

PROMOTION

www.promotion.com / **Specialty:** Tooling, automation and robotic system design and manufacturing
/ **Mark Zimny, president:** "The domestic market is the powerhouse in nuclear energy right now."

CANADA



AUTOMATION SENSATION

PROMOTION EXPANDS INTO NEW INDUSTRIES WITH ITS SYSTEM CAPABILITIES. **BY JANICE HOPPE**

Promotion, based in Oakville, Ontario, is a leading designer and manufacturer of high-quality tooling, automation and robotic systems for the automotive, nuclear and industrial markets. The company has come a long way from its humble start as a one-man operation in 1995 and continues to look to break into new industries.

In 1985, Mark Zimny left Poland with a master's degree in mechanical engineering to work in research and development centers in Canada. "I came here and I saw a big demand in the automotive market, so I decided to open my own business and it took off from there," Zimny says. He founded Promotion in 1995 and focused on manufacturing automation systems for the automotive industry.

Today, Promotion has 75 employees, is headquartered in a 62,000-square-foot facility and delivers custom equipment and turnkey solutions to its global customers. "We export our nuclear and automotive robotic tools and machines overseas, most recently to Korea and Argentina," Zimny says. "We have global exposure with our equipment."

EXPANDING TO NUCLEAR ENERGY

Promotion began with a focus on the automotive industry until the decline in the market. "Promotion surpassed Michigan in 2003 and 2004 in annual car output from a factory," Zimny says. "I exported machines to the United States on an annual basis. I couldn't keep up with the demand." In 2004, however, the automotive



PROMOTION STAYS A LEADING MANUFACTURER BY FOCUSING ON CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING.

industry began to decline with major customers going bankrupt, Zimny says, which left him looking for a different industry to serve.

Zimny decided in 2005 to transition his focus into the nuclear energy market. "The company has top-of-the-line engineering so I was able to move my services to nuclear work," he explains. "The nuclear process is long-term. I started designing machines for second-tier nuclear chain supply and after years of building for the businesses, I am in compli-

ance with national and international nuclear industry standards." Today, Promotion's advanced technologies are designed to support plant life management, extend plant design life and reduce maintenance costs.

The nuclear energy market became lucrative and stable, so Zimny opened a nuclear division of Promotion in 2009. "The domestic market is the powerhouse in nuclear energy right now," he explains. "The nuclear division has gone through the roof." Because both the nuclear and auto-

motive divisions are doing well, Zimny is looking to expand again into new industries. The company looks to include the transportation, mineral, chemical and pharmaceutical industries to its clientele.

STAYING INNOVATIVE

To ensure Promotion has the foundation to stay a leading manufacturer, the company has implemented a continuous improvement plan that focuses on capital investment, technology advancements and workforce training. "They are all going well, but in terms of implementation, I am not satisfied with the pace," Zimny says. "The reason being that all three require investment and despite the number of government programs to offer assistance, it's not going too quickly. We could do it better and I

wish it would go faster." Because money is not always readily available, Zimny focuses on goals he can achieve without financial assistance, such as capital improvements.

In 2009, the company moved into its current 62,000-square-foot facility in Oakville, making a capital investment in additional space for the new nuclear division. To educate its workforce, the company's employees are offered supplemental training programs.

Technology advancements can be costly, but remain a must-have in the manufacturing industry. Clients require the latest drawing design capabilities that are very detail-oriented. "There is a lot of cost associated with IT and it is an expensive service to maintain," Zimny admits. "In order to get a high level of benefits

from IT you have to keep investing into training and development."

Investments in technology have allowed Promotion to develop a new Automated Part Storage and Retrieval System with an Automatic Hand-Guided Vehicle, which offers robotic handling and is mainly used for the automotive industry. "This allows us to deliver, move, store and handle customer material products with increase efficiency, flexibility and accuracy," Zimny says.

The new product is one way the company looks to grow. To maintain a loyal customer base, Promotion works closely with its customers to help them succeed. "That's our No. 1 priority," Zimny says. "We believe we are an extension of the customer and we can help develop a solution that we can stand behind." **mt**



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