



Technical Member Profile: Chicago Extruded Metals Co.

Chicago Extruded Metals Company (CXM) is a leading manufacturer of extruded brass shapes in rod, bar and wire. The company employs horizontal continuous casting and indirect extrusion in the production of its profiles.

CXM was established in 1923 in Cicero, Ill. by the Anderson family. Early customers were Chicago-area machine shops, most of which were suppliers to the automotive industry. Over the years, the company expanded its operations and customer base. The business was purchased by a private investor in 2003. Today, CXM's 250,000-square-foot casting and extrusion facility sits on a 10-acre site across the street from the company's original location.

The fully integrated brass mill allows CXM to cast, extrude and finish specialty shapes and customized products. Its markets now include makers of locks and security devices, valve and fittings manufacturers, automotive suppliers, machine shops and service centers.

"CXM is a job shop specializing in near-net, engineered brass profiles in bar, coil and precision-cut pieces," says Scott Johnson, the company's director of business development. "Our engineered alloys are designed for our customers' unique applications. We also provide standard shapes with special requirements such as small diameter, Swiss tolerance and special hardness.

"Because we are a job shop, we cast a variety of alloys in smaller, tightly controlled and monitored heats," he continues. He also points

out that the company recently expanded its metals laboratories and upgraded its continuous casting machines to include environmental controls.

A PMPA technical member since 1991, CXM is involved in the association at both the regional and national levels. "We typically attend all local PMPA district meetings," Mr. Johnson says. "The PMPA national conferences provide access to a broad range of best management techniques that are specific to our products, processes and customer expectations. The Technical Conference gives us access to member shop floor people who can discuss what is important to them from a raw material supplier.



"The conferences give our people a chance to interact with the people that are in direct contact with our products in key end user markets," he adds. "These conferences reflect the real problems and opportunities facing businesses that vary in size, markets served and levels of expertise."

"Some of our top customers are also PMPA members and we are very active in the association's committees," says Frank Massa, CXM's sales director. He has

served as both vice chairman and chairman for PMPA technical members, positions that include PMPA board responsibilities.

Mr. Massa, who has been with CXM since 1973, is currently a member of the PMPA Technical Program Committee. "CXM has exhibited at the PMPA Technical Conference since the early 1990s," he says. "And, we are a charter exhibitor at the Precision Machining Technology Show."

Mr. Johnson ranks the Listserves as the number one benefit of PMPA because of the way they reflect the daily pulse of the machining industry. "For CXM, the Listserves provide background support for our company. Eight of our employees have been directly involved with the Listserves."

He also stresses the importance of the PMPA economic reports and material impacts report. "They provide visibility of industry challenges from a national perspective." In addition, CXM has taken advantage of the training offered by PMPA, using it for its production supervisors and human resource manager.

In summary, Mr. Johnson says, "As a PMPA member, we have access to market intelligence, performance expectations of raw material from the shop floor and knowledge of best practices to address machining problems."

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