



Member Spotlight: Pioneer Metal Finishing

Customer orientation leads to growth

By Nancy Jean

“We’re in a growth mode.” That’s the way CEO Bob Pyle describes Pioneer Metal Finishing. Known as America’s leading metal finisher, that growth has brought the corporate headquarters for the short-term to 750 Cormier Rd. in Ashwaubenon. Pioneer Metal Finishing has set as its goal of 15 percent growth per year through acquisitions and growth from within. And it plans to attain this with three specific strategies: investment in people, investment in process improvement and geographical expansion said Pyle.

With divisions in Green Bay, Oshkosh (which was added in December 2007), Minneapolis, Monroe, Mich., and Portland, Pioneer Metal Finishing was honored Nov. 5 by the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce with one of five Manufacturing Awards of Distinction.

The company serves 3,000 customers nationwide from its five divisions and workforce of nearly 800 people — 300 of them here in Green Bay. Originally called Pioneer Plating Co., it was founded in Minneapolis in 1945 as World War II was coming to its end.

Pioneer Metal Finishing is a solution-based metal finishing company known by original equipment manufacturers and job shops for its ability to enhance the wear and corrosion resistance as well as the aesthetic look of their parts. Its role in the manufacturing process is pivotal: Pioneer’s process improves the overall characteristics of a product to increase wear resistance, lubricity, dielectric properties, heat dissipation, corrosion resistance, bonding and aesthetics. Pioneer Metal Finishing does this through processes that include anodizing; electroless nickel plating, chromate, passivation, paint, powdercoat, E-coat and VA-100 technology.

And, explained Pyle, its five divisions are



Pioneer Metal Finishing team members use specialized fixtures to process customer parts.

located so that a job of most any size can be accomplished quickly and efficiently to meet the customer’s needs.

“It all starts with our customers,” said Pyle, as he talked about just how important their work is to the manufacturing process. “We are typically the final step.” Some jobs are on a regular production schedule, others unpredictable. “Customers expect we can manage these dynamics and provide them the level of service they need and expect. It is truly a dynamic environment that changes hourly. Without a culture of customer service the organization could not deliver consistent and repeatable quality,” said Pyle.

“We can’t make it happen fast enough,” added Pyle. Pioneer Metal Finishing will soon roll out a new system to allow customers to get quotes in real time online and access to productions schedules.

A customer service survey is conducted annually on the company’s quality and service performance. The results, which are used in their strategic business planning process, are published on their Web site at www.pioneermetal.com. “We’re an open book,” said Pyle.

“Friendly” is the way he hopes customers view Pioneer Metal Finishing. The company has great people, said Pyle.

Pioneer Metal Finishing Pyle lives by its mission statement which speaks of partnership. It is threefold:

- To create value for our customers, associates and shareholders by providing the highest quality products and services in the metal finishing industry.
- Our success will be measured by the relationships we build with our customers, employees, suppliers and community.
- These relationships will be based on

trust, respect and a commitment to protecting the environment.

Here are some other thoughts from Pyle:

- In Green Bay Pioneer Metal Finishing runs three shifts five to six days a week. It is the largest division by sales. The company outgrew its space at 486 Globe Ave. on the west bank of the Fox River, hence the temporary move of the corporate headquarters to 750 Cormier Rd., not far from Bay Park Square. The campus has 100,000 square feet spanning 11 acres, which is where a new corporate headquarters will be.

- The environment is of constant concern to the company. “Our industry hasn’t always received good press,” said Pyle. Metal finishing has had the reputation as a “dirty industry,” he continued. Not at Pioneer Metal Finishing. “We’re primarily green in most of our plants,” he said. Scrubbing systems clean the air and waste treatment systems are in place to ensure the environment is protected.

- Leadership development is important. Throughout the company there is a program that works with developing leaders at all levels. “We encourage people to step forward and challenge themselves to develop their leadership abilities,” he emphasized.

- The economy is admittedly flat, but, said Pyle, “One of the things about Pioneer is that we’re well diversified.” Among their customers are the paper, printing, packaging, medical, aerospace, transportation and military industry. He noted that it’s important to pick the right banking partner. For Pioneer Metal Finishing it has been Johnson Bank.

