



Member Profile: Permac Industries

Founded in 1966, Permac Industries started out as a small screw machine shop with a few Brown & Sharpe machines. Today, the Minnesota-based company is a custom manufacturer of precision machined products for a range of industries.

Permac's capabilities have grown significantly over the past 40 years. In addition to the Brown & Sharpe machines, the company now has Acme Gridley six-spindle screw machines, as well as an extensive CNC department with Swiss machining capability, milling machines, two-axis lathes and vertical machining centers.

The company produces custom, precision parts for off-road and tractor hydraulics, the food and beverage industry, avionics, compressor systems and road signage applications, among other industries.

Much of Permac Industries' success can be attributed to its current president, Darlene M. Miller.



She joined the company in 1992 as an independent sales representative and purchased Permac 2 years later.

Despite having no experience in running a manufacturing operation, Ms. Miller turned the struggling company around by expanding its capabilities and customer base. In 1998, Permac moved to its own 17,000-square-foot headquarters in Burnsville, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis.

In recognition of Ms. Miller's outstanding business achievements, the U.S. Small Business Administration recently named her the Minnesota Small Business Person of the Year. Also this year, Permac Industries was one of 60 American companies that received the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Blue Ribbon Award.

Ms. Miller currently serves on the PMPA Benchmarking Committee and is a big proponent of the association's benchmarking surveys. "I use the surveys a lot, mainly the financial measures," she says. "Because so many people in the PMPA are second- or third-generation owners, they already have a great deal of knowledge of the industry. For me, the benchmarking is a good tool to measure how my company compares with the other precision machining shops. It allows me to see where we are financially.

"I use the salary surveys too," she continues. "I believe in paying a little bit higher than the norm, so it is



helpful for me to see what the salary averages are in our area, as well as nationally."

Ms. Miller also praises the PMPA Listserves. "It's like having a consultant in your pocket," she explains. "I use the Marketplace and Corporate Listserves, and my employees use the Quality and Technical Listserves. It's phenomenal that they can ask a question and then get an answer—even 20 answers—in a matter of minutes."

Now in her third year of serving on the PMPA Board of Directors, Ms. Miller states that it is PMPA's support that is the association's biggest benefit. "From the PMPA staff to the other members, everybody is so helpful," she states. "As I was first getting to know the industry, I had to ask a lot of questions, but I never felt intimidated by anyone. I can call anyone at any time, and they will help me."

Permac Industries is located at 14401 Ewing Avenue South, Burnsville, MN 55306. Phone: (952) 894-7231. Web site: www.permacindustries.com

Why Join PMPA?

B E N C H M A R K I N G

Measuring your company's performance against "best-in-class" producers of precision machined products is essential in charting the direction of your business. PMPA offers cost-effective tools to help manage this critical business function.