

PMPA Member JC Gibbons Manufacturing Finds Success in Diversification and Exceptional Customer Service

In the late 1950s, John Clifton Gibbons was a machine repairman for the Ford Motor Co. until he got the news he had been laid off. Although he only had a fifth-grade education, Mr. Gibbons was well respected in the area for his knowledge in automotive repair and maintenance work. Mr. Gibbons had been laid off for more than two years when he received a telegram from Ford asking if he would return to his previous position. A few weeks prior, he had an opportunity to purchase three Traubs, one chip spinner and a Toledo scale at the encouragement of a friend who wanted him to run some parts for him. To do this, it cost \$4,000 of his \$4,018 life savings and meant he would have to leave Ford for good. After receiving some encouragement from his wife, Blanche, he turned down the offer from Ford and pursued an opportunity to make directional levers for Chevy, Pontiac, Oldsmobile and Buick. So, in 1959, Mr. Gibbons and his 17-year-old son, Jerry, started JC Gibbons Manufacturing's 60-year legacy by making these levers in the back of someone else's shop. The next year, the two moved the company into a modest, 450-square-foot building in Detroit, Michigan, where they hired their first employee, purchased more machines and manufactured 50,000 carburetor jets a month.

Several decades and millions of manufactured parts later, JC Gibbons moved to its current headquarters, a 22,000-square-foot facility in Livonia, Michigan, with more than 30 screw machines and 10 CNC lathes and CNC vertical mills, all of which are capable of working with countless machining materials and volumes.



Today, JC Gibbons Manufacturing is run by Jerry Gibbons' sons, Jeff and Dan Gibbons, and has become a leading manufacturer of precision CNC machining services and screw machine products for a number of different industries, including automotive, HVAC, specialty and custom fasteners, defense, electronics and musical instruments.

"One of the advantages of working for a smaller company is that you get to know everybody," says Jeff Gibbons, president at JC Gibbons Manufacturing. "Everyone here is important and has a valuable spot within our company. We look at everyone at JC Gibbons as an extended family member."

Despite growing up around the family business, Mr. Gibbons had career aspirations to instead work in sports broadcasting and worked for a National Hockey League minor league affiliate in Toledo, Ohio. In 1995, Mr. Gibbons experienced an epiphany and decided he'd be happier working for JC Gibbons with his father. In 2007, his younger brother, Dan Gibbons, joined the fold and is currently the company's vice president.

"I definitely consider it a blessing to have had the opportunity to work with my dad for several years," Mr. Gibbons says. "I wanted to give him an opportunity to retire, and what a great opportunity it was to have your boss be someone you deeply love and respect."

Similar to the tight bond experienced between its family members and employees, so too are the relationships JC Gibbons maintains with many of its customers. Mr. Gibbons says it's the company's personal care, technical support and attention to detail that has kept its customers around, some for more than 30 years.

"By working with the customer in mind, it really creates some good, long-term relationships," Mr. Gibbons says. "We really make an effort to connect with and have all the answers for our customers, even if it's for a job we can't do."

In its early days, JC Gibbons primarily served the automotive industry. Over the years, the company had to find ways to withstand several major recessions, specifically in the automotive industry, in order to stay afloat. Fortunately, Mr. Gibbons' father and grandfather discovered early on the importance of spreading out a customer base across different industries.

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"There were some fantastic times, and then there were some hard times and a lot of long hours," Mr. Gibbons says. "My dad and my grandfather were always looking two steps ahead, and we continue to diversify our portfolio of customers so we are less reliant on an industry's cyclical nature. Not putting all our eggs in one basket has helped us continue doing business for 60 years now."

JC Gibbons joined PMPA in 1992. Since becoming a member, Mr. Gibbons says he and his team greatly benefit from the openness and friendliness when it comes to the sharing of information between members. The company also stays up to date on all the latest

trends and issues within the industry by taking advantage of PMPA's listserves, conferences, shop visits and other helpful tools the organization provides.

"PMPA has been a terrific resource we've enjoyed through the years," Mr. Gibbons says. "The number one thing we've gained is the opportunity to know and meet other companies doing the same thing who open up their shops, so we can all gain new information that we would've otherwise had to learn the hard way."

JC Gibbons Manufacturing Inc. is located at 35055 Glendale St., Livonia, Michigan 48150. Phone: 800-734-8596. Website: jcgibbons.com

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Surprising Development in the Top 10 OSHA Violations for 2018

rush to say this is a result of a change in OSHA enforcement priorities. We are convinced that the decline of standards being violated that relate to our shops reflects a reduced incidence of these kind of violations in our shops as a contributing factor.

There is no doubt that OSHA is addressing the top violation priorities under its authority. We are pleased to note that the share that might be found in our shops has declined. That is good news for OSHA, for our shops and, most important of all, our performers.

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