- “As a leader at Pioneer it’s expected you are part of the community,” said Pyle, who has been active with the Boys and Girls Club and the Wisconsin State Golf Association. He is also a member of The Executive Committee (TEC) which brings leaders together from a variety of business sectors for education and professional growth opportunities.

For more information see the Pioneer Metal Finishing Web site at www.pioneermetal.com or call (920) 884-1610.

Chapman event focuses on inspirational leadership

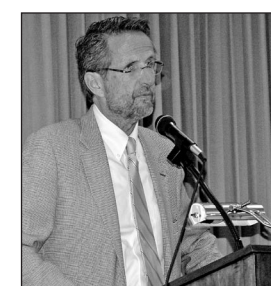
On Nov. 21, Bob Chapman, chairman and chief executive officer of Barry-Wehmiller Cos. Inc., parent company of Paper Machine Converting Company of Ashwaubenon, addressed members of the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce CEO and CFO Roundtable groups and the TEC CEO Group at St. Norbert College.

His messages were straight-forward; he said most businesses that claim “people are our most

important asset” don’t behave like it. In contrast, Barry-Wehmiller’s approach is to touch the lives of its workers because business holds the key to changing the country. He said people are taught a lot of things in business school but are grossly lacking in much-needed inspirational leadership. Chapman said the company’s approach is to use inspirational leadership to make work something employees want to do. “If you build great people

in a sustainable business model, profits will follow,” he said.

Today, Paper Converting has 1,025 employees worldwide, including 850 in Brown County, and it accounts for \$206 million of Barry-Wehmiller’s \$1.1 billion in annual revenue. The company has a 21 percent compound growth rate over 10 years and its share price increased from \$17.67 a share to \$70.14 in the same period.



Bob Chapman addressed members of the CEO and CFO Roundtable groups and the TEC CEO Group at St. Norbert College.



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Chamber Events

The Green Bay Area of Chamber of Commerce promotes business growth and retention, and strives to improve the quality of life for all area residents. Check out its latest events, designed to inform, assist and promote your business. To register for any Chamber events or to discuss Chamber membership call (920) 593-3422 or visit www.titletown.org.

Power Networking Breakfast

When: Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2009, 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Where: Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. Please note our new location: 300 N. Broadway, Ste. 3A, Green Bay. Please park in the north parking lot behind the building and walk around the entry at the corner of Dousman and Broadway Streets.

Cost: Free to members, \$16 for prospective members

This is an opportunity to introduce your company, product or service to 40 of your business peers and to tour our new building!

Register at www.titletown.org by Jan. 2 or call (920) 593-3419 or (920) 593-3422.

Current Professional Reading Series

When: Monday, Jan. 12, 2009, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Where: The Daily Buzz, downtown Green Bay

Cost: Free

This month, the group is reading "Lincoln on Leadership" by Donald T. Phillips, led by John Zakowski, district attorney for Brown County. Please note: It's OK and encouraged for people who haven't read the book to join the group!

Business & Breakfast

When: Thursday, Jan. 15, 2009, 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Where: F.K. Bemis Center, St. Norbert College campus

Cost: \$18 for members, \$35 for prospective members

Join us to learn about Need-Satisfaction Selling Processing presented by Jerry Mader of *The Business News*. You'll walk away with a step-by-step process for conducting professional, productive sales presentations that include an opening, probing, presenting and closing. You'll also learn how to understand and handle sales objections. This month's Business & Breakfast is sponsored by TDS Metrocom.

To register, visit www.titletown.org by Jan. 13, 2009, or call (920) 593-3419 or (920) 593-3422.

Power Networking Breakfast

When: Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009, 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Where: Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce

Cost: Free to members; \$16 for prospective members

This is your opportunity to introduce your company and its products or services, meet Chamber staff and tour our new location!

Register at www.titletown.org or call (920) 593-3419 or (920) 593-3422.

If you're interested in becoming a member of the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, call sales today at (920) 437-8704. For questions about this and other editorial found on these pages, call Lori Kaye Lodes, marketing communications manager and editor at (920) 593-3423 or e-mail llodes@titletown.org.