

Imagine what would happen to the Ford Motor Company if its management allowed itself to think, "This year we've built the ultimate in automobiles. Further improvement is impossible. Therefore, all experimental engineering and designing activities are hereby permanently terminated." Even the mammoth Ford Motor Company would shrivel fast with this attitude.

Successful people, like successful businesses, live with these questions: "How can I improve the quality of my performance? How can I do better?"

Absolute perfection in all human undertakings from building missiles to rearing children is unattainable. This means there is endless room for improvement. Successful people know this, and they are always searching for a better way. (Note: The successful person doesn't ask, "Can I do it better?" He *knows* he can. So he phrases the question: "*How* can I do it better?")

A few months ago, a former student of mine, in business for just four years, opened her fourth hardware store. This was quite a feat, considering the young lady's small initial capital investment of only \$3,500, strong competition from other stores, and the relatively short time she had been in business.

I visited her new store shortly after it opened to congratulate her on the fine progress she had made.

In an indirect way I asked her how she was able to make a success of three stores and open a fourth one when most merchants had to struggle to make a success of just one store.

"Naturally," she answered, "I worked hard, but just getting up early and working late isn't responsible for the four stores. Most people in my business work hard. The main thing I attribute my success to is my self-styled 'weekly improvement program.'"