

PMPA Member Hannes Precision Finds Success in Flexibility and Top Customer Service

While Hannes Precision was established in Norwalk, Connecticut, in 1973, the company's roots go back to the 1940s in a small town of 7,000 people in Switzerland. Founder Jean Schaer started as an apprentice with a Swiss screw machine builder and would eventually travel the world as a service technician. Eventually, Mr. Schaer settled in Norwalk, bought and rebuilt some cam machines and started what would become Hannes Precision out of his garage.

Today, the company is run by Jean Schaer's son, Raymond Schaer, who began working in the shop when he was in middle school. The company has grown to be a leader in delivering Swiss automatic screw machine products for a number of industries, including electronics, defense, computers and entertainment.

"We make small, high precision parts, and it's all Swiss work, because that's all we've ever known," says Raymond Schaer, president at Hannes Precision. "One of our first customers was a Swiss screw machine shop because we could do the work they would rather not attempt."

Hannes Precision specializes in manufacturing parts with the capability to work with materials ranging from 1/16 inch or smaller, up to 20 mm in diameter. Some of its flagship products include electronic connectors for military applications and defense work and sophisticated parts for medical instruments. Mr. Schaer says one of Hannes' advantages is their ability to be flexible in scheduling and delivery. For some jobs, that means manufacturing extra parts and keeping them on hand for future needs.

"When we have a customer that has a certain catalog of parts and needs them in a pinch, it's a benefit and the customer needs to understand, however, that we assume the risk," Mr. Schaer says. "If there's been a change, we're going to eat them. When we prepared for our new ISO certification, we needed to address the issue of assessing



and mitigating risk in the new standard. We haven't really changed anything in what we do, but just do what we think works best, based on past experience."

Hannes Precision recently had its re-certification and upgraded to the ISO 9001:2015 standard. Mr. Schaer says he believes being an ISO-certified company has made a significant difference in his shop. Hannes Precision's parts are monitored continuously using certified gaging and precision measuring equipment, such as a Keyence IM Series optical gaging system and two optical comparators to assure quality and consistency.

"A lot of customers look for the certification and use it as a kind of benchmark," Mr. Schaer says. "It keeps us on our toes, and we're a better company for doing it. We've passed every audit we've had."

A PMPA member since the mid-1990s, Mr. Schaer admits he was initially reluctant to join the organization until he finally attended a meeting in search of new ideas. Not long after, he became an officer for his local chapter and has since gone on to serve on PMPA's board of directors. Whether the topic is materials, tooling or healthcare providers, Hannes Precision has learned a great deal from PMPA resources, such as its listserves, local and national meetings.

"What you don't expect are the friendships you form and the openness between members," Mr. Schaer says. "From the Tech Conferences, to Management Update, the knowledge you pick up to help deal with today's challenges is amazing. Once you've made that leap of faith, it's easy to see there's something there for everyone."

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