



Thought Starter

# CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

DWM Holdings, January 2019

## Executive Summary

“Status quo, you know, is Latin for ‘the mess we’re in.’” This quote by Ronald Reagan resonates with the DWM Holdings team. Defying traditional approaches and making continuous improvements has become synonymous with how we like to do business.

For far too long, there has been a “standard” manufacturer-supplier relationship. Within our industry, we’ve come to expect such things as long lead times, estimated ship dates, a certain level of defects, difficulty getting information, and an overall lack of transparency. At DWM Holdings, we think it’s time to expect more.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Things are Not Okay	2
Elevating the Pole (er, Bar) to Drive Value	2
Expertise	
Exceptional Lead Times	
Increased Transparency	
It All Stems from Partnership-Focused Service	4
Changing the Game	4

## Things are Not Okay

Think about how you do business in other aspects of your life. For instance, if you want a product, you order it from Amazon and it arrives the next day. Need a lift? Simply pick up your phone and use an app. Getting a customized coffee drink exactly the way you like it from your local barista is no problem. And, your favorite retailer is probably the one that provides exceptional customer service and flexibility.

The world is moving faster, competition is intensifying, and while customers have always been important, they are now calling the shots! Thanks to the Internet, customers in every industry are savvier and farther along in the buying process prior to contacting a sales rep than ever before. They don't want to be sold, they want to be serviced.

Yet, the pole manufacturing industry has been slow to respond to these cultural changes. DWM Holdings is hoping to pioneer a transformation in the industry by doing things smarter, faster and with operational excellence.

## Elevating the Pole (er, Bar) to Drive Value

It's been said that the seven most expensive words in business are "because it's how we've always done it." Being resistant to change, especially in a rapidly evolving world, can keep a company from growing – or worse, lead to its demise. But change just for the sake of change is not much better. That's why we focus on meaningful improvements that drive value throughout the entire go-to-market value chain.

### At DWM Holdings, our Ideal State includes:

- » Zero defects
- » One week or less lead time for all product types
- » Unanimous 5 out of 5 customer-satisfaction and team member morale scores
- » Just-in-time inventory management
- » An innate culture of learning (Learn-Apply-Reflect)
- » Systematic and efficient process flows
- » Be a household name in the lighting pole industry

Status quo challenger, entrepreneur and author, Bradley Callow suggests asking why repeatedly when deciding on what to change to add value. "Asking why will lead you to a reason for an action. If the 'why' is weak, you are onto something," says Callow.

Whether you're supplying us with raw materials, acting as a manufacturer sales rep/agency partner, or a distribution, OEM, service, specifying, or installation partner, you can expect DWM to provide expertise, exceptional lead times, and increased levels of transparency.



### Why

We cultivate partnerships through transparency, candor, and empathy.

### How

We do this through continuous improvement in every area of our business, by actively listening to our partners, providing an exciting level of transparency into our manufacturing process, and having fun.

### What

These partnerships allow us to build light poles that we feel good standing behind. Because, we don't want you to worry about standing behind them either.

## Expertise

We have nearly 50 years of experience engineering, designing and manufacturing poles for the lighting industry. Our manufacturing facilities are skillfully focused on producing quality steel and aluminum standards. Some people might say that a goal of zero defects is too lofty, but we believe that with the right investment and focus our knowledgeable in-house engineering, design, and production teams are capable of unparalleled quality. This same expertise gives us the flexibility to handle custom designs and engineering requirements.



### The bottom line:

Relying on a partner with a strong core competency not only adds value but reduces risk.

## Exceptional Lead Times

Our emphasis on our core competency allows us to create operational efficiencies, such as short lead times. While the average lead time in the pole manufacturing industry is 4-6 weeks, our standard average lead time is 4 weeks or less.

A true test for a manufacturer is to make operational improvements while maintaining quality. We've done just that. Over the course of our operational journey, we have improved quality from 90% to 99.53% for our volume business, while increasing productivity by 25%.



### The bottom line:

When selecting a partner, you shouldn't have to choose between quality and speed. You can have both.

## Increased Transparency

We live in an age of instant information, so why should it take days to get the status of your order? At DWM Holdings, we believe that a relentless focus on transparency and immediate access to the information you need to run your business is key to changing the game for pole manufacturing. To this end, we've created PoleVault™ – a proprietary information-sharing platform that allows your team to continually monitor your order pipeline, from Purchase Order receipt to shipping.

Of course, being transparent involves some risk, as it exposes a company's vulnerabilities. However, it also builds trust and credibility. We believe people would rather do business with a partner who is willing to connect in an open, honest way. With DWM Holdings, our partners can see what is happening in real-time.

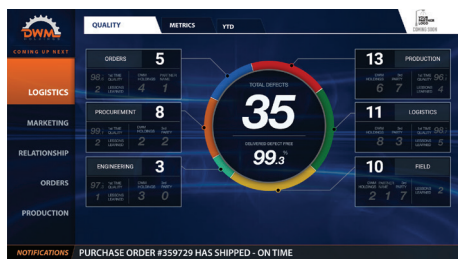


### The bottom line:

Shipping dates should be guaranteed, not estimated. Getting information on your order should be instantaneous, not a matter of days. Transparency and trust go hand in hand.

