

Expanding Offerings with Max-Bar Tooling

Somma Tool Company has a history of taking advantage of opportunities to help the business thrive. Recently, Somma Tool found a way to expand its product line — and market — by acquiring the Max-Bar Tool Company.



PMPA: How long as Somma Tool been in business?

Rob Somma: We just celebrated our 80th anniversary. My great-grandfather, Gerard Somma, started the business in 1939 as a specialty form tool grinding house and then we expanded into other types of cutting tools, tool holders, and work holding for primarily screw machines. About 25 years ago, we expanded into broaching and replaceable insert form tooling.

PMPA: What is your history with Somma Tool?

RS: I have been around the business my whole life, but I started full-time in 2004 after



Tray of inserts

I graduated from college. When I was about 14 or 15, my grandfather, Herman Somma, taught me form tool design so I was able to start full-time

doing that and then learned to design the custom broach tools we offer. I'm also involved with some CNC programming as well as general engineering; new product design or updates to existing products.

PMPA: Tell me the story about Max-Bar.

RS: Max-Bar was a local manufacturer about 10 minutes from our place and they had been in business for about 40 years. We acquired Max-Bar in August 2019 which allowed us to expand our product line to serve our current customers and bring in new customers.

Max-Bar allows us to offer cutting tools and holders for Swiss and CNC machines. We have been reselling them for a few years and when

the owners wanted to sell, we saw a great opportunity to bring their operations in-house and expand our line of tooling. We are now able to offer a universal tool holder which can perform front turning, back turning, grooving, threading, cut-off and other operations Plus, all the inserts are ground instead of molded which provides a lot of benefits.

PMPA: Was the acquisition of Max-Bar part of a bigger plan?

RS: We didn't necessarily set out to acquire another business, but we saw that CNC Swiss machines were becoming more popular and our line was primarily for screw machines. So, the Max-Bar tools fit into our line perfectly.

PMPA: Is there a vision for Somma Tool?

RS: We want to continue to be synonymous with quality tools and customer service and we think that adding Max-Bar to our product line will help us continue that for hopefully the next 80 years.

PMPA: Of what is Somma most proud?

RS: Our employees. We have great employees who have been here from as little as a few months to three employees who have been with us for over 50 years. To give you an example of

how great our team is, we closed on the purchase of Max-Bar on August 8th and we had all the machines moved in and making parts only five days later. It was an incredible display of teamwork.

PMPA: Why do you value your PMPA membership?

RS: I really enjoy the National Technical Conferences — meeting everyone, finding out what needs they have and how we can help solve a problem. I've also enjoyed the opportunities I've had to speak at the Technical Conference — giving back to the PMPA because I know they do a lot for our industry.

The PMPA is made up of a great group of members. I enjoy reading the ListServes and going to the conferences and seeing the information sharing. I think, "Wow, these guys are technically competitors and here they are helping each other out" and it's just great to see that kind of cooperation and comraderie.

Then you have groups like the NextGen committee who provide succession planning and transfer of knowledge information. There is a lot of information available to PMPA members. [PMPA](#)



Owners of Somma Tool and former owners of Max-Bar Tooling

Left to right: Tom Minuto, Wayne Hogrefe (Max-Bar), Eric Somma, Bob Hurlbut (Max-Bar), Jerry Somma and Rob Somma.