
Rochester Focuses: A Community's Core Competence

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From the sprawling Kodak Park complex with its own fire station and railroad to the dozens of family-owned mill-and-drill shops and optical companies, Rochester, New York is a prototype of a traditional industrial town. But today it is also a prototype of another kind, the site of an evolving experiment in community-based economic renewal that combines the challenge of advanced technology with the spirit of old-fashioned barn raisings.

In important respects, Rochester's strategy for renewal is a throwback to an earlier era when companies and individuals with deep community ties came together to build a common future. A time when local initiative could summon the intellectual and financial resources to rebuild a community's industrial skills rather than expecting a solution from Washington. Today, as in the past, Rochester is calling on its twin pillars of community and technology to foster the recovery of its core businesses in optics and imaging.

- In a laboratory on the campus of the University of Rochester, an alliance of academics and company researchers is developing the OPTICAM machine,

which is the first major breakthrough in optics manufacturing since before World War II. Leading the effort is Harvey Pollicove, a middle manager from Kodak who got his start with the company as a factory worker in the 1960s.

- In classrooms throughout the city, the Rochester school district has launched an ambitious experiment aimed at reversing the decline in local education. After years of divisiveness that pitted parents against teachers and alienated local business, Rochester came together in 1986 around an education blueprint called "A Call to Action." Today educators, administrators, parents, and companies are working hard to hold together their precarious coalition and move forward with ambitious school reforms.
- A few miles away in nearby Webster, New York, Trident Tool CEO Nick Juskiw has moved his decade-old company with sales of over \$5 million beyond simply building electromechanical assemblies. Like hundreds of other companies in the region, Trident has embarked on a total quality mission, spurred on by Xerox, which won the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award in 1989.

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Pollicove's manufacturing mission, the community's education experiment, and Trident's quality efforts all represent different—but mutually reinforcing