

**Y2K20?**  
**As appeared in ISHN's "FDO"**  
**January 1999**

Are you ready? Is R&D (Research & Development) ready? No it's not a typo -I really mean Y2K20 - or to envision the year 2020. We could look at it from many perspectives (i.e. is sales/marketing ready? are they working on it? - together? with R&D?) This time let's look at it from a R&D point of view primarily, from your company, from any company, from any industry, any market - let's say, for example, we take it from a glove manufacturer's R&D point of view.

Hmmm ... Y2K20..... first the "Ultimate Glove" (the Ultimate Mouse - remember?) and let's work it back. The Ultimate Glove has excellent cut, puncture, abrasion and chemical resistance. It also has excellent temperature insulation, meets or exceeds all OSHA requirements, great wet and dry grip, and extreme dexterity and worker comfort, one size fits all and ambidextrous and of course ergonomically correct and is one cent a pair! (And it's profitable and patented by you, of course.) If I were in R&D I'd have a picture of it hanging on the wall! The Ultimate Glove! We are not just talking next generation here.

Now, seriously, let's take a look ahead for hand protection: In Y2K20 will there be globally: More or less gloves used? Will they be the same types of gloves we're using now? What's the direction glove usage is going? Will there be more women using gloves? More Hispanics, Orientals, etc.? Will worker's age be a factor? Will the gloves be heavier - thicker or lighter - thin walled? Multi layered film based? Will the jobs requiring gloves now be done by robot machines (glove usage engineered out)? Will the jobs requiring gloves be outsourced to countries that are not required to wear gloves? Will a cure for AIDS be discovered? Will there be another AIDS type problem crisis that gloves will have a major role? What would it be? Will more of a shift from Personal Protection to Product Protection occur?

Will more gloves be made domestically or imported? Will the ultimate gloves in Y2K20 be made without labor as a cost factor? If so, assuming the usage is domestic, the need for imports would be drastically reduced. Where, globally, will the new markets be for these gloves? Could it be Russia, China, India, Indonesia or Brazil? (re: SEDA Conference <sup>C98</sup> John J. McDevitt) Where, globally, will the raw materials for this (these) gloves come from in Y2K20? or, will they use synthetic materials or combinations? Or, are these issues? Will there be global hand protection standards by Y2K20? (for sure)? Will we initiate it? (We should/must.) Will we be able to comply? compete? What can (will) we do to uniquely differentiate our gloves from others? Who will be the competition in Y2K20? Will there be needs beyond global - universe - in space?

This is just a start - what are you doing in your company? What's your ultimate widget (or service, or process)? What are you doing (now) to develop it (on going)? Are you looking ahead? Does your vision extend to Y2K20? (or beyond)? Can you afford it? Can you afford not to?

Think about it.

George J. Hayward  
United Sales Associates