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CMA's Compete to Win lures firms

Devotees report that benefits of the program show on the bottom line

BY NATTALIA LEA
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The Canadian Manufacturers Association aims high with its continuous improvement system – Compete to Win.

Improved employee morale, increased profitability and productivity, and more effective communication between managers and front-line staff are some of its goals.

More than 100 companies have signed up so far for all or part of the flexible training program, which is undergoing continuous improvement itself, and can be adapted to any size organization in any sector. Devotees range from multinationals like Dow Chemical Canada Inc. to smaller businesses like Mustang Engineered Technical Apparel Corp. of Richmond, B.C.

Since April, 1991, Compete to Win has grown from three key components to eight, ranging from vision and leadership to team development and day-to-day improvement.

Survival in today's increasingly competitive global economy was a reason **Lennox Industries (Canada) Ltd.** of Toronto signed up two years ago.

"Employees are the major asset to the company, and they're part of the solution," said Patricia Maguire, director of human resources and quality at the company. "The question is, how do you bring people alive to their full potential? How do you stop them from parking their brains in the lot every morning at nine and picking them up af-

ter five?"

Consumers Glass, a division of **Consumers Packaging Inc.** of Toronto and mattress manufacturer **Simmons Canada Inc.** of Mississauga, give Compete to Win a measure of credit for improvement in their bottom lines.

After three consecutive years of losses, Consumers Glass reported profits for the first two quarters of 1993. President Jim Bacon said: "Compete to Win has absolutely been a strong factor in improving the bottom line." At the end of the third quarter this year, Consumers Glass was showing a profit of 13 cents a share, compared with a loss of 74 cents a share a year ago.

And two years into Compete to Win, Simmons reported reducing finished goods inventory by 50 per cent, space requirements by 38 per cent and order-cycle time by 90 per cent.

Simmons president Patrick Thody said Compete to Win has resulted in improvement in a great many areas of the company's operation. "The challenge was to get middle managers and supervisors to accept the change. Traditionally, we tell people what to do, now we ask them for their input and that's threatening. It's taking a lot longer than we thought and created a lot more demands on management because employees expect results when you ask them to get involved"

Compete to Win is administered for the CMA by Toronto-based Gilmore & Associates Learning Systems Inc.

The article EM9350 reprinted above is used in Figure 11.16 of the STAT 221 Course Materials.