



Member Profile: W. H. Bagshaw Company

This year marks the 140th anniversary of the W. H. Bagshaw Company, America's oldest manufacturer of textile pins. The company was established in 1870 by Walter Henry Bagshaw, an English immigrant who landed his first pin manufacturing job at the age of nine.

He was 23 when he set up his own pin business in Lowell, Massachusetts in the heart of New England's textile region. The company's core product line – textile pins – are still used today for opening and combing fiber.

In 1950, the W. H. Bagshaw Company turned 80 years old and moved across the state line to its current location in Nashua, New Hampshire. The 100,000-square-foot facility was previously occupied by one of the area's large textile operations.

Today, W. H. Bagshaw is led by Aaron Bagshaw, the fifth generation of the family. The founder's great great grandson began working for the business during high school and joined full-time in 1995. Soon after automating the plant's manufacturing operation, he took over as president from his father David Bagshaw.

The company still manufactures the textile pins it made in 1870, but it also offers a lot more. W. H. Bagshaw is a major supplier of all types of pointed and non-pointed wire products, as well as CNC-machined parts.

A few years ago, in response to customer inquiries, the company began to diversify its product offering. "People were coming to us with all sorts of prints and parts, asking if we can make them," explains Mr. Bagshaw. "We had to capitalize on those opportunities, so we brought in our first CNC machine about five years ago. Last month, we added our 15th CNC machine.

"With our increased capabilities, we began to quote on other precision machined parts," he continues. "Today, we have a more diverse customer base and it has really worked out well for us. It has also allowed us to have an identity beyond being just a pin maker. But we still make a lot of pins."

W. H. Bagshaw pins can be found in equipment ranging from pistachio sorting machines to web offset printing presses. "Pins are not big items, but they go into multi-million-dollar machines," says Mr. Bagshaw. "If one of those machines doesn't have a good pin, it's not going to work."

Other W. H. Bagshaw products include pointed hand tools such as ice picks, hinge pins for keeping furniture together and blood-dosing needles. The company now turns precision machined parts for the aerospace, medical, dental, defense and electronics industries.

"When I first heard of PMPA, I knew they were exactly who we are now," says Mr. Bagshaw. "We're a precision machined parts manufacturer. PMPA has been a tremendous resource for us, especially when we first began expanding our product line."

He credits the PMPA Listserve with helping him get answers to many of his questions. "The Listserve has been great," says Mr. Bagshaw. "Our quality manager uses the Listserve for ideas and to help other members. When we have a question, even something out of the ordinary, we always get an answer. There's always another

machine shop that has done the exact same thing we're doing. Whether it's a question on materials...quality...anything, there are voices out there that will get back to us."

Mr. Bagshaw also praises the PMPA Web site at pmpa.org. "There are a lot of valuable tools available through the association's Web site. Tools such as capital equipment expenditure calculators...those are all very useful."

In February, Mr. Bagshaw attended his first PMPA Management Update Conference and says he came back with some great contacts and information. "It's always interesting to be in a room with your competitors," he says. "Half of the guys there probably see the same prints I see. But it's exciting. We're not giving away secrets; we're just sharing ideas."

Mr. Bagshaw also points to the benefits of the various data PMPA offers its members. "They have some excellent market data," he continues. "I've used some of the PMPA benchmarking data – things like economical trends and hiring statistics. I like how they relate the data to our industry. That information is very helpful when we're trying to gauge where we're at in the precision machined products industry."

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