

Supplier Touts Benefits of Staying Small

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There's a new kid on the block—well, maybe not so new. After 20 years with Ace Electric, Robbie Sullivan transitioned this spring to help create ACCUMAX, a manufacturer and distributor to the electrical rebuilding industry located in Joplin, Mo.

Sullivan says he's often asked why he started a new business with the overall downturn the rebuilding industry has experienced in recent years. Questions intensify when he explains his plan is to stay small.

"This industry is shrinking in some areas; however there are also fewer suppliers. I believe if you stick to what you know, work hard, provide service and a good product, then customers will appreciate the option of buying from a small supplier," he said. "Call it finding a niche."

ACCUMAX manufactures and distributes a full line of solenoids and starter drives, as well as small switches. They also remanufacture starter drives.

"We have coverage for import, late domestic, agricultural, industrial, heavy duty, and passenger car. We also offer small switches, continuous duty switches, and series parallel. Our focus is to be a one-stop shop for drives and solenoids," said Sullivan. "Our customer base is comprised of OE and OE aftermarket, traditional market distributors, large rebuilders, and several nationwide distributors providing service to the rebuilder."

"There are no secrets as to who our competitors are. Every industry has competition and every customer has preferences and choices. I believe in friendly competition as long as you work within limitations. What makes us different I believe is the small company service and personal touch we provide."

The ACCUMAX name has quite a literal meaning, but it helps to know your root words.

"ACCUMAX comes from 'accu' meaning precise, precision and 'max'

from the word maximum; maximum precision auto parts," he said.

Sullivan "grew up" in the rebuilding industry. After starting with Ace Electric in 1984 putting together armatures and field coils on the assembly line, he worked his way through the ranks to become product manager. This customer service, sales, distribution, technical, and management experience have all come together with ACCUMAX.

"I cannot give enough thanks to many of the people I was able to work with, work for, and become acquainted with. I am thankful to customers who worked with me as I was learning the parts side and to those who always gave me new opportunities and opened doors allowing me to further my career," he said. "It is true what they say—it gets in your blood."

Sullivan said his employees are some of the best in the business, and he strives not to take that for granted.

"Most have several years of manufacturing and warehousing experience, so they all know what needs to be done with very little supervision. I do my best to keep all of the employees very involved in the company and up to date, a sort of open book management. Every employee at ACCUMAX will tell you they feel they are a part of something

and not just another number," he said.

"One of my internal goals is to provide a pleasant working environment where employees enjoy coming to work, work as a team, and know that they make a difference. We emphasize for everyone to remember that every part they touch goes on someone's car, truck or tractor."

