

Member Profile: Cox Manufacturing Company

Cox Manufacturing Company specializes in custom, screw machine products, as well as CNC turning and machining services. The company uses a variety of turning solutions ranging from CNC Swiss lathes to multi-spindle screw machines.

It was in 1956 that William Cox Sr.—who had a natural aptitude for solving engineering problems—founded the San Antonio, Texas-based company. After working in civil service for several years, he decided to start his own business by bidding on an almost new, Swiss-type screw machine that was up for auction.

In its early days, the manufacturer supplied the electronics industry with screw machine products. Mr. Cox soon became known as one of the leading precision machining production facilities in the Southwest, with a reputation for producing challenging parts that other companies could not or would not make.

In 1968, Cox Manufacturing's founder died of a heart attack, leaving his wife and business partner, Lillian Cox, to run the company. Mrs. Cox guided the operation for more than a decade until her only son, process engineer W. T. (Bill) Cox II, took over as president in 1980. The company moved into its current headquarters that same year.



"I've grown up with the business," says the younger Mr. Cox, who was born the year the company was founded. "When my dad passed away, my mom asked me if the business was something I'd want to do someday. I said 'yes,' and she started showing me financial statements when I was only 12 years old."

Under Mr. Cox's leadership, the company began serving a wider variety of industries, including automotive, medical, defense, aerospace, consumer goods and electronics. The manufacturer also expanded into new technologies, such as multi-spindle screw machines, camless bar automatics and CNC machining. Today, Cox Manufacturing is an ISO 9001:2000-certified company.

According to Mr. Cox, the company has been a PMPA member since 1959. "The PMPA has been instrumental in my learning the industry," he says. "I always knew that for Cox Manufacturing to sustain itself, it would have to expand into other markets."

Mr. Cox points out that he has learned a lot from the PMPA Technical Conferences. "When it was still called the National Screw Machine Products Association, PMPA used to publish a written transcript of each of the technical conferences and my dad kept those on file," he says. "When I was 20 years old, I read through every one of those transcripts. By reading and by attending the PMPA Technical Conferences, I was able to learn about technical solutions to problems I was unfamiliar with.

"The Technical Conferences have unique content that you're not going to get anywhere else," continues Mr. Cox. "We usually



send two to four people to the conference every year. We also have a number of our management and technical people on the PMPA Listserve sharing information during the rest of the year.

"PMPA's technical resources help us continually improve our operations," he says. "The world's not going to stay still, so we all have to improve. We all have to change to stay competitive. PMPA helps us stay out in front."

Mr. Cox believes that one of the biggest challenges facing the precision machined products industry is attracting young people to manufacturing careers. "We have a serious shortage of the next generation entering manufacturing jobs," he explains. "It's a crisis that's about to hit this nation as baby boomers start retiring."

Mr. Cox is chairman of a non-profit group of San Antonio area manufacturers with the mission of promoting manufacturing careers through marketing, plant tours and by using high school educators to champion the cause. "We not only have to reach the students, but also the parents, teachers and counselors," he concludes.

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