

Hubbard Supply Co.

ABOUT US

Hubbard Supply Co. is an innovative, solutions-oriented industrial distributor of products and value-added services designed to enhance customer competitiveness, efficiencies and profitability.

The company has retained a reputation for its products and service for nearly 150 years, and it has expanded to meet the growing needs of customers as it survived The Great Depression, two World Wars and the economic downturn of recent years. Hubbard Supply Co. provides solutions to help customers streamline the procurement process, reduce total inventory and increase workplace efficiency.

What started as a small hardware store is now one of the leading industrial and electronic suppliers in Michigan. Today, Hubbard Supply Co. has five branch offices, two distribution centers and eight partner distribution centers and conducts business in all of Michigan as well as northern Indiana and Ohio.

HISTORY

In 1865, H.B. Newton and George W. Hubbard opened Newton & Hubbard Hardware Store in Flint, Mich. The business prospered and five years later, Hubbard bought out his partner and renamed the store Hubbard Hardware.

Much of Hubbard's success was attributed to the personal attention he gave his customers. He was known to arrive early, before the store opened, to attend to paperwork and business matters. He would then spend the rest of the day at the door, personally greeting and interacting with his customers.

After Hubbard's death in 1937, the Burrough family, a prominent local business family Hubbard's daughter had married into, became major stockholders in the company and took the reins. The Burrough family retained the company name and added an industrial supply division before selling it to Charles "Chuck" Shelley, a local businessman, in 1963.

Shelley wanted to capitalize on the growing industrial market and decided to close Hubbard's retail and wholesale divisions to focus on the industrial supply division. This move pushed the company in a new direction, and the name was changed to Hubbard Industrial Supply. Shelley also convinced his son-in-law, Robert Fuller, to join the company. When Shelley retired in 1977, Fuller took over as president and continued the momentum Shelley started by looking for growth opportunities. Soon after, he opened a regional distribution center in Saginaw, the first of many expansions. Branch offices in Lansing and Livonia were opened and later closed as the business changed once again.

In 1993, Hubbard Industrial Supply acquired Shand Electronics, an electronics supplier in Flint. Shand Electronics operated as a separate business entity until 1999 when the

company was merged with Hubbard Industrial Supply. The name was then changed to Hubbard Supply Co.

In 2004, Hubbard Supply Co. acquired Kendall Industrial Supply of Battle Creek, Mich. This move expanded Hubbard Supply Co.'s geographical reach to the west side of Michigan, adding branches in Battle Creek, Benton Harbor and Traverse City.

In April 2007, ownership changed hands once again when Jeff Bigelow and Tim Brooks, current CEO and chief operating officer, respectively, purchased the company from Fuller, keeping it a family-owned, private business.

Hubbard Supply Co. is a member of two national industrial cooperatives, Affiliated Distributors and Edge Inc., as well as an owner member of supplyFORCE and partner with 3M. These cooperatives combine the purchasing power of distributors across the country and provide access to more than 3,500 manufacturers, allowing better pricing and product availability to be passed on to the customers.

LEADERSHIP

JEFF BIGELOW, CEO

Shortly after graduating from the University of Michigan in 1992, Jeff Bigelow joined Hubbard Supply Co. as the program development manager. After several years of jointly managing the business under its prior ownership, Bigelow and business partner Tim Brooks acquired Hubbard Supply Co. in 2007.

In addition to being a member of the Industrial Supply Association Board of Directors, Bigelow also is chairman of the Industrial Supply Divisional Board of Affiliated Distributors and a member of the Membership Committee for the Industrial Supply Association, the supplyForce board, the Public Policy Committee for the Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce and the campaign committee for the United Way of Genesee County.

He lives in Flushing, Mich. with his wife, Stephanie, and two children, Brandon, 25, and Megan, 15.

TIM BROOKS, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Tim Brooks' experience with Hubbard goes back nearly 30 years. In 1984, he graduated from Baker College with an associate's degree in electronic technology and joined Shand Electronics, which was owned by the same family as Hubbard Supply Co. He worked his way up in the company from the manager of the electronics retail store to account manager for Delphi, which became the company's largest customer.

