

Longevity, both with employees and customers, is key for Sanmina-SCI

By Heather Rothbauer-Wanish

The Sanmina-SCI site in Turtle Lake has seen changes and building additions during its 35-year history. One thing that has not changed is the commitment of employees. In fact, employee longevity is one of the ways the company has maintained its success.

Program Manager Cookie Frankenberg, a 32-year veteran with the company, views employee longevity as an important factor in the success of the computer injection molding and aluminum die casting facility, as well as performing precision CNC machining, painting and electro-mechanical assembly. “Our people have always gotten along well and are a close-knit group,” Frankenberg says. On average, employees have been with the company 14 years, with many employees serving the company since its inception in 1974.

“The company grew quickly because of the good benefits and pay program offered,” Frankenberg says. Sanmina-SCI in Turtle Lake now employs many family member groups; these individuals are rewarded with stable employment and an opportunity for promotion.

In recent years, the biggest challenge has been from global competition. Sanmina-SCI has utilized its in-house high-technology engineering practices, design collaboration, fabrication and automation to compete against other suppliers worldwide.

Frankenberg explains that Sanmina-SCI has implemented a Lean Manufacturing program to eliminate wasteful processes in its plant. The lean practices have allowed the company to lower production costs and gain clients.

“We will continue to use our lean manufacturing program and apply those concepts to our facility,” Frankenberg explains.



The die casting division of the company continues to focus on heavier-weight projects, where the physical weight of the product prohibits competition due to high freight costs. In addition, the company has developed alliances with global competitors in both Asia and Mexico. Sanmina-SCI was recently awarded projects based on price, even while in competition with off-shore and Mexico competitors.

“There will continue to be a lot of pressure from overseas competitors; we will look for opportunities where there are high-technology and high-engineering needs,” Frankenberg says.

In addition to a high level of customer service, Sanmina-SCI offers engineering support and unsolicited design modifications to customers. The company maintains contact with past clients and works closely with them to develop future projects.

By showing a genuine interest in the company and delivering on its promises, the company has good working relationships with customers such as Kawasaki, Motorola, 3M, Cisco, Honda, Intel and Johnson Controls.

Frankenberg expects Sanmina-SCI to grow well into the future. “We are a smaller-size company in a small town in northwestern Wisconsin; however, we have a very progressive and intelligent company here,” she concludes.