

Rowley Spring a growing success in state and abroad

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BRISTOL — A mainstay in Bristol for 60 years, Rowley Spring and Stamping has grown from humble beginnings to a multi-million dollar manufacturing business.

Stanley Bitel started the business in 1954 in his garage in Berlin with only a dozen bench presses and a few other machinery items before moving to Federal Street six years later.

The company — which began with 13 employees and 12 customers — has grown to more than 100 full and part-time employees and more than 700 customers in about six countries.

Today, Rowley Spring sits on 150,000 square feet on Redstone Hill Road and is a “one stop shopping” manufacturing company for its customers, said John Dellalana, president since March 2013.

While Bitel is now in his 90s and no longer runs the company, Dellalana does report to his two daughters.

“Rowley has a wide range of capabilities, including tool design, power pressing stamping, four slide operations, spring fabrication and secondary operations,” said the 49-year-old New Jersey native. The four slide operations, for example, take raw materials and bends and folds them to the customer’s needs.

There are three primary segments to the business, Dellalana continued. They include power press, four slide and springs. The power press department is comprised of 28 power press machines that range in size from 32 tons to 150 tons.

Rowley’s primary clients include defense contractors, automotive companies and manufacturing businesses, he said. The company makes parts that go on rocket launchers, and the spring division makes a spring used in a new EpiPen.

“We make 1 million parts a day,” said Dellalana, who graduated in 1987 from Penn State with a bachelors of science degree in electrical engineering. “Just about everyone owns a Rowley part in their home, whether it’s in their car, their electrical outlet, their tool box [the company makes Allen wrenches] or even parts for blinds.”



New Britain

Board game enthusiasts will recognize a Rowley part if they play the popular game “Trouble.” “We make the popper for the game,” he said.

Dellalana said he was attracted to Rowley because “it’s a very much family-oriented environment. The people here really care about their business. Our workers average more than 15 years of service, and we just handed a certificate to a women for 50 years of service.”

Dellalana recently sat down to discuss what makes him most proud about working for Rowley, among other issues.

Robert Storace: What are the biggest challenges ahead for companies like Rowley?

John Dellalana: Finding and retaining talented trades people. In order to do that, we prioritize in-house training for our current workforce and also get involved in the community to create the next generation of trades people.

Storace: Tell us about your manufacturing training program and what that entails.

Dellalana: For current employees, we have apprenticeship programs and we have a partnership with a company called Leanovations that does certificate training in this building.

Storace: What in your nearly two years as president of Rowley makes you the most proud?

Dellalana: I would say the people and the way the culture has received me. Everyone has bought into what we are trying to do here. People are willing to accept accountability and to focus on continually improving our cost and delivery to our customers.

Storace: What is your pitch on why young people in the area should consider manufacturing and working for a company like Rowley for a career?

Dellalana: There are so many jobs available for people who want to do this for a career, and there is an advancement ladder. You can come in not knowing a lot and move your way up. The money is good and people can make more than \$70,000 a year.

Storace: What new innovations or products do you see Rowley spearheading 10 years down the road?

Dellalana: There will be more technologies for prototyping parts. There may be more opportunities to make parts immediately using 3-D technologies, for example.

Storace: In a recent interview, your controller Bill Joyce said one of the company’s top priorities was to recognize and reward employee accomplishments. How does Rowley go about doing that?

Dellalana: It is like a family. At all-hands meetings, we do a business update and we recognize people for their years of service. The employees here get an opportunity to participate on teams to improve a certain process they might be working on, for example. We have a very active culture and everyone is involved.