The New York Times

Financial Desk; D BUSINESS PEOPLE

By Leonard Sloane 310 words 17 August 1981 The New York Times NYTF Late City Final Edition English

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About two years ago, the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company restructured its management to create two presidencies instead of one, and John M. Pitblado was elected president for United States operations. Now the giant company, based in St. Paul, says that it will restructure again next Jan. 1 when Mr. Pitblado, 63, retires and no one is appointed to fill his position.

"It seemed like the best way to go then when we had \$3 billion in United States sales and I had 10 groups reporting to me," said Mr. Pitblado about the 1979 restructuring. "Now we have created four business sectors divided by technology, headed by executive vice presidents and we were getting to a point where there was not a need for another decision-maker in the chain. The four sector heads will report to the chief executive officer as a permanent arrangement."

The chairman and chief executive officer of 3M is Lewis W. Lehr, and the president for international operations, who received this title at the same time that Mr. Pitblado got his, is James A. Thwaits. "I don't even want to speculate" on any possible changes in Mr. Thwaits's title, Mr. Pitblado said.

After working for the United States Steel Corporation and the Mobil Corporation, Mr. Pitblado joined Minnesota Mining in 1946 as a methods engineer in the sandpaper division. He became a divisional vice president in 1970, a group vice president five years later and domestic president in March 1979.

Mr. Pitblado asserted that he had no intention of being a lameduck president until his retirement. "I'll be going on our South American reviews, just like I went last year to the Far East," he said. "And I'll be sitting in on all our planning for 1982."

Illustrations: Photo of John M. Pitblado

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Text	
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Author	All Authors
Company	3M Company
Subject	All Subjects
Industry	All Industries
Region	United States
Language	English

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Results Found	4,351
Timestamp	17 July 2018 11:24