

Increased Market Share Helps FPC Have Best Year Ever in 2002

FPC Corporation of Wauconda, Illinois sells fastening products through distributors as well as to the retail market. Michael Kamis is President of FPC and Pat Kamins is Vice President. Their product lines include hot melt glue and glue guns, staples and staple guns, rivets and rivet tools. They have become a low-cost leader in these market areas and they are making big inroads into their competition's turf.

New Product — Surebonder® Blind Rivets

FPC recently introduced a new line of blind rivets and rivet tools that they are offering to fastener distributors. This product line, called Surebonder®, includes:

- Blind Rivets
- Rivet Tools
- Threaded Rubber Inserts
- Threaded Jack Inserts

They offer open end, closed end, multiple grip, and expandable secondary head rivets. They have dome, counter sunk and large flange headed rivets. The rivets are available in aluminum, steel, stainless steel, and copper styles. Because each overseas manufacturer specializes in a particular rivet type, there are many manufacturers necessary to accomplish their broad product line. When a special application comes along, it is FPC's commitment to find the most capable manufacturer to produce a quality product. Specialty rivets such as secondary head, split, and custom colored rivets require the right manufacturer with a thorough quality control program. FPC makes this possible with over 20 years of import experience.

Their rivet tools include everything from air/hydraulic rivet tools to a complete line of hand rivet tools ranging from the inexpensive DIY to the high-end professionals.

New Product Line, Same Dedication

The same philosophy applies to this new venture. They are positioned to be the low cost leader in this market as well. When Michael and Pat Kamins' father, Eugene started the company in 1968, they operated

as a rivet and eyelet distributor, selling to OEMs. Now they are a major importer and have many manufacturers making products to their high quality standards. Their marketing strategy for this product line is to sell strictly through distributors.

They know the needs of the distributor, since they have been there themselves. They have built close relationships with top quality overseas vendors. FPC maintains an extensive in-depth stock in their 45,000 square foot warehouse in Wauconda, Illinois. They have 47 employees involved in everything from the actual manufacture of the Hot Melt Adhesive to the processing, handling, repackaging and selling of their various

products. FPC will accept orders with no minimums and they are able to deliver quickly since virtually all products are maintained in stock at all times.

Narrow Product Lines; Extensive Expertise

During a recent interview, Mike Kamins, President, explained why they have been so successful. "We have purposely limited our product lines for two reasons," he said. "We feel that we must be true experts in any product that we offer and we must be able to assure a consistent flow of product for our customers. Our lead times are often three months or more, which means that we must do some rather sophisticated inventory forecasting. The forecasts must include seasonality and they

must also allow for growth, or decline, in the market demand for each item."

End-to-End Integration of Systems

Mr. Kamins said, "Our old computer system did not provide for this and it was very limiting to us. We would always have to 'purge' the data so we never had history in the main system. We would take the reports at the end of each month and have someone key the information into Excel in order to try to keep meaningful historical data. This was tedious, time consuming, expensive, and error prone.



Surebonder® Rivet Gun

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"When we set out to replace that system in October 1998, we wanted a system that would provide us with extensive history," he continued. "We also wanted the flexibility to tailor the use of the information to our specific needs. After an extensive search of available systems, we chose The BUSINESS EDGE System from Computer Insights. With this new system, we were able to develop our proprietary Inventory Forecasting System in Microsoft Access. All of the information that we need is generated directly out of our BUSINESS EDGE System. The result is that we have a fully integrated system that maintains the entire company database. At the same time, it feeds our internal system that embodies our 30 years of experience. It is the best of both worlds. We have a fully supportable 'package' program and the ability to control the custom touches that we need in-house. It has proven to be a very cost effective way to operate."

He stated, "With our retail customers, we do business using EDI so that our computer system, The BUSINESS EDGE, talks directly to their systems. Each of our customers uses a different set of standards or at least a different variation on one of the same standards, so we have to tailor the EDI to the needs of each customer. Since the information is readily available from The BUSINESS EDGE, we are able to do this with a minimum of hassle."

Pat Kamins added, "Michaels, a large chain crafts

store, sends us an order at the beginning of the season for each of their 700 stores. This is sent to us in a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. We simply import the information and The BUSINESS EDGE creates 700 separate orders. It saves us a ton of time. Another major customer sends us EDI orders for 60 items per store. These are uploaded to The BUSINESS EDGE in minutes. They require an ASN (Advance Ship Notice) and an EDI Invoice as well. The BUSINESS EDGE 'talks' to our EDI software and the loop is closed. This is absolutely required if you are going to do business in the retail industry today."

Quality — Performance — Expertise

The message is clear. Do it right. Have it in stock. Know what you are talking about.

For more information about the Surebender line of rivets and rivet tools, contact FPC Corp., Michael Kamins, President; or Pat Kamins, Vice President; 355 Hollow Hill, Wauconda, IL 60084; phone 847-487-4583; fax 847-487-0174; or visit their website at www.surebender.com.

For more information about The BUSINESS EDGE, contact Computer Insights, Inc., Dennis R. Cowhey, President, 108 South Third St., Bloomingdale, IL 60108; phone 800-539-1233; or visit their website at www.ci-inc.com. 