Brooks became the general manager at Hubbard Supply Co. in the Shand Electronics division in 1993 and served in that capacity until 1999. During this time, he also completed his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Michigan, Flint. In 1999, he was brought on to serve as Hubbard Supply Co.'s chief operating officer, a position he maintained even after he and Jeff Bigelow purchased the company in 2007.

Hubbard Supply Co. runs in the family as Brooks' wife, Julie, has worked as the company's human resources director since 2001. Tim and Julie Brooks have two children and two grandchildren with a third due in December. Tim Brooks and his sons, Jeff and Joshua, are all licensed pilots with multiple ratings. Other than flying the friendly skies, Tim Brooks also is a marathon runner, logging 1,500 miles annually and a total of eight marathons and hundreds of smaller races.

Q&A

Q: In layman's terms, what is an industrial supplier?

A: We are a hardware store, basically, that caters to manufacturing and commercial customers. That means anyone who is making anything – automobiles, automobile parts and components, general metal fabrication, furniture, pharmaceuticals, food processing – or basically any customer that is manufacturing anything is a customer an industrial supplier would focus on. Companies like ours aren't retail like your typical hardware stores, but we are a hardware store for manufacturing companies. Anything a manufacturing company or commercial customer (office building, university, etc.) needs, they will order from an industrial supply company.

Q: How is the industrial supply industry tied to the automotive industry?

A: There's a strong correlation between the two in Michigan. Automotive manufacturing is very strong in our region and so are the component parts suppliers. There are many of those types of companies that are in our region, and more specifically, our state. An additional part of that is that many of those companies have a lot of research and development facilities in our region. At those facilities, engineers dream up the new car designs and model them and then send them to the manufacturer to be built.

Q: Hubbard Supply Co. is an independent supplier verses being a big box name. What does that mean exactly?

A: We're privately held, independently owned and typically have a local or regional footprint, although we ship around the country.

Q: Why is being independent beneficial to the customer?

A: The biggest reason is the flexibility as an independent distributor to meet the needs efficiently and effectively of our manufacturing companies. They all have different needs. Independent companies can usually respond quicker and more efficiently to the needs of those companies. Large, publicly owned companies can't adjust as easily.

For example, if a company needs a pink marker for a specific reason, many corporate companies can only give them what they have, which are, say, red, blue and black markers. If we don't have the pink markers on hand, we will seek them out and make sure the customer gets the right product to fit their needs. If we find out the marker, for instance, has to write on metal, we will make sure we find one that writes on metal.

We're a solutions-driven company that helps customers identify and solve problems and delivers solutions and production-related cost savings.

Q: Why was it important to you to keep the business family owned and operated?

A: It was important for us to do that to keep the business independent. For cohesiveness for our customers and employees and for our business' future, it would be better to continue to keep it an independent distributor.

Q: What drew you to purchase Hubbard Supply Co.?

Jeff: I had been working for the business for about 15 years and had a passion for the industry I had developed a career in. It was like the opportunity was meant for me.

Tim: My work ethic has always been to think and work like an owner. When the opportunity came to buy the company, it seemed as a natural progression to become an owner since I had prepared for it for many years.

Q: There aren't many businesses that have survived The Great Depression, two World Wars and the economic downturn of recent years. What about Hubbard Supply Co. has kept it alive since 1865?

A: I think the key to its success is the ability to adapt to the environment at every one of those junctures. The company was always fortunate enough to have leadership that adapted to the change of the environment that was presented to them. We've been largely successful, but we'll be continually challenged. We are always listening to our customers and responding to the needs of the market as best we can.

We're also fortunate to have a very tenured and strong team of individuals that make our business a success. We have 100 employees and they are as passionate as we are. Our average tenure of employees is about 16 years. It goes all the way from 40-plus years to a year or so at the company. The average tenure is heavily weighted in the area of 15 years and more. What that tells us is people come to work for our company and stay for a career.

