



With two divisions and locations in 16 cities, Curbell Inc. serves customers worldwide. CEO Shuhartha Ghose and Vice Chairman Tina Sabuda lead a company that has seen record sales and profit in recent years.

Curbell carries on with medical technology, innovation

BY JANE SCHMITT

Curbell Inc. got a new logo last year as part of its 70th anniversary celebration, but one thing that hasn't changed is the company's commitment to developing strong customer relationships and its reliance on "integration expertise" to drive product development and innovation.

Indeed, this is a business with a long history and traditional values that date to its founding in the 1940s in industrial Buffalo. Back then, it was a small machine shop known as Curbell Machine Co. but it evolved into a fabricator of aircraft components.

In fact, the corporate name was derived from two major customers – Curtiss-Wright and Bell Aircraft. The modern operation is comprised of Curbell Plastics Inc. and Curbell Medical Products Inc.

With headquarters in Orchard Park, the companies have combined employment of 432 and sales last year were \$169.3 million. That was up from \$142 million in 2010.

"Put us to work for you" is a phrase that sums up Curbell's approach to its customers," company leaders say. "More than just a products company, Curbell partners with its customers to develop solutions that are custom-made for their unique challenges. The philosophy has allowed the company to build long-term customer relationships, beat out (the) competition and to significantly grow both Curbell Plastics and Curbell Medical."

Exceeding customer expectations is the

focus here, and the work force takes pride in being part of an enterprise that is innovative and creative.

"As a family owned company with deep roots in the industries it serves, the company takes an innovative approach, backed by years of quality service that their customers have come to trust and rely upon," says the company website.

Curbell Plastics has 17 sales and distribution centers nationwide and supplies plastic sheet, rod, tube and other materials to a variety of industries.

Curbell Medical Products, meanwhile, makes medical devices for OEM systems manufacturers, resellers and hospitals. In addition to private-label accessories, it markets Curbell-branded products to 5,800 hospitals nationwide, according to Tracy Schiedel, director of marketing.

"Like most companies over the last five years, Curbell was not immune to the downturn in the economy and suffered along with its customers," she said in an emailed statement.

"The ailing economy had a strong impact in the plastics industry in particular, as many customers went out of business, impacting Curbell Plastics significantly."

Schiedel said a solid financial position combined with a long-term view ensured that the company would survive and grow.

"Curbell continued to invest in its infrastructure and its employees, knowing that the company would emerge stronger when the economy began to improve," she said.

During the economic downturn, management continued to invest in training, professional development, new products and R&D. Curbell also saw a difficult economy as an opportunity to take a hard look at operations and evaluate strengths and weaknesses, she said.

"The result was that Curbell made internal changes, including a much more integrated sales and marketing

approach," Schiedel said.

"These changes allowed the company to improve operations and become more

efficient, while still providing the level of service that customers had come to expect."

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