

Endustra Filter Manufacturers Inc. / www.endustrafilteers.com / HQ: Schererville, Ind.

Specialty: Intake filters / Robert Geyer, President and CEO: “[Customers] expect unwavering integrity.”

OBEY THE MARKET

ENDUSTRA UNDERSTANDS THE MARKETPLACE IS CHALLENGING FOR MANUFACTURERS, BUT BY LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS AND ADAPTING TO THEIR NEEDS, THE FILTER MANUFACTURER IS GAINING MARKETSHARE. BY STACI DAVIDSON



ENDUSTRA TRI-VENT® SERIES TKT BOTTOM OUTLET MANIFOLD INTAKE FILTER SILENCERS REPLACE 9-PANEL HOUSINGS AT THE EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT, TEMECULA, CALIF., WRF.

“To manufacture in the United States is to be proactive,” declares Robert Geyer, president and owner of Endustra Filter Manufacturers Inc. In recent years, he notes, as the market has transformed as a result of increasing energy prices, import pressures and a shrinking manufacturing sector, companies can’t afford to be complacent. And by focusing on being

proactive in serving the needs of its customers – along with adhering to its values of reliability, quality, pride and dedication – Endustra has maintained a strong, growing business.

“Any company that operates using a 10- or even five-year-old business model will contract,” Geyer says. “Since 2009, Endustra has secured four new patents, scaled our Tri-

Vent® technology to fit applications from 60 to 60,000 CFM, and we have reached out to new technology segments and assisted in adapting their equipment to the American market.

“Rather than scale back during the recession, we retooled and refocused our processes to reduce lead times from three to four weeks to three to four days – we don’t feel a customer

should have to wait for a filter,” he continues. “We developed proprietary scheduling methods to maintain on-time deliveries for more than 99 percent of all orders. This is what we would like to see from our suppliers, so that’s what we provide to our customers.”

Based in Schererville, Ind., Endustra manufactures its flagship line of the Tri-Vent® series intake filters and filter silencers, as well as replacement filter elements and dust collector cartridges for the OEM and end-user markets. The company is structured to best serve manufacturers of blowers and compressors used in manufacturing, pneumatic conveying and wastewater treatment – or any process that requires a large volume of clean compressed air, Geyer says.

“Our customers are manufacturers and engineering firms, and they expect to be able to tell us what they need, and they assume that Endustra will deliver the product on time and with zero defects,” he says. “Our customers expect us to consistently exceed our promised specifications. They expect unwavering integrity. Quality means getting more than you paid for.”

QUALITY PRODUCTS, ON TIME

Endustra feels it is best and is set apart in its industry because it not only provides performance-based products, but also adapts its technologies to fit customers’ needs. “We don’t even like to use the word ‘custom,’” Geyer says. “When a customer needs something different, something that isn’t on our shelf – whether that is a matched color, private labeling or a completely new design – we standardize the product the customer wants.”

Endustra shies away from the term “custom,” because Geyer believes it implies delays, added costs and difficulties. Endustra’s lean process means it can easily adapt to the needs of its customers, offering “options” instead of “customizations.”



ENDUSTRA OFFERS A COMPLETE LINE OF TRI-VENT® FILTERS AND FILTER SILENCERS.

“With our process, a customized product is delivered in the same amount of time as a standard product, so by taking away the delays and difficulties, it’s not really custom anymore,” Geyer says. “We ask our customers what they need our product to do, and we deliver.”

Endustra is able to operate this way because of its dedication to quality,

which has been in place since it was founded in 1971, but the company really got serious about it in the mid-1980s. This was the beginning of the quality movement in the United States, Geyer relates, and Endustra began self-auditing how it performed in different areas. Eventually, it came up with its own way of tracking conformance.

The company starts at the receive- ▶



TRI-VENT® SERIES K08
SIDE-ACCESS INLINE FILTERS
SCALE UP FOR HIGH-VOLUME
APPLICATIONS.

ing dock, inspecting the raw materials. Then each operator throughout the process does an inspection, and has the authority to reject what was sent to her or him. Once a product is all put together, it is inspected again. Endustra uses visual and metrics inspection to check all finished goods.

“We don’t measure five and approve the lot – we check every single item,” Geyer says. “Everyone has the authority to stop production if they see a problem because, in the

end, everyone has a responsibility to the customer. No one is reprimanded for catching a mistake – we profit-share, so everyone understands that if we have to do something twice, we’re no longer making money on it. If we find problems we fix them.”

Geyer notes that Endustra’s system is so strong that it exceeds the practice requirements of ISO standards and audits, so it has not sought out those certifications. “We are already exceeding that quality documentation and we don’t want to compromise our standards to get that certification,” he says. “We define a reject not as something we have to throw away, but as something the customer catches. It is very rare that an Endustra customer returns a product because it isn’t right.”

He adds that Endustra was employing the basic principles of lean manu-

facturing before that term was coined, and it continues to this day. For example, he notes that the company was able to reduce delivery times from three to four weeks to three to four days, and that was due to a change in how it used inventory, making the process leaner.

“The way we are inspecting is also the reason we deliver on time,” he says. “When quality work is done on time, it is delivered on time. We track internal delivery times as well as delivery times to customers. We have 100 percent on-time delivery, year in and year out. If you don’t have to redo work, it’s easy to stay on time.”

