integrator Directory, Off Highway Suppliers Directory, Tech Directory, and Manufacturers Directory, by Innovative Designs & Publishing, Inc., 3245 Freemansburg Avenue, Palmer, PA 18045-7118. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part of any material in this publication is acceptable with credit. Publishers assume no liability for any information published. We reserve the right to accept or reject all advertising material and will not guarantee the return or safety of unsolicited art, photographs or manuscripts. POSTMASTER: Please send Address Corrections to Fluid Power Journal, PO Box 2548, Orlando, FL 32802-9830