

Charter Manufacturing Co. Inc.

first place 1,000+ employees



Charter Manufacturing Co. has swelled and split into four divisions since its establishment in 1936. Charter Wire, Milwaukee Wire, Charter Steel and Charter Specialty have all become tops in their markets for materials and parts for cars, farming implements, construction equipment and defense-related business.

The business continues to vary with new customers every year and new products every few years.

Charter Manufacturing has had a solid relationship with Chrysler, General Motors and Ford for more than 50 years.

Charter Steel also caters to well-

known companies such as Eaton, Massco-Tech, Rexnord and Torrington.

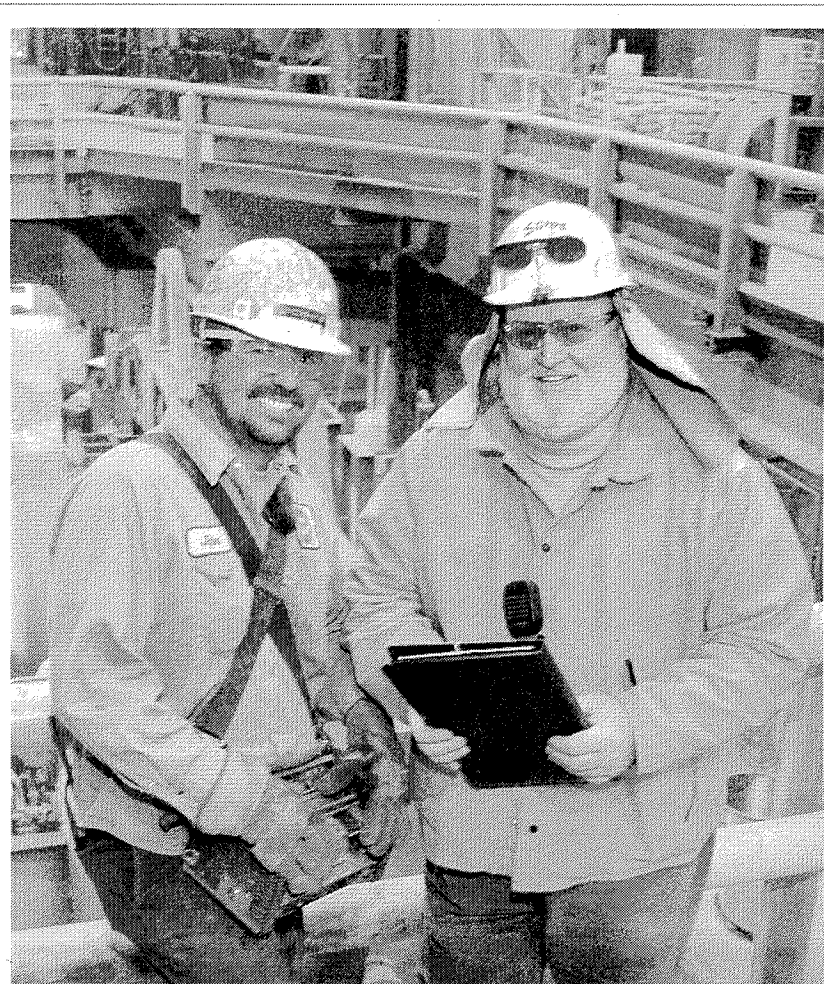
President John Mellowes of Charter Manufacturing cites three components of the company's formula for success: An employer must deal with employees correctly; be willing to invest; and

FOUNDED: 1936

LOCATION:
1212 W. Glen Oaks Lane,
Mequon

TRADE: Steel-based
machinery parts
& materials

EMPLOYEES: 1,200



JOHN ROBERTS

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CORPORATE ETHICS begin on the front line for Charter Manufacturing Co. Inc., where crane operator John Kettenhoven and shift manager Steve Truesdale make a difference.

focus on the marketplace under which the business falls.

"We have fostered mutual trust with our employees in that they are all involved in the operations of our business," says Mellowes. "Their opinions are solicited, acknowledged and then used. We really try to make the employees a part of the company, as far as running the business."

Mellowes has instilled an honest relationship with his employees since he became president in 1980 by operating with decentralized management and working with time sheets instead of the traditional efficiency of a punch card and a time clock.

Although the employees are paid by the hour, Mellowes guarantees pay for a 40-hour week, plus overtime — and sick days.

Mellowes says that giving employees an equal voice and responsibility in the company in turn brings loyalty and strength for Charter to continue its growth.

The company as a whole has increased sales nearly 10 times since 1980, Mellowes says.

Charter Specialty was made possible in 2001 by stockholder investments

from family members and company profit. Charter Steel began in 1978, also as an investment, and now is the largest division of Charter Manufacturing, boasting 500 employees.

To keep up with the fast-paced yet unstable economy, Mellowes makes sure that both employees and clients are treated well and know they are taken care of.

Annual policy meetings are held within each division to review ethical and behavioral business principles outlined in the company's employee handbook.

Charter Manufacturing meets with customers, as well, to establish a universal pricing mechanism to accommodate for increases in energy and raw material costs.

"To have a good company, you need to invest, and to keep a good company, you should continue to invest, but we mainly rely on our strong group of employees," says Mellowes. "We are always looking for new companion products, and we are always trying to expand the envelope. We expect the company to keep growing at a steady rate, and we expect to earn enough money to finance its growth."