LISTENING AND INNOVATION

Endustra’s growth is being driven by the Tri-Vent® Intake Filters and Filter Silencers, primarily as the result of its innovation and dedication to adapting its technology to the needs of the market, and those needs include reduced operating cost and energy efficiency. Geyer explains that the Tri-Vent® TK Series can provide up to 60,000 CFM of clean air with a footprint that is one-fourth the size of any competing product. The TK requires no tools to maintain and service, and it reduces energy consumption so much that customers can recover the filter’s cost in less than a year.

Geyer notes that this innovation and growth also helps Endustra to remain competitive in the difficult global market. “Our strategy is innovation,” he says. “When challenged by global competition and evolving technologies, a company must listen to its customers, evaluate its products and services, and in the end, obey the market. Every generation of new technology displaces products, expertise and even whole industries out of practical existence. History tells us that companies that embraced the inevitability of changes and the benefit of technological achievement prospered.”

‘WE PROFIT-SHARE, SO EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THAT IF WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING TWICE, WE’RE NO LONGER MAKING MONEY ON IT. IF WE FIND PROBLEMS, WE FIX THEM.’ -Robert Geyer



INSTALLED IN 2012 AT THE JAMES R. DILORIO WATER RECLAMATION FACILITY IN PUEBLO, COLO., THE ENDUSTR TRI-VENT® SERIES KP8VCR SIDE-ACCESS MANIFOLD INTAKE FILTER SILENCER PROVIDES CLEAN INLET AIR FOR FIVE SULZER-ABS HIGH-SPEED TURBLOWERS.

TWO GENERATIONS OF SUCCESS

Continuous improvement and innovation are the hallmarks of Endustra Filter Manufacturers' current growth, but they have been important attributes of the company's success since its early years, explains owner and President Robert Geyer. Endustra was founded by Geyer's father, Robert E. Geyer, Jr., who, working with his father and brother, began selling filters in 1968 and evolved to manufacture filters in 1971 for the local steel industry.

To meet the needs of the market, the company originally focused on inlet filters for reciprocating air compressors, but over time, the operation evolved to focus on centrifugal compressors and pressure blowers.

"Before the phrase was coined, we practiced continuous improvement,

and as a result, we developed proprietary technologies and an institutional know-how enabling the company to develop intake filters that reduced energy consumption and filtration costs," Robert Geyer explains.

By the early 2000s, Endustra was field-testing the patented Tri-Vent® Series of filters, which now is the core of the company's business.

Robert Geyer had an early interest in his father's business, asking permission to work full-time in the factory during the summer when he was 13. "By the time I was in high school, I was in put in charge of manufacturing cells, and in college I helped design production lines," he says. "After finishing my education, I left the company and the industry for 10 years, then came back after my father retired."

Having achieved more than 40 years in business, Endustra is confident of its core competencies, Geyer adds, and innovation in its field has allowed it to maintain the fast pace with which its market is evolving. By focusing on its core competencies, Endustra's strategy for the present is to pursue continuous improvement and its strategy for the future is innovation.

"The Tri-Vent® is the right product for today – we know that not because we think it is true, but because that's what the marketplace tells us," he says. "Yet 10 years ago, the product did not exist. The manufacturing technology to produce the product did not even exist. So what will the market demand in 10 years? We rely on our business partners, our customers, to

tell us what they need, and Endustra will listen and we will innovate.

"For any number of reasons, the economy is particularly difficult today," he continues. "Faced with a difficult economy, the temptation for many companies is to scale back. And as government regulation and intervention increases and ever-greater pressure comes to bear on a dwin- ➤



TRI-VENT® SERIES TMO9 INTAKE FILTER SILENCERS MAKE FILTER CHANGES SAFE, ELIMINATING THE NEED FOR LADDERS IN MOST APPLICATIONS.

◀ dling supply of manufacturers to carry the burden of a stagnant job market, from one perspective that is understandable. We don't hold with that thinking. In terms of the global filter market, we command a tiny percentage of marketshare. So from our point of view, even in a contracting economy, there is opportunity for growth."

ALWAYS ADAPTING

Endustra applies the 80/20 rule to its growth goals, Geyer explains. "About 80 percent of growth should come

'FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, EVEN IN A CONTRACTING ECONOMY, THERE IS OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH.'

-Robert Geyer

from existing customers because we've already won their confidence and we are helping them to grow, also," he says. "About 20 percent will come from new markets, and we expect to see more of that as new technologies emerge."

This has been a successful strategy for the company, as is its focus on adapting to the needs of the marketplace. Geyer says that the company's four patents since 2009 are all "products that hadn't arisen before." By remaining committed to the air filter industry and strengthened by its internal expertise, Endustra is confident of its ongoing growth.

Additionally, even though the marketplace is becoming more global, the American market is still 90 percent of Endustra's business, and the company remains dedicated to domestic production. Geyer stresses that it doesn't import any raw material and all of its

manufacturing is done at its facility in Indiana. Its operational capabilities are key to its growth goals.

"Every year, we've doubled the number of Tri-Vent® TKs we've shipped, and that is because the price is right, the footprint is small, and the cost recovery happens in a year or less thanks to energy savings," Geyer says. "We are seeing growth in the entire product line, but it is scaled to meet the demands of today's market. We are proud of what we've done – the Tri-Vent® is the right product for traditional equipment and enhances the performance of newer technology machines.

"The Tri-Vent line can be changed and adapted for any product on the market and any product coming down the pipe," he adds. "We adapted the line to include configurations of intake filters that didn't exist a few years ago. Whether a filter needs one cartridge or 10, we can supply it." **mt**