



## Member Profile

# Fordsell Machine Products Co. ....

In 2006, Fordsell Machine Products Co. reached a business milestone. The job shop manufacturer of precision-turned parts celebrated its 60th anniversary. Fordsell opened its doors in 1946 in Warren, Michigan, by Bill Sellheim and Gwayne Ford. In 1984, Michael Redfield, who had prior experience as a general manager at another screw machine company, purchased Fordsell. His main focus for the company was to use Brown & Sharpe as well as Index cam machines to generate business. In 1998, Redfield's son, David, took over the company and is the current president of Fordsell.

In the late 1990s, Mr. Redfield realized that the company did not have a future based solely on cam screw machines, and he broadened its equipment base, while relying on the advantages of the cam machines for a portion of the business. Fordsell recently won a significant contract from a customer using this blend of technology. According to Mr. Redfield, Fordsell needed both kinds of equipment to win this new work.

"Seeing these changes in the marketplace motivated me to refine my viewpoint of the company's mission," Mr. Redfield says. "I decided that we are no longer a Brown & Sharpe shop, but we are a precision machine company committed to serving customers in the hydraulics, pneumatics and medical equipment markets."

By changing its view from equipment to customers, Fordsell was not limited by the equipment to meet its customers' needs.

"New equipment can be purchased

but new customers are very difficult to find, so it made more sense for us to expand our equipment base to meet the needs of our current customers," said Redfield. "This unleashed the need for numerous new support activities such as quoting, job kitting, inspection and training, which has been critical to our current success."

move in the same direction validated the strategy.

According to Mr. Redfield, interacting with other PMPA members also helps in providing solutions to customers.

"Members help each other out to get the job done," he continues. "We not only exchange ideas, but we



Meeting its customers' needs is not only addressed through changing business strategies but also through Fordsell's PMPA membership.

According to the company, it finds its membership extremely useful and helpful for its organization because it is able to give and receive advice from others in the industry. It is a great way of exchanging ideas to improve the company.

Mr. Redfield recalled a time when the company's shop recognized the need to run more parts in fewer operations. Through Fordsell's PMPA membership, Mr. Redfield saw how other members were tackling this situation. He realized that Fordsell's situation was not unique, but rather, it was an industry trend. Seeing others

exchange services with over a dozen active members and numerous technical members. Fordsell touts this as the 'North America Network,' when communicating to its customers. It's a term I use to describe the relationships we can bring to bear when addressing a customer's problem. It makes Fordsell a more complete solution for them."

There also is a personal element to Fordsell's membership. Redfield has made many friends through his involvement with PMPA. He just served 3 years on the board of directors and has been a past district chair, which allowed him to foster both personal and business relationships. Redfield also is encouraging of employees to take advantage of



## Fordsell ...continued.....

this benefit. Walter Schwenk, a quality control manager at Fordsell, is on the PMPA quality committee, and Barry Marshall, vice president of engineering, also has been a past district chairperson.

"What I like about PMPA is that it provides opportunities for people to get involved and serve the organization," Mr. Redfield explains. "It helps employees stay on top of this ever-changing industry."

Also, he finds PMPA's conferences very useful for business owners and employees.

"My father was a great believer that the Management Update Conferences were the most beneficial for business owners, and I see that too," Mr. Redfield says. "The content is useful for owners because it is a forum for networking and provides information on new technology, leadership and human resource topics."

The Management Update Conference and the technical conferences also provide growth for employees in that they have an opportunity to obtain a big picture of the industry. Mr. Redfield uses the annual meetings as a social forum and to help him get to know other members better. "At one of the annual meetings, in talking with other members, I discovered that they had the same equipment as one of my customers who needed additional equipment capacity. I put the two in touch, so that the PMPA member could possibly help out my customer. I knew that I could do so because I trust PMPA members."

"Overall, I find the personal interaction the most beneficial to my company. By sharing ideas with other members, I continue to build a better business," said Redfield.

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## Recent PMPA Listserve Topics

PMPA members use e-mail Listserves to share ideas, solve problems, sell excess material and equipment, and learn about new business opportunities. Here is a list of topics that were recently discussed:

- Working Things Out with a "Giant Customer"
- Gainsharing
- Side Shields
- EDI
- Self Insuring Portions of Healthcare
- World-class Benchmarking Survey
- New EPA Hazardous Waste Manifest Requirements
- College Scholarships
- Positive Communication Skills
- Jury Duty
- Cost of Quality
- Quick Gear Check Fixture
- Recess Milling
- Solvents
- Electro Chemical Deburring Machines
- Source for 410 Stainless
- Masking of Parts
- Straightness of Brass Bars
- 14HSS
- Black Oxide and Special Supplemental Treatments
- Haas Supermill
- DI Water System
- Al 2011 T3 is it Available as ROHS Compliant
- Cutting A286 on Multi Spindles
- Hexavalent-Free
- Recycled Tooling
- Looking for a Plater to Provide Nickel Steel in the Midwest
- Fanuc Batteries
- Live Tool Holders
- Drill Issues
- ALCOA Aluminum
- AC Spindle Drive
- Chasers for Geometric Die Thread
- Steel Bundle Hauling and Storing
- High-speed Drilling Attachment
- E-Mail: Setting Up an Out of Office Assistant Message

Remember that you must be a PMPA member to subscribe to the PMPA Listserves and to receive the benefits.

[pmpa.org](http://pmpa.org)



To learn more about any of PMPA's networking opportunities, visit our Web site.

## PMPA Calendar Of Events

Below is the calendar of upcoming conferences and events scheduled for the 2007 program year. For the latest district/chapter meeting information, please view the Calendar of Events at [www.pmpa.org/calendar/](http://www.pmpa.org/calendar/). If you have questions about PMPA conferences or regional meetings, please contact Rob Kiener, director of marketing and communications, at (440) 526-0300 or [rkiener@pmpa.org](mailto:rkiener@pmpa.org).

PMPA Management Update Conference  
March 1-3, 2007  
Disney's Contemporary Resort  
Lake Buena Vista, Florida

PMPA 2007 National Technical Conference  
April 22-24, 2007  
Greater Columbus Convention Center  
Columbus, Ohio

PMTS - Precision Machining Technology Show  
April 24-26, 2007  
Greater Columbus Convention Center  
Columbus, Ohio