

CM Pulling Strings

by Monica Cardenas

NAC Delivers Performance

What is the nature of your business?

MB: North American Composites (NAC) is a distributor of raw materials, equipment and supplies to the composites and cast polymer industries. We have 23 distribution centers throughout the U.S. and western Canada. We partner with more than 100 suppliers to bring our manufacturing customers the best products the industry has to offer. Our headquarters is in St. Paul, Minnesota.



Mark Brost,
Vice President
and General
Manager, North
American
Composites

How many employees do you have?

MB: We have 140 employees; 50 of whom are sales personnel.

What is your company's background?

MB: Southern Fiberglass Supply was founded in 1973, and was the forefather of Interplastic Distribution Group (IDG). IDG was formed in 1988 due to company expansion. During the 1990's, the company made numerous acquisitions of independent distributors to broaden its coverage and offerings. NAC was created in 1999 when IDG acquired M.A. Hanna's Thermoset Resin Distribution business. This acquisition created a new, national distributor to the composites industry with more than 30 years of experience.

How has it evolved from its beginnings?

MB: We've gone from 7 to 23 distribution centers. We source products in a worldwide market. We also offer equipment financing, act as a conduit between our suppliers and customers for process and technical training and we provide regulatory information and guidance to our customers.

How did you get started in the industry?

MB: I joined Interplastic Corporation in 1986 as the Vice President of Finance and Administration. After participating on the acquisition teams throughout the 1990's, I became NAC's Vice President and General Manager in 1999.

What obstacles does your company face today in the regulatory or technical arenas?

MB: Process improvements to minimize emissions will play a key role in helping meet stringent environmental requirements. Closed molding processes such as infusion, Light RTM, vacuum bagging, etc., will continue gaining acceptance as reinforcements, resins and process experience evolve. Other challenges are: keeping our sales force apprised of industry regulatory requirements and the manufacturing process developments, and providing our customers with the regulatory and technical information and services they demand.

What are your marketing efforts?

MB: We publish *Delivering Performance*, a quarterly, 40-page magazine. It is the only magazine written by a distribution company that is specifically tailored to the composites and cast polymer industries. NAC's customers and suppliers are featured in each issue along with new products, industry news and other pertinent industry information. We also have a Web site (www.nacomposites.com) that we're always improving. We exhibit at tradeshow and our local sales staffs conduct various promotions and seminars with customers and vendors during the year. We were a CCT sponsor in April 2006. NAC is also a strong supporter of the composites industry through the American Composites Manufacturers Association (ACMA) and related industry trade groups across the country. I serve on the ACMA board and several of our staff members serve in the ICPA.


What development or research would you like to see happen to improve the industry?

MB: The industry needs to raise its profile with the regulatory and political communities by capitalizing on the positive press generated by composites applications in aerospace, military and infrastructure/energy. The entire industry needs to become more directly involved with R&D related to regulatory compliance. The challenge is to be compliant while still allowing fabricators to produce cost effective products compared to those made with other material systems.

Where do you see your business in five years?

MB: NAC will be the premier distributor to the composites industry throughout the U.S. and Canada. We will differentiate ourselves by providing outstanding local customer service coupled with our portfolio of strategic suppliers that provide unique solutions to our customers. We also expect to grow faster than the general economy by promoting a more sophisticated manufacturing processes, and play a larger role in finding solutions to infrastructure and energy challenges.

How are you staying on the cutting edge?

MB: We think it is vital to support the ACMA. This is the organization that promotes our common interests so we will remain very active. We also believe in the CCT program. It demonstrates a professional commitment to the industry. 

Monica Cardenas is the assistant editor of CM magazine. She can be reached at 703.682.1651 or mcardenas@acmanet.org.

Advertiser Review

SAY YOU SAW IT IN COMPOSITES MANUFACTURING MAGAZINE

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