



Screenent

Over the past 10 years, family
made the transformation to a
Jackson talks to Gay Sutton a
and why the company is spend

est

ly-owned BM&M Screening Solutions has a global organization. President Collin Jackson is about developing the strategy for success, and spending money when most are not



Innovation has always been at the heart of BM&M Screening Solutions. Launched in 1968 by Tom Humphrey, a creative and prolific engineer who designed and patented a number of revolutionary screening products that are still among the best in the market today, the company has adapted its technology to a whole range of new industries, is exporting to Asia and South America, and has licensed partners in Europe and Australia.

This passion for engineering runs through the veins of the founder's two sons, Peter and Dave, who own the business today. Over the past 13 years, they have steered the company through a transformation, bringing in former controls and instrumentation industry manager Collin Jackson to guide it from a family business to a true global leader. However, bridging that perilous gap requires determination and a considerable leap of faith.

When Jackson joined the company as sales and marketing manager in January 1997 he was tasked with growing the company and providing a direction for it. "For Peter and Dave this move was not only a risk," Jackson says, "they were literally forcing a cultural change on their company, and they had no idea what the end result would be. That was pretty brave."

It turned out to be a good decision. During the 1990s BM&M developed a cohesive strategy for growth, and they focused all elements of the business on that. The vision was to take the knowledge and expertise the company had developed in the general bulk and powder grain and forestry industries, and innovate to solve screening problems in other industries.

"However, at that time it was important that we didn't grow faster than our reputation could take," Jackson points out. "So we began to limit our growth and focus on the markets that we identified as good opportunities. For some of the team members in the company this was a rather mystical concept," he comments. However, restraining the scattergun approach and focusing strategically has worked well, and the company has diversified into the food and chemical industries, and more recently into the rapidly expanding and highly lucrative recycling and biofuels sectors.

Internally, the management structure developed by Jackson and the Humphrey family has been successful but rather unconventional. Jackson is now president of the company, overseeing the strategy and direction while the owners are part of his management team—Peter Humphrey as chief engineer and Dave Humphrey as plant manager.

One of BM&M's first steps was to invest in a large



test and R&D facility, which opened in 1998. This has delivered a significant competitive advantage, enabling company engineers to analyze and test materials and develop new screening technology. Next, BM&M invested in a company-wide information system called BOSS that brings together all the elements of an ERP system from customer relationship management through to supply chain management and factory scheduling.

As early as 1998, however, BM&M recognized that the company was in desperate need of a new manufacturing facility. "We did exhaustive analysis, optimized the people and equipment, and attempted to run three shifts," he says. "But the more equipment we tried to put through the factory, the slower we went. We simply didn't have the capacity, and we were running the factory and our people ragged." Construction of a new factory became part of the 1998 five-year plan.

Five-year plans, though, rarely happen in five years. But once land was located in Surrey, British Columbia, and the purchase completed in 2006, things began to move quickly. The vision was to bring together all elements of

the company and build a new manufacturing plant, a new test and R&D facility, and a company headquarters on one site. Teck Construction was called in to work with BM&M and deliver this as an engineering procurement and construction (EPC) project at a cost of \$8 million.

The factory needed to be capable of satisfying demand for the next 20 years, so the manufacturing footprint was more than doubled to 42,000 square feet, the new test facility added another 2,000 square feet and the head office a further 6,000 square feet. Ground was broken in December 2008, and the company moved in on September 14, 2009, two weeks early and \$100,000 under budget.

"One of the aims of the new facility was to be more productive and manufacture equipment at a lower price than we could in the old facility," Jackson says. And two particular innovations are playing a major part in this. The company builds to order, manufacturing subcomponents in house and bringing them together on the assembly line. However, the products can range from large machines measuring 30 feet by 16 feet and weighing 20,000 pounds, to small 1,000-pound

machines measuring just 2 feet by 4 feet. "We found we were literally using man-weeks in the old factory just moving these machines from station to station. What we did was design and install a rail system inside the new factory, and the guys can literally roll the machines from station to station through the factory. It's been a huge innovation for us."

The second innovation has also had an enormous impact. The paint shop in the old plant had been created to be flexible and provide almost any paint system the customer could specify. As a consequence, it was both labor-intensive and hugely expensive. "After a lot of soul searching and calculation, we decided to simplify the paint shop and build a new state-of-the-art facility that painted every machine with the very best paint system available—epoxy paint—and because of the increased efficiency we can do that literally at the same cost."

BM&M has built its business on relationships, working

very closely on quality and design with its customers and also with key suppliers. "Partnership with our vendors is a critical part of our success," Jackson says. "Over the past 10 years we've grown these supplier relationships and brought key technology partners into our manufacturing stream." Quality is obviously of paramount importance. Steel manufacturer Brenco, for example, has invested in the latest laser and plasma cutting and forming technology and has integrated with BM&M to the extent that AutoCAD drawings can be exchanged and modified via the Internet. Machining company Tana has also achieved a similar level of integration and has been working with BM&M for over 25 years.

Asked to sum up the company's philosophy, Jackson concludes, "We're using the business knowledge of the past generation and the technology of today, and marrying them together in a way that we can go to the market with integrity. If there is anything that defines BM&M's business, it's that." ●

**While you
perfect your screens,
we screen your
risks.**

Congratulations, BM&M Screening Solutions!

We are pleased to have been screening out your risks for the past 6 years. We wish you many more years of success – we'll be here to insure it.



The Western Group
The Screening People™
1-800-663-7705

Congratulations to BM&M Screening Solutions on the opening of their new 42,000 square foot manufacturing facility.

The Western Group manufactures screening products for the wood, food, aggregate, and mining sectors at 11 facilities located throughout North America. We offer woven and welded wire, perforated plate, and non-metallic screen options.