

Member Kerr Lakeside Owes Longtime Success to Membership Insights and Market Anticipation

Now in its third generation of ownership, Kerr Lakeside has been a staple in the Cleveland screw manufacturing industry since 1948. Today, the company is a leading manufacturer of cold-headed hex-socket screw products, precision-turned and special cold-headed components, all housed in a 150,000-square-foot facility. While Kerr's product lines serve a variety of applications, much of its OEM customer base is in the mining and off-road powertrain industries. Kerr's inventory of standard hex-socket cap screws is manufactured to ASTM and ASME specifications.

Even in the company's earliest days, Kerr Lakeside maintained a strong relationship with PMPA. Members since 1951, Kerr Lakeside has relied heavily on the association's guidance in successfully pushing companies forward into the future of the precision machine industry. Charlie Kerr, president of Kerr Lakeside, doesn't see this relationship changing any time soon.

"Regardless of your business model, there is no limit to the amount of value you can get out of your membership," Mr. Kerr says. "What it costs to be a member of the PMPA is a major bargain when looking at other business associations."

The guidance on a range of mission-critical issues Kerr Lakeside receives from PMPA has contributed heavily to the company's longevity. The company's management has the ability to anticipate rather than respond to changes in the market.

"Management responding to changes in the market was satisfactory back in the 1960s, but it is a fatal management style today," Mr. Kerr says. "If you don't anticipate what's ahead for your business, you will eventually be confronted by a problem you are not prepared to deal with. I can't think of a single problem or challenge this industry has been confronted with that PMPA did not prepare its members for. None of us have a crystal ball, but the business intelligence we receive from PMPA is the next best thing."

As many other companies in the precision machining industry, Kerr Lakeside stayed up to date on new technology and the obsolescence of older machines. When Mr. Kerr stepped into a managerial role for Kerr Lakeside more than three decades ago, manufacturers didn't have to worry about machines becoming obsolete before the company could recover the investment.

"If you bought an Acme in 1965, that machine had a production life expectancy of 50 years or longer," Mr. Kerr says. "Technology evolves so quickly now. I compare it with buying jeans for a small child. That child is going to outgrow the pants before they wear out. So, if you're going to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a new machine,

you have to do so with a reasonable expectation that the machine will not become obsolete before you recover your investment. There is no margin for error when making these types of investment decisions."

As technology moves forward and machines become more specialized, Mr. Kerr is mindful of what is truly necessary for his type of manufacturing in order to avoid unnecessary spending on trendier machines that come at the risk of becoming obsolete in less than a decade.

"Production equipment placed in service 30 years ago is antiquated compared with what's available today," Mr. Kerr says. "A huge difference between those machines and what's new is how fast a machine can be become outdated and, consequently, a competitive liability. The information the company receives from its PMPA membership enables us to make machine tool investment decisions with the least amount of risk."



While having more than 40 years in the family business certainly helps, Mr. Kerr explains Kerr Lakeside's growth as a company was augmented by using PMPA as a resource for networking with and learning from other industry professionals. Both Mr. Kerr's father and grandfather served as presidents for the PMPA, and he is the current treasurer for the organization.

"Today, companies are like snowflakes, and no two are really alike," Mr. Kerr says. "PMPA has done a good job addressing this non-homogenous machine tool presence in the industry. On the local and national level, PMPA provides excellent know-how on the business and keeps its members up to date on the latest and greatest news and trends."

Kerr Lakeside Inc. is located at 26841 Tungsten Road, Euclid, Ohio 44132. Phone: 216-261-2100. Fax: 216-261-9798. Website: kerrlakeside.com