



A Second Career in Powder Coating

Cousins join forces to own a manufacturing, finishing company.

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ABOVE: Terence Reid and Walker Knox say they are working to continue the company's reputation for quality and customer service excellence built over two decades.

Since purchasing their fabrication and finishing shop in September 2015, two cousins who grew up on the same dirt road in Rock Hill, South Carolina, are taking a successful business to a new level of excellence.

As a job shop manufacturer of precision sheet metal components, Mid-Atlantic Fabrication and Finishing (MAF) in Knightdale, North Carolina, specializes in computer-assisted manufacturing for custom parts in large or small quantities, and is focused on quality and prompt services to meet its customer needs.

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with quick turnaround times on all projects, from custom prototypes to full production-run quantities.

Reid and Knox say they established a goal for MAF to be the top supplier of choice, a goal they say is now set in motion by improvements in customer service, process flow and working conditions, coupled with reductions in turnaround times and product costs.

“During the past year, we have been experiencing growth in customers and revenues now averaging more than 30 percent each month,” Knox says.

New Pretreatment

One finishing improvement implemented earlier this year was a conversion to zirconium-based powder coating technology for cleaning and pretreating metal before powder coating. MAF converted from an iron phosphate system that is still used by most of the metal fabrication and finishing industry, but which produces a byproduct of liquid waste regulated by the EPA because of environment risks.

“The new process does not pose environmental risks and is more effective for customers, providing better protection against rust and corrosion,” says Reid, who added that there are no additional costs passed to customers; instead, the investment was made to demonstrate MAF’s commitment to quality.

The facility has a self-contained spray booth with a Gema powder coating system with hoppers and an 800,000-BTU oven for curing. The company also offers vibratory finishing and screen printing for parts after coating to help speed up the process for its customers.

Former Marine

Reid leaves no doubt that he knows how to motivate a team. While serving as the assistant commandant and senior instructor for the Marine Leadership Academy in Chicago, he was invited to speak at a ceremony honoring the 240th anniversary of the Marines Corps, where he shared his Top 10 list of lessons he learned in 30 years of service, culminating in an admiration for honesty and integrity.





Mid-Atlantic Fabrication and Finishing in Knightdale, North Carolina, is focused on quality and prompt service first.

“With the Marines, there is no middle ground or gray area; there are only missions and objectives,” Reid says. “Marines are steadfast and consistent in everything they do, and being a Marine means men and women know that to lead is to serve.”

Reid retired as a colonel from the U.S. Marine Corps in January 2015 after 30 years of honorable service. He graduated from the University of South Carolina with a business management degree before embarking on his military career. His progressive leadership and management positions

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included aviation logistics, providing supply and maintenance support for hundreds of aircrafts; supply chain management of both ground and aviation logistics; manufacturing repair and overhaul of all ground

equipment in the Marine Corps inventory; and strategic and operational planning in all aspects of logistics planning and execution.

Reid served as the U.S. Marine Corps liaison officer to the U.S. Transportation Command for surge operation deployments and troop and equipment recovery during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Previously he served as commander of the maintenance center in Albany, Georgia, a billion-dollar maintenance, repair and overhaul facility

supporting all ground support equipment in the Marine Corps inventory. This assignment included leading more than 2,000 civilian personnel and the implementation of Lean Six Sigma processes, decreasing turnaround time and increasing safety measures that reduced workplace injuries.

Reid’s leadership was credited with increasing the readiness of worldwide U.S. Department of Defense operations and saving the Marine Corps millions of dollars in repair costs. The maintenance center was recognized as Manufacturer of the Year, earning Excellence in Innovation, the USMC Award for Continuous Process Improvement Excellence, and Achievement in Safety Awards.

In his last position before MAF, he served as the assistant commandant and senior Marine instructor for the Marine Leadership Academy, a public high school in Chicago training leaders for success in school and a life of service. His personal decorations include the Legion of Merit with two gold stars, Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with a gold star, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Presidential Service Badge, and the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

Valspar Veteran

Knox was an experienced technical sales professional with 25 years of business development leadership before buying MAF. He started his career as a chemist after graduating from North Carolina State University and working as a lab manager at Raychem before pursuing roles as a product engineer and



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business development and sales manager.

Prior to purchasing MAF, Knox was project manager for the Kenton Group, offering research design and development of telecommunications products. He was sales manager for Technomark, a developer and manufacturer of products for the human machine interface including membrane switches, electroluminescent lighting, touchscreens and keypads. He was also a sales manager for Tyco Electronics and worldwide business manager for Valspar, the fourth largest global manufacturer and distributor of paints and coatings.

Since acquiring the business, Reid says the goal has been to build a business on the culture and processes that provide excellent services to customers and contribute positively to the lives of the people who work there.

“The quality of their work and service lets me and my team know that we can depend on it,” says Catherine Cordell, supply chain manager at TUTCO-Farnam Custom Products. “If we want an order to be delivered a specific day, it will be there on or before then. The reason I call them a five-star supplier is that I know I can count on that delivery and the quality of their work.”

MAF has adopted a continuous process improvement program, an ongoing effort to improve products, services and processes. The result is both incremental and breakthrough improvements that constantly evaluate customer processes.

MAF is working toward ISO, Lean Six Sigma and other certifications to sharpen business operations for future growth.

“Lean Six Sigma is a process about everyone understanding their role and how the team accomplishes

objectives,” Reid says, adding that the processes improve business performance by eliminating unnecessary steps that do not add value to the customer.

“Terry’s background in the Marines fits our business,” says Eric Reeves, director of enterprise resources for INI Power Systems. “He keeps his employees and business running like you would expect from a former military leader.”

Reeves says MAF is quick about replying with quotes when request for proposals are sent.

“They even brought some parts over recently, wanting to make sure the company was meeting our expectations and understood the consequences of how we asked him to make the parts,” Reeves says. “They offered an alternative that provided a better solution for us and our customer. I like that attention to detail and personal service.” **PF 50**

For information on Mid-Atlantic Fabrication and Finishing, call 919-217-6080 or visit mid-atlanticfab.com.

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