



Expanding Opportunities

Employees Gain New Opportunities for Growth

Founded in 1962, Creavey Seal originally provided high-performance seals for America's new space exploration program. In the decades that followed, the company added new o-ring designs, materials, and processes to its product offerings, enabling it to design products for applications ranging from space travel to protecting pumps, filters, compressors, vessel lids, and pressure-regulated valves in a variety of industries.

A HISTORY OF GROWTH FROM ACQUISITION

"I joined Creavey Seal in 1986 when I left the U.S. Navy," said Frank Shimo, foreman for Creavey. "At that time there were eight employees and we were working for the company's founder." By 2005 there were 70 employees producing Teflon-encapsulated o-rings and specialized seals with Viton, silicone, and stainless steel cores, in sizes that ranged from 1/4" to 70 feet in diameter. As foreman, Shimo oversaw the production line, managing manufacturing and hiring of production employees.

Unknown to Creavey Seal employees, the company was being prepared for sale. Due diligence and negotiations had been performed and almost completed so discreetly that news of the impending sale was a shock to most employees. Would the plant be closed? Would employees keep their jobs or be forced to move? Would they be replaced by workers from the purchasing company? Several employees who had lost prior jobs at other companies as the result of acquisitions decided to proactively seek other opportunities, rather than risk being laid off.

"Everyone was concerned about how their jobs would be affected by the sale," said Shimo. "Many people feared that they would lose their jobs. However, that did not happen. In fact, my responsibilities have expanded, giving me more exposure to operations and how the business is run."

ANTICIPATING MORE GROWTH

The transaction was closed in April 2005, and business continued without interruption at a brisk pace. Today, Shimo's role includes more supervisory and decision-making responsibilities for production, inventory management, process improvement, payroll, and financial reporting.

"I've gained a deeper appreciation of business operations and meeting customers' needs," said Shimo. "From receipt of a customer's initial order, to meeting accelerated delivery schedules and anticipating spikes in demand—I've been challenged to grow in my abilities. The process has been rewarding."

Shimo notes that Creavey Seal will now be teamed with a recently acquired Sanders Industries company, Northern Engineering—which had been Creavey's primary competitor. Together, they will form a new division that focuses exclusively on engineered sealing products. This new transition initially renewed concerns about job security and changing roles among employees. However, divisional management has worked diligently to reassure employees and keep them apprised of impending changes, so morale is strong. The company is now well positioned to seek out new customers, expand into new market segments, and support high-volume production.

"A transition is always unsettling, but you have to look at it from a positive perspective," said Shimo. "Company growth results in growth for all of us—in experience, salaries, benefits, and opportunity for the future."