

# PMPA Member Avanti Engineering Finds Success in Quality Assurance, Customer Diversity

In the early 1950s, a young Joseph Bratta and his family immigrated to the United States from Bari, Italy, in search of opportunity. Barely a teenager, Mr. Bratta settled in Chicago working in a screw machine shop and learning Davenport multi-spindle screw machining. After becoming a screw machine expert by his early 20s, Mr. Bratta bought his first Davenport machine and started his own machining business out of his garage. He took on whatever jobs he could until he eventually had enough business to leave his day job and open up what would become Avanti Engineering's original headquarters in Melrose Park, Illinois, in 1972. More than 40 years later, the company is run by Mr. Bratta's three children.

"The company has continued to grow, expand equipment and deliver quality products at a competitive price," says Rocco Bratta, president at Avanti Engineering. "With having a tight family bond and some luck along the way, we are able to persevere through the many obstacles of a family business. Working with family is not the easiest thing in the world, but it brings in rewards that we sometimes overlook, such as loyalty, honesty and dedication."

In a 55,000-square-foot facility with 80 employees, Avanti serves a number of different markets, including automotive, aftermarket, hydraulics, aerospace and refrigeration, with heavy emphasis on volume machining. Much of Avanti's success comes from having a diverse list of customers that balance each other out as the economy shifts.

Avanti's strength also comes from its fleet of multi-spindle screw machines, complex CNC for tight tolerances and multi-axis Swiss turning lathes for precision micro parts and demanding surface finishes. Avanti uses wire EDM for the complex fabrication of machine tooling and offers value-added consulting and engineering services, including CAD and CAM.

"What separates us from the competition is our ability to get the job right the first time," Mr. Bratta says. "The people who do that the best are the ones who have security moving



forward. In our business, you can always find a cheaper price, but you can't always find a quality company that meets, and often exceeds, expectations."

As PMPA members, Mr. Bratta says the organization's reports, resources and listserves have been an integral part of the company's growth. He also notes that it's PMPA's members' open communication that makes the organization appealing for companies such as Avanti.

"It's an organization that is always there for anything an employer needs," Mr. Bratta says. "To have that ability to get on the phone or reach out to the other members, sometimes in a matter of minutes, and network together is something that every employer can benefit from."

Through participating in events such as National Manufacturing Day, Avanti and PMPA are working together to combat one of the industry's biggest challenges: closing the skills gap. In addition to PMPA's outreach to local schools, Mr. Bratta says Avanti holds open houses at its facility to attract potential new talent and show prospective employees what Avanti does and the products it makes.

"The future of our workforce is in jeopardy, especially with screw machines, where you're working by hand with older equipment," Mr. Bratta says. "We're doing more at our level than ever before to try to market ourselves, connect with people and reach out to students to try to get the proper employees in here to be trained and put to work."

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