

Precision Roll Grinders' New President Predicts Strong Future

Jim Manley took over the helm of Precision Roll Grinders at a time that is economically challenging, not only to the paper industry, but also to virtually every company across the globe. With many years of experience behind him, Manley has all the tools to lead PRG into the future.

Before taking over as President, Manley was vice president of operations responsible for PRG's three facilities. He also has served as General Manager at both the Carrollton and Lewisport plants.

PRG has earned a solid reputation as a quality leader in the industry. Manley's first challenge is communicating how that "quality" translates to "value." Manley, along with everyone else at Precision believes that value can be a unique competitive advantage for its customers—many of whom have been forced to move price to a much higher priority in the decision-making process.

"Our concern is that we are providing the greatest value for the customer. There's more to consider than just the cost of the repair service," Manley emphasizes. "In the paper industry downtime can cost thousands of dollars per hour. Our customers can't afford that."

Guy Martel from Technocell in Canada has been a PRG customer for two years. He also states PRG was selected to meet the company's high-quality requirement. "PRG has given Technocell the added value we



PRG President Jim Manley (left) and Superintendent Steve Csencsits (right) review a customer's job on the company's Super Calendar Roll.

were looking for by analyzing our needs and making sure the paper quality we produce meets those needs."

"We make sure our rolls are of the highest quality," Manley asserts. "If they aren't, the product our customer ends up making is rejected product. If he has to replace that roll with an old one, he has to reduce production speed. And there's the downtime to replace the rolls. Plus, if our customer is late shipping to his customer, that customer could decide to go to someone else. It's easy to see how the cheapest price up front could become the most expensive route in the long run."

The value-added services Manley refers to start with higher tolerances and tighter finishing requirements. But he is quick to point out that product quality is only the beginning at PRG. "Our customers need to experience value from all services — from tolerance, to accuracy, to communication, to the documentation provided, the tracking of roll records that enables them to offload internal paperwork. It's the small details that make it easier for our customers to deal with us."

According to the maintenance coordinator at a major carbonless paper manufacturer, "There are so many things they do that I consider value added, starting with flexibility. PRG is able to make adjustments to our schedule, or to our specifications. They're always giving us new ideas, new ways to do things, making rolls run longer in the machine, and developing specs to do that."

Overall reduction of costs in an operation can be achieved, according to Manley, by longer life, better quality of paper being produced, less reject, higher grades and the prices they can get for their products. "That's what our customers expect us to help them achieve," he says, and then adds, "and we love meeting and exceeding our customers' expectations."

To fulfill its commitment to customer service, Precision's operations are always ready to accommodate a customer's needs. The facilities are ready to work 24 hours a day and weekends to make sure rolls are delivered on time.

"Our locations are very strategic to keep delivery times short and transportation costs low for our customers," Manley points out. "And our expert staff is

Precision Roll Grinders was founded in 1970, and has facilities in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Carrollton, Georgia, and Lewisport, Kentucky, with a fourth facility slated to open in 2004 in Texarkana, Arkansas. The facilities are dedicated exclusively to roll grinding, roll repair and rebuilds, roll manufacturing and related services. PRG regrinds and refurbishes the rolls, reels, drums and dryers that are a critical part of today's paper mill processes.

always ready to go where we're needed. Technicians with specific expertise travel to customer locations and provide seminars on operations, maintenance and troubleshooting."

That commitment to solving problems is the reason Tim Fisher, Project Engineer at American Fiber Resources, started working with PRG. According to Fisher, "We were having severe problems with our machine; they came in and talked to us, and we liked their solutions. They suggested a different option for our machine to make it run better. They even recommended we call a different company to have the machine aligned and that helped solve a lot of our problems. In fact, uptime improved from almost 80% to 95%."

Precision's workforce is "senior, stable across all facilities, and very skilled and highly knowledgeable," Manley asserts. Seniority is high, and turnover is low. Proprietary processes and ongoing training have always been a high priority, especially as new equipment is added and new technology brought on line.

A large part of our investment, Manley points out, is bringing new technology to the marketplace. "Over the 34 years we've been in business, processing technology has advanced substantially. The upgrades we're making on our machines weren't even available a year or two ago." But Precision feels new technology is providing significant advantages in productivity that will provide significant benefits to its clients.

In summarizing his direction for the future, Manley has definitive answers. "Quality... delivery... price — they're always the primary factors in our customers' minds. I wish people who think we are just the highest price would give us a call. Let us talk about the value added. We may or may not be the highest price," he states firmly, "but we'll always be the highest value" ■