Q: Your predecessors were always looking out for new opportunities. Do you share the same vision for the company?

A: Absolutely. It was the original local hardware store for a neighborhood in 1865, which evolved into a three-story department store, including a retail lumber yard. The lumbering community gave the opportunity to build a wood carriage, which began the construction of the metal carriage, which led to the automobile industry in our backyard. They reshaped what was the new industry, which was the manufacturing industry, and became an industrial supply company. Everything is about change. The dynamic is changing all the time. The key to continued success is all about adapting and having a vision for change.

Q: What do you think is the future of the industrial supply industry?

A: For the independent companies, there have been a lot of consolidations along with a lot of growth. Those companies that have been successful should continue to grow. There will be smaller industrial distributors, but they will be stronger independent industrial distributors once it vets itself out. There are plenty of competitive forces that work in our space – the Internet and Amazon.com – that challenge our industry. We are working against those competitors to carve out our niches and develop deeper relationships with our customers. Those who can do that will continue to be successful, and we're pretty confident we can do that.

FAQs

What does Hubbard Supply Co. do?

What our customers use us for most is to help them solve problems. They're asking us for the hard stuff. The stuff no one else would think about or understand. We are the Google for the industrial supply industry. They ask us for stuff people don't think about, and we go out and find it. When it comes to buying the right product for the application, you need a partner. The product is just a by-product of the transaction.

Oftentimes, where a customer starts is miles apart from where they end up when they're looking for a product. It's our job to get them where they need to be.

Why use an industrial supply company?

It's the technical capability for the company to make sure whatever the customer is in search for, they get the correct product and the one that helps them do better business in the space they have. Their competencies are many things, but their competencies are not things like industrial supplies or maintenance repair and operations materials.

While we recognize they are experts at what they do, a big box solution can't, won't and chooses not to provide the customer with the best solution to the problem they're trying to solve. They can do it sometimes, but an independent distributor will always provide the customer more flexibility.

PRODUCTS

Abrasives	Instrumentation	Power tools
Absorbents	Janitorial supplies	Precision tools
Adhesives and tapes	Lab supplies	Safety/PPE
Batteries	Labels	Static control
Cabinets and enclosures	Machine tools	Storage equipment
Chemicals	Maintenance supplies	Testing equipment
Contractor supplies	Material handling equipment	Tool and die supplies
Electronic components	Office products	Welding supplies
Electronic Tools	Packaging	Wire and cable
Hand tools	Paper products	
Industrial hardware		

SERVICES AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

Bar coding	Commodity management
Custom data reporting	Integrated supply (HDI)
Savings solutions	3PIMM services
Consolidated invoicing	Customized e-commerce solution (HDG)
Warranty and repair	Point-of-use
On-site staffing and support	Vending machines
Kitting	Customized inventory
Training and inspections	Crib and spot buy management software
Inventory reduction and consolidation	

LOCATIONS

Corporate Offices

901 W. Second Street
Flint, MI 48503
Phone: 810- 234-8681
Toll Free: 800-875-4811

Saginaw Sales & Distribution

3900 E. Washington
Saginaw, MI 48601
Phone: 989-753-2453
Toll Free: 800-875-4812

Battle Creek Sales & Distribution

4560 W. Dickman Road
Battle Creek, MI 49037
Phone: 269-965-2211
Toll Free: 800-632-9606

Partner Distribution Centers

Boston
Harrisburg, Penn.
Columbus
Charlotte, NC
Atlanta
Orlando, Fla.

Carol Stream, Ill
Minneapolis
Kansas City, Mo.
Muskogee, Okla.
Houston
Dallas

Birmingham, Ala.
Grand Rapids, Mich.
Visalia, Calif.
Denver
Los Angeles
Portland, Ore.

ARTWORK * INTERVIEWS

- Images are available in all formats (i.e. .jpg, .tiff & .eps) and can be e-mailed or provided as a custom art disk.
- Interviews with Jeff Bigelow and Tim Brooks can be scheduled

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