

# Overcoming adversity: coping with change

Techmetals, Inc., Dayton, OH, was founded in 1968 and began as Miami Precision Chrome, Inc. The founders of the original company were Dan Brockman and John Stickel. The shop was started as a side job to supplement college



*A lot of support from my wife. My wife Gail, has been a help and support through all the time it took to start Techmetals and especially through all the catastrophes. Gail's role in the business is one of support to me as she is a career Paramedic and nurse.*

expenses. It was at this time that Dan Brockman wrote their first strategic plan. Their mission was clear and still remains the same today—growth through fulfillment of customers' needs in their specialized area of enhancing and extending the life of metal parts.

By January, 1973 John Stickel had left the company and Dan gained a new partner, a longtime friend, Mike Frantz. They moved into a larger and more permanent location to meet the ever increasing demands of their plating jobs. The new location was home for 11 years.

## Catastrophe and Perseverance

September 26, 1984 brought about the most devastating event a small business could face. A fire in the main office and shop area of Miami Precision Chrome put the facility completely out of operation, and totally destroyed the main offices. Miraculously, no customer parts were lost in the fire, and we were able to double up in the two existing buildings... the business survived. The following weeks and months brought out many strong characteristics and efforts by the entire staff enabling this crisis to be overcome.

*Call Techmetals for a folder on what to do after a fire.*

In February of 1986, a new hard chrome facility was complet-

ed. This facility also housed the grinding shop, as well as the new offices. The new plant enabled Techmetals to have two of the most modern engineering metal finishing facilities in the Midwest, with a total floor space of over 40,000 square feet, and the ability to handle parts in all areas up to 12 feet in length and weighing over 10,000 pounds.

## Present Capabilities

The last few years have seen even more growth. In 1988 Techmetals took the technology it used to build one of the first completely automated hard chrome lines to build a completely computer controlled automatic electroless nickel line. This line contained all of the precleaning tanks required to handle different metals, plus six electroless nickel plating tanks. The main

advantage for the installation of this line, as seen by Techmetals, was market driven. It fulfilled the need to control the process and give customers consistent quality.

Such innovations have helped Techmetals enjoy a position of high status in the field of metal finishing. It currently competes locally and nationally for its work. It is dominant in the aerospace and machine tool industries and the company has enjoyed a growth of 20% per year, even during the recession era. Continued growth will be closely aligned to its abilities to remain competitive in today's service market. Techmetals' goal of being the best engineering metal finisher can only be met with continued improvements in the organization. This applies not only to equipment and material, but also to the human resources that are needed.

In 1989 a Continuous Improvement Program was started along with a Training Center. In 1992 the automatic line was updated with a programmed hoist providing more flexibility for process improvement. Also an additional 20,000 square foot building for future expansion was purchased to increase capacity for complete manufacturing and repair of cylinders.

Plans for 1993 include a shop floor data collection system to improve processes and more accurately collect cost data. An additional automatic programmed hoist is also in the budget. ●

## QualityControl

Quality is everything. This philosophy is shared by every member of the Techmetals team.

QC Capabilities: compliance to MIL-1-45208, MIL-STD-45622, permascope, x-ray fluorescence, profilometer, computerized controllers, ionchromatography, all physical dimensions and wet laboratory capabilities.

Military and AMS process specifications: QQC-320, QQN-290, MIL-26074, MIL-C-23422, AMS2404, AMS2405, AMS2406 and many others. ●