

“THE VOICE OF INDUSTRY”

SETPOINT

Helping Manufacturers Today & Tomorrow

In June 2007, Setpoint Systems, Inc., a manufacturing automation firm, donated a Demco Wedge™ to Brigham Young University's Manufacturing Engineering Technology Program to provide an opportunity to incorporate practical experience for the mechanical and electrical engineers in their education.

Setpoint Systems helps manufacturers develop, re-tool, and implement automated machinery. The UMA wanted to know more. We spoke to Kara Smith who shared the following information with us.

UMA: Is there something significant about your company's name?

Setpoint: Setpoint is an industry term that refers to a reference point that you set. It is from this point that all changes or variances are gauged from. Even our logo has a point in the middle of the S with arrows point to it.

UMA: Please tell us about the history of your company.

Setpoint: Founders, Joe VanDenBerghe and Joe Cornwell met while working for an amusement ride manufacturer that provided roller coasters and other rides all over the world. The two became good friends and started to meet twice a week at the local library to talk about their dreams and plans for someday owning and running their own business. Joe & Joe made those dreams and plans a reality in 1992 when they founded Setpoint. The business started by providing turn-key custom automated manufacturing equipment to companies in the inter-mountain west. By 2003 the owners of Setpoint were machining parts for the automated machinery that they were building and decided that this was a big enough business that it could run on its own, thus Leanwerks was founded. In 2005 Setpoint Systems Inc. announced the formation of Rocky Mountain Testing Solutions (RMTS) in partnership with the MEP for the State of Utah. RMTS is an environmental testing company serving Utah and the Intermountain region with quality, on-time environmental testing solutions for manufacturers in the Aerospace, Defense, Medical and Automotive industries. Then again in 2006 Setpoint continued to grow by merging with AutoPack, a local packaging company. AutoPack manufactures product feeding and packaging equipment for the nutritional and personal care industries. AutoPack has now been absorbed into Setpoint Systems.

UMA: What is your target market and who are your customers?

Setpoint: Our target market is medium to large manufacturing



companies requiring automated integrated systems to produce their products that will benefit by implementing automation to produce their products.

UMA: What kind of products and services do you offer that specifically help manufacturers?

Setpoint: We offer a complete service to analyze and identify opportunities to increase productivity coupled with full service design, build and implement capabilities. We are a one stop shop to identify opportunities and implement solutions. We believe in productivity delivered.

UMA: How long have you been in Utah?

Setpoint: Since 1992

UMA: How many employees does your company have?

Setpoint: 35

UMA: Tell us something about your company that most people wouldn't know?

Setpoint: That we are a local company. We're one of the best kept secrets in Utah; we provide services that can help manufacturers grow their business.

UMA: What makes your company different from other companies?

Setpoint: Open book management and communication, real time project status, and experience in the market.

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UMA: How has your industry changed over the years and how have you managed to keep pace?

Setpoint: We find that the industry is starting to change more to the lean automation approach instead of a full line; they want more variety, less volume. Systems have to be more flexible—offering quick change outs. Capital equipment asset utilization has been a big deal for manufacturers. We offer flexibility over multiple platforms.

UMA: What are some of the challenges your company faces today?

Setpoint: We are generalists and don't have a specific application. We sit down and design a solution that exactly meets our customers' needs. We sell “how can we help you” and as a generalist it is hard to grow the market share. We find that there is a lot of competition from internal groups. With smaller companies they like to do it themselves. Another challenge we face is finding the companies that need the automation support and marketing our services without a specific product to offer them.

UMA: What are some of your company's long term goals?

Setpoint: To grow the business at about at 15% growth rate per year. To develop a product that fills a specific niche need that will differentiate us from our competition.

UMA: How is your company involved in the community?

Setpoint: We are on the board with NUMA (Northern Utah Manufacturing Alliance) and the Women's Shelter in Ogden. We are involved with Ogden Weber Chamber of Commerce, MEP (Manufacturing Extension Partnership), EDCUtah (Economic Development Corporation Utah), and the Habitat for Humanity. We have employees that sit on advisory boards for engineering curriculum; we work closely with University's and professors on projects encouraging students to learn automation platforms. We provide technical engineering jobs and help manufacturers to be more competitive.

UMA: How long have you been a UMA member? What made you decide to join UMA?

Setpoint: About 3 months now. We joined because we believe in supporting our local economy. We've had a significant impact with major manufacturers and wanted to be involved in the direction that Utah is heading.

UMA: How has UMA help or benefited you company? How do UMA members benefit from your services and products?

Setpoint: UMA has given us exposure to other companies that we wouldn't normally meet. It allows us to offer our resources that they can take advantage of, giving us the opportunity to serve them.

UMA: How important do you think a common voice for manufacturers is to your success in business?

Setpoint: A common voice can help us to better understand a wider diverse range of what the manufacturers need since it would create a standard reference for what is needed and wanted here in Utah. Standardized offerings are able to provide a better value.

UMA: What is your top concern you would like the Legislature to address in Utah?

Setpoint: Medical benefits – they are hard for small businesses.

UMA: What is your top national concern you would like the Congress to address?

Setpoint: Taxes on small businesses are so high that it is hard to make it with all of the regulations.

UMA: Do you take advantage of the Manufacturers Sales Tax Exemption?

Setpoint: We do take advantage of this.

UMA: What do you see in the future for your industry?

Setpoint: Wider adoption of automation processes for people to have an advantage over other countries. Having more automation will help Utah businesses stay competitive in the market.

UMA: What have you learned in your business that may be of help to other manufacturers in Utah?

Setpoint: Create an open book environment communicating culture with employees and customers. It's a key to being successful because then they have a stake in it and work harder to make it work.

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