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## Anderson and Associates Preparing Employees to Control Future

Working for a company with an Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP) is like being in business for himself, according to Dennis Burton, project manager for Anderson and Associates Inc., an engineering surveying and planning firm based in Blacksburg, Va., with offices in Greensboro and in Richmond, Va. On any given day, Burton can examine the company's financial records, which are open to all of its 100-plus employees, 70 percent of whom are participants in the ESOP program. A daily report on the company's income, expenses and progress on projects are also at his fingertips via the company's computer network. This information, and additional data available from other management communications, allows the employees to generate ideas which will increase productivity, cut costs or better serve the customer.

The company also has a five-person ESOP Advisory Committee in place which serves as a sounding board for employee and administrative issues.

In addition to the trust the company's president and founder Ken Anderson is putting in his employees to maintain a good market for the company's stock, Anderson said he hopes the ESOP will allow an orderly transfer of ownership to the inside leadership, rather than having to sell the company to an outsider. He currently owns 62 percent of the company but plans to reduce his share down to zero by retirement.

"It's a win-win situation," he said.