

# Welding together a better community

**M**any small businesses have found themselves struggling to survive during these troubled economic times. But some have managed to achieve the seemingly impossible task of increasing revenue. South Bend-based Manufacturing Technology Inc., or MTI, finds itself among them.

"We've seen tremendous success (in 2009)," said Dan Adams, who, along with his brother Bob and sister Jennifer, owns the company. "This was a record for sales and profits."

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce recently honored the company as the state's Small Business of the Year for 2009.

The award recognizes a Hoosier company that best demonstrates practices in business sustainability and growth, commitment to employees and a track record of community involvement.

MTI has proven itself to be a worthy recipient.

Originally a tool and die shop that provided engineering services to such local companies as Studebaker, MTI has steadily forged partnerships that have allowed it to rise to worldwide prominence.

Under the leadership of the Adamses' father, MTI branched out into rotary friction welding, a process for metals and thermoplastic materials in which two members are joined by rubbing the mating faces together under high pressure.

"Our acquisition of friction welding really changed the course of the business," Dan Adams said.

Now a fourth-generation family-owned business with around 100 employees, MTI primarily builds machines that carry out the friction welding process. Following the precedent set by their ancestors, however, the Adamses have managed to broaden the scope of services that the company offers.

"We were totally rotary friction welding, and we've had the opportunity to expand into linear and stir friction welding to the point where we're the only company in the world that offers all three of the major forms of friction welding," Bob Adams said.

The company's reach has allowed it other opportunities to expand in recent years. In 2005, MTI started a joint venture in England to cover the European market. Expansion into India followed in late 2008.

"We traditionally have been a 30 percent export company, but in the last three or four years, we've been more like a 75 or 80 percent export company," Dan Adams said.

MTI has experienced sales growth of more than 300 percent in the last five years. Such an accelerated pace of business, however, has not interfered with the company's commitment to the community that has allowed it to flourish.

In 2009 the company partnered with Granger Community Church at the Monroe Circle Community Center. The center's mission is to guide individuals living in low-income, subsidized housing to self-sufficiency. MTI took part in a pilot program for the center that allows these individuals the opportunity to turn the skills they've learned into firsthand experience.

"The community center is within walking distance from our company," Dan Adams said. "We realize that if we can help change the neighborhood around us, it will make everyone's lives better."

"We want to make sure we're making our community a better place to live."

MTI also gives back to the community through various school-related activities and through the Junior Achievement. The company's general manager and chief financial officer teach classes for the program.

Such direct involvement in educating and supporting the community seems fitting for a company that touches it indirectly in so many other ways.

"One thing that people probably don't realize is that the products that are made from our equipment are in their homes and cars, and in the airplanes that they fly on," Dan Adams said. "We touch a lot of different industries."



## Get in touch

For more information, contact Manufacturing Technology Inc., 1702 W. Washington St., South Bend; call (574) 233-9490, or visit [www.mtiwelding.com](http://www.mtiwelding.com).

# MTI named Small Business of the Year by Indiana Chamber

profile

Tribune Photo/GENE KAISER

Dan and Bob Adams are fourth-generation owners of MTI. The business was named Small Business of the Year for 2009 by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce.

