

MIDWEST FUEL INJECTION: A TEAM COMMITTED TO QUALITY IN REMAN AND SERVICE

BY: M. DIANE MCCORMICK

At its core, so to speak, Midwest Fuel Injection leverages remanufacturing to the highest industry standards plus distribution capabilities in order to offer customers tremendous value and options.

“We partner with people to offer a top-quality product, knowledge, competitive pricing, and great service from quote to core return,” said Executive Vice President Kurtis Howey. “Our ultimate goal is to be easy to do business with and thinking about the customer always, and not doing what is easiest for Midwest Fuel Injection.”

Midwest Fuel Injection (MWFI) was founded in 1981 by Geret and Ben Seidel. Now based in a state-of-the-art headquarters in Bolingbrook, Illinois, MWFI remains the largest division within the family-owned Seidel Diesel Group (SDg) and its 14 locations nationwide.

Respect not only for customers but for the team members who devote their talents and energies to the enterprise remains a hallmark of the entire group.

Before and throughout the pandemic, MWFI has continued to become the go-to place for all turbocharger needs. MWFI is a Garrett Advancing Motion Master Distributor, and since the acquisitions of Turbo Exchange and Bell Turbo, is now a distributor for Borg Warner and for Holset Turbochargers. These acquisitions allowed MWFI to offer a remanufactured solution to customers when supply chain was limited throughout the pandemic. This was another example of decisions made at MWFI with the customer in mind.

Those strategic moves, following years of growth in fuel injection, expanded the MWFI portfolio, adding versatility and customer choices to the mix. The company’s commitment to quality is captured in the creed established by founder Geret Seidel and upheld by CEO/President Ben Seidel: “Too frugal to buy cheap.” To MWFI, it means committing to top quality in remanufacturing, products, and service, without cutting corners.

On the remanufacturing side, MWFI was in the first group of 14 companies achieving MERA Manufactured Again Certification in 2017. With the certification, MWFI attests to meeting ISO 14001:2015 standards, operating its remanufacturing facilities and using the latest technology and techniques to reach the same quality standards as new manufacturing facilities. As a Manufactured Again company, the firm restores original

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products in factory settings to like-new, OEM specs through a controlled, reproducible, and sustainable process.

(For MWFI's video celebrating 2022 Global Reman Day, visit www.seideldieselgroup.com/?s=Reman+day.)

Remanufacturing gives new life to fuel injectors, fuel pumps, and turbochargers that remain viable. The customer gets value through condition and performance equivalent to the original part, plus better value by saving money on a fully warranted part with OE fit and function. The environment gets a boost, too. MWFI's remanufacturing processes have prevented nearly 81,000 pounds of aluminum and 182,000 pounds of steel from going to landfills. The power needed to produce the equivalent weight in steel would serve 50,000 homes for a year.

"Midwest Fuel Injection is a major supporter and advocate of sustainability and of MERA – The Association for Sustainable Manufacturing," said Howey.

But sometimes, a piece is beyond repair, and parts are no longer available. That's when MWFI's national distribution capabilities give customers options that keep them and their equipment operating in top condition.

"If the manufacturer no longer offers the complete units but they offer the components, we can reman the customer's unit, and they're off on their way," said Jason Rodriguez, MWFI's Turbocharger Product Manager.

Respecting and valuing each team member is the key to keeping pace with a changing marketplace and turbulent economy, said Howey.

"The entire SDg team and customers are at the top of the list for every decision we make," he said. "Our leaders at each one of the SDg locations lead their business units with the support of the entire team at SDg. We work hard every day to listen more than we talk. We are humble in stating that we have the best team in the industry, and our team is the difference."

As a large, family-owned business, SDg also commits to keeping manufacturing in the U.S. while also supporting local communities by seeking out opportunities to support local causes. In Bolingbrook, SDg's Action Truck Parts' annual golf tournament raised more than \$59,000 for Special Olympics Illinois in 2022.

"This incredible amount came from the generosity of our outing sponsors and donors, as well as through a live auction and raffle at the event," said Sales and Marketing Coordinator Jessica Koranda. "We are proud to have hosted this event

for the past four years, and will continue to work to make it bigger and better every year."

Of course, there are challenges to conquer. Especially amid the supply chain uncertainties of the pandemic, MWFI family spend their time managing parts shortages, forecasting parts, and getting a handle on inventory control. MWFI, like everyone else, must also address frequent price changes from vendors and price updates to customers.

The best way to manage? "Communication, communication, communication," said Howey. "We forged new relationships, forecasted even more, and ordered more inventory when available."

Lacking a crystal ball, Rodriguez handles his forecasting duties through data analysis, scrutiny of vehicle and product reports, tracking missed opportunities, and communicating with customers about their past and future needs.

"The customer doesn't have that crystal ball, either," he admitted. But true to company values, Rodriguez can call on his colleagues for support. The entire team at MWFI has the autonomy to suggest ideas and make adaptations.

"It's family-oriented here," Rodriguez said. "When anyone has ideas, we listen to them and collaborate, and we move in that direction. It makes a fun work environment. People are involved. They're engaged."

For the future, MWFI plans to retain its industry-leading role in quality offerings of remanufactured fuel injectors, fuel pumps, turbochargers, and adding product offerings for additional customer value through the Manufactured Again process. Growth could encompass acquisitions or greenfield opportunities.

"We will continue working with partners to distribute our products, and not compete against those same partners that support our SDg family," said Howey.

ADS has been "a large part of our business for many decades," said Director Paul Thoms. Midwest Fuel Injection leadership play active roles as ADS advocates, supporters, and council members. Thoms, of MWFI, serves on the ADS board and is soon to be president.

"Our company learns about new product releases from the OEMs, learns from colleagues at other fuel shops, has developed many forever friendships, and tries to provide support or knowledge to ADS members whenever asked," Thoms said. "ADS has been, and continues to be, a huge value to the SDg group of companies." ■