



Ashtabula Rubber is a "design manufacturer and technical service provider," says Nick Jammal, president.

ASHTABULA: 'THERE'S MORE TO MANUFACTURING RUBBER'

BY FERNIE GRACE TIFLIS

Ashtabula Rubber Co. Marketing Manager Tim Ward attributes the company's success to its ability to adapt easily. "There are certainly a lot of changes in the market today," he states. "You have to be willing to change if you want to survive."

Some of the continuous challenges that Ashtabula Rubber faces are the increasing cost of raw materials needed to produce its product, and the competition in both the domestic and international markets. Although it is unable to control the cost of raw materials, Ashtabula Rubber says it has been able to adapt to the changing global market.

PROFILE

Ashtabula Rubber Co.
www.ashtabularubber.com
 HQ: Ashtabula, Ohio
 Employees: Approx. 200
 Products: Engineered rubber components
 Tim Ward, marketing manager: "You have to be willing to change if you want to survive."

The competition outside the United States was forcing some of Ashtabula Rubber's customers – telecommunications and transportation industries – to embark on drastic cost-cutting to reduce prices of the products. However, Ashtabula Rubber says, these customers quickly learned the

difficulty in finding a dependable supply chain overseas, prompting them to invite Ashtabula Rubber to manufacture internationally.

Since opening a manufacturing facility in China, Ashtabula Rubber is not only competing with the low-cost demands of the global market, but also providing a reliable manufacturing and sourcing network for new and existing customers. "Our reaction to the world economy is to become part of it," says Nick Jammal, president.

For some, operating overseas can be intimidating. However, "Ashtabula Rubber helps avoid the pains of design misinterpretation, language difficulties, travel expenses, as well as shipping and custom delays by establishing working relationships with some of the most trusted companies to emerge on the global scene," Jammal explains. "We ensure that the components customers receive are of the same quality that we produce in-house, and that the production parts are exactly like the samples.

"Regardless of where they are manufactured, our customers receive the highest quality parts on-time and within their budget," Jammal adds.

FAMILY HEIRLOOM

"Ashtabula Rubber is more than just a manufacturer of rubber components," Jammal explains, "We are a design manufacturer and technical service provider with more than 60 years of experience in the industry."

Jammal is the third generation to handle the family-owned business, which started in 1945. His grandfather, N.J. Jammal, took over the Hershberg Rubber Co., a supplier of rubber parts to the battery industry.

By 1965, Jammal's father took over the company. During his tenure, Ashtabula Rubber served the transportation, energy and telecommunications markets – markets it still serves today, the company explains.

"We have always focused on the more technological products," Jammal says.

NO SURPRISES

Jammal adds that Ashtabula Rubber's ability to work with design engineers sets it apart from other companies. "We have the ability to sit down with engineers and help them develop a cost-effective component that will work," he notes.

Aside from its reputation for quality and technical capabilities, the company says, its relationship with customers puts them at the forefront of the industry.


"Our relationship with our clients is key to our success in today's market," Jammal emphasizes.

Customers typically contact Ashtabula Rubber early in the design process, the company says. "To do this, Ashtabula Rubber supplies prototypes to help customers gauge the effectiveness of the design before entering into production runs, effectively eliminating any surprises down the road."

In addition, the company participates in finding solutions to issues concerning upgrades of existing products to address more extreme environments and chronic field issues.

"Customers benefit from our systematic approach to finding solutions because our process focuses on optimizing the component's performance as it relates to form, fit and function, while achieving the long-term reliability they expect," the company explains.

Its level of service is one reason why Ashtabula Rubber is successful overseas, the company notes.

"Customers are inviting us to manufacture overseas because of the quality and technical service that we provide domestically," Jammal adds. "It's hard to find that kind of technical expertise with a rubber company overseas." 

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