## PoleVault™ Screenshots

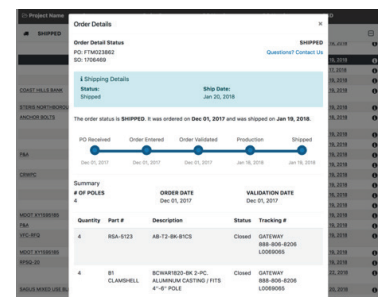
### Quality



### Current In-Flight



### Detailed Order Tracking



## It All Stems from Partnership-Focused Service

We strive to be the best possible partner and provide exceptional service levels. We see this as a continuous process that begins with actively listening to our partners and focusing on their needs. What do you need from us to make the process easier? What are your expectations? How can we make our partnership more mutually beneficial? These are the questions we ask every day.

Unfortunately, manufacturing is often perceived as a commodity business, where price is the overriding factor. While costs are important, and DWM Holdings works hard to meet increasing demands on cost containment, we focus on a “total value proposition.” Like your favorite recipe, this involves the right ingredients in the correct proportions. If the trade-off for low prices is poor quality, longer lead times, or minimal service, the recipe fails, and you’re left disappointed.

We understand that value is determined through the lens of our partners. In other words, we can’t deliver value until we fully understand what our partners want and need to succeed. At DWM Holdings, our commitment to cultivating true partnerships versus the traditional manufacturer-supplier-customer relationships, results in unrivaled partner experiences. And, that makes doing business with us unique – and a true pleasure.

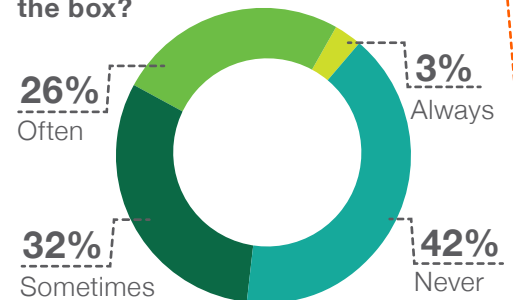


## Changing the Game

We’re not naïve – we know that challenging the status quo and changing the game in this industry is not an easy proposition. In fact, it might be akin to turning an aircraft carrier around! But, if we change nothing, nothing changes.

Recently, the Harvard Business Review asked more than 1,000 employees across U.S. industries this question: “How often have you seen senior leaders challenge the status quo or ask employees to think outside the box?” Sadly, the answers were not stellar: 42% said never or almost never, 32% said sometimes, and 26% said fairly often or very often. Only 3% said always.

**How often have you seen senior leaders challenge the status quo or ask employees to think outside the box?**



“Driving operational excellence is one key goal for every asset industry site. Manufacturers want to meet customer expectations and have sustainable improvements in the performance of their assets. In order for companies to achieve optimum performance, they create vision statements and mission statements supported by goals and objectives. To reach these goals, companies must challenge the status quo, which begins with clearly redefining roles and responsibilities for all levels of the organization. Everyone must understand their role in order for the whole team to deliver on the promises being made.”

“Challenging the Status Quo,” by Mark Rigdon, ReliabilityWeb.com

Frankly, we're not surprised by these results. Though organizations want their leaders and employees to challenge the status quo and be innovative, it's not happening at most companies. Forbes reports that the majority of leaders and employees would like to see a change from simply "managing growth and maintaining the status quo (preserving the existing state of affairs), to recreating growth and challenging it." But, this is easier said than done, because it involves going outside one's comfort zone and taking risks. Sometimes the problem lies in not knowing how to start the process.

At DWM Holdings, we've made challenging the status quo a priority, from internal leadership to external interactions. It's an ongoing process, and one that requires the participation of partners who also want to create positive change. If that sounds good to you, let's discuss how we can be partners.

## OUR PURPOSE

We cultivate partnerships thought transparency, candor and empathy.

## OUR MISSION

Be the premier pole manufacturer.

## OUR VISION

Providing the poles that connect tomorrow's world today.

To learn more about our unique approach to doing business, check out "[\*The Best Businesses are Built with Purpose.\*](#)"

DWM Holdings is the umbrella company for a portfolio of light pole manufacturing brands: United Lighting Standards; General Structures, Inc.; Lyte Poles; and UniPost Systems. The business was founded by Douglas William MacVoy in 1971. Since that time, it has grown both with and ahead of the lighting industry — all of which has shaped a company steeped in a rich tradition of developing outstanding partnerships. We are doing things differently — and having a lot of fun along the way.

## Sources

"How to Challenge the Status Quo (5 Ways to Disrupt Your Industry)," by Bradley Callow, Prsuit, 2017.

"5 Reasons Leaders Are Afraid To Challenge The Status Quo," by Glenn Llopis, Forbes, 2017.