

PMPA Member, Imperial, Credits Product Diversity for Longevity

Since it was founded by the Ver Wys family, Imperial Metal Products has been a staple in the Michigan manufacturing industry for more than a century. Starting in 1914 as a manufacturer of lathes and other machines for furniture companies, Imperial soon made the switch to producing metal parts, many of which were used in the 1940s for equipment used in World War II. Today, the company, which also includes Corotech and Steel Supply and Engineering, annually manufactures millions of precision parts that serve a great number of industries from medical and office furniture, to aerospace and defense equipment.

"It's exciting to see all the developments, like how to process metal, whether it's powdered metal or new machines or casting techniques," says Adam Dean, business development manager at Imperial. "There are a lot of different ways to approach a problem and go after a solution."

"The benefits include being able to ask questions to peers, whether it's on how we competitively pay, or how we provide bonuses to people on the floor. There are a lot of topics that can be covered, and you can get a range of advice on a local and national level."

Imperial originally set up shop in a two-story building in Grand Rapids. In 2000, the company expanded into a modern 110,000-square-foot manufacturing facility 2 miles from its original downtown location. Always privately owned, Imperial came under new ownership in 1997 and currently has a staff of 65 employees with plans of increasing that number in the near future.

True to its Michigan roots, Imperial hopes to expand its presence in the automotive industry with its more than 60

Imperial

METAL PRODUCTS COMPANY

years of experience. Despite the recent recession putting many companies out of business, Imperial's range of service and expertise has allowed for the business to survive hard times.

"I think that our diverse capabilities really helped us during the downturns in Michigan," Mr. Dean says. "The automotive volume right now is very nice."

As a PMPA member, Imperial uses the organization as a way to learn and network with local businesses. The company has at least a handful of employees at each local meeting, sends its engineers to as many technical conferences as possible and has its general manager on the board of the local chapter. According to Mr. Dean, meeting with other businesses within PMPA builds a strong sense of camaraderie, not rivalry. The active use of the organization's listserves has also been a major help in Imperial's success.

"It's a real fount of knowledge for the team," Mr. Dean says. "The benefits include being able to ask questions to peers, whether it's on how we competitively pay, or how we provide bonuses to people on the floor. There are a lot of topics that can be covered, and you can get a range of advice on a local and national level."

Along with its diverse line of products, Imperial uses its top-tier customer service and program management tactics to elevate its success. The company provides collaborative launch meetings, review meetings and best-in-class quote turnaround and more than 50 years of combined experience in project management to ensure customer satisfaction.

"We've been in the industry for a long time. We've tried to come up with creative solutions to problems, capitalize on new projects and go after the best process to provide results to our customers," Mr. Dean says.

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