

PMPA Member Eaton Steel Bar Co. Finds Success in its Longevity and Large Inventory

When it was founded in 1953 by Albert "Al" Goodman, the headquarters of Eaton Steel Bar Co. (ESBC) was not much more than a few overturned orange crates in the warehouse of his father's sporting goods store in Detroit, Michigan. Mr. Goodman was a metallurgist for the Ford Motor Co. and worked with many parts suppliers in the Detroit area. Through his work with Ford and other companies, Mr. Goodman saw a demand from local machine shops to carry excess inventory, so he started Eaton Steel Bar Co. as a brokerage company for excess steel. In 1963, Al was joined by his brother, Ozzie Goodman.

"For machine shops at the time, there wasn't a good network to get rid of a bundle of excess material," says Wayne Turner, regional sales and marketing manager at Eaton Steel Bar Co. "You couldn't just surf the Internet like you can now. Al was often asked if he knew of any shops with excess steel or that needed smaller amounts of steel. He heard this many times until he decided to start buying excess material himself. This ultimately led to a hot rolled bar master distributor and the creation of Hercules Cold Drawn Steel supplying cold drawn bars to the machining industry."

Today, Eaton Steel Bar Co. operates as an integrated supplier of special bar quality steel and offers more than 500 hot-rolled and cold-drawn grades of product. The company provides custom supply chain solutions and carries inventory for many different industries, including automotive, heavy-truck, defense, hydraulics fittings suppliers, distribution, energy markets and hand tools. From its humble beginnings in the sporting goods warehouse, ESBC has grown to four locations across the Detroit area, combining for more than 800,000-square-feet of facilities. In an average year, the company ships up to 300,000 tons of steel bars and supports its customers with 70,000 to 80,000 tons of hot-rolled and cold-drawn bar inventory available at any given time.

"Inventory is not a 'bad' word at Eaton," says Mark Goodman, one of the current owners of Eaton Steel Bar Company. "We maintain one of the largest inventories in the industry through lean and strong markets, making sure we have what our customers need exactly when they need it."

Another of Eaton Steel Bar Co.'s competitive advantages is its ownership of its own trucking and logistics companies. Atlas Trucking and Atlas Logistics put more than 120 semi-trucks on the road each day, which helps ESBC achieve consistent on-time performance for its customers. The company also owns its own A2LA-accredited lab that offers



Owners Mark, Jeff and Gary Goodman.

metallurgical testing, analysis and consultation and its own quench and temper line, supplying 1-inch to 12-inch diameter quench and tempered bars.

"Our 64 years in the business and the amount of inventory we stock gives us a big advantage in the marketplace," Mr. Goodman says. "We are the only supplier in the United States who not only has a hot-rolled mill depot for customers' inventory needs, but also owns a cold-drawn bar mill as well."

As a PMPA member, ESBC takes advantage of the organization's events and meetings as they offer a great opportunity to see other professionals on the cutting edge of modern machining and manufacturing processes. Mr. Turner adds that out of the several other organizations he is a part of, he believes PMPA is the most active organization in its communication between members on a weekly basis, especially in regards to its listserves.

"For the cost of being a member, where else can you go to meet industry leaders from world-class companies who machine parts for applications from all over the world?" Mr. Turner asks. "Where else can you find that kind of resource multiple times a year that's willing to help make you a better company, so that more machining comes back to this country? More than anything else, we've gained a better understanding of not only our business, but the industry as a whole."

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