



Myers Spring Company

SIMPLY 'SOLVING PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS'

Address: 720 Water St., Logansport

Telephone: (574) 753-1505

Web site: www.myersspring.com

Management: Todd Miller,
president and CEO

Employees: Approximately 50

By Lauren Burdick

History:

In 1946, Logansport's Walt Myers began Myers Spring Company with the idea that one family member from each successive generation would run the business. Sixty-eight years later, his grandson Todd Miller serves as the leader of an operation that provides spring engineering to 300 customers internationally – from John Deere to Honda and many more.

The presence of springs in cars, pens, tractors and countless everyday products allows Myers Spring to produce parts for many industries. Those springs and wire forms eventually travel to customer locations throughout the country and around the world.

Family matters:

Growing up, Miller knew a position at Myers Spring was always an option. In his time at Purdue University, however, he says he focused more on the glee club than academics. Though he spent his college summers working for the company, the prospect of taking over, he admits, made him nervous.

"I woke up one morning and thought, 'What if I hate that place?'" Miller recalls. "I decided at the end of my sophomore year that I didn't know if this was the place for me."

Miller's hesitation about going into the family business resulted in a job with Honda that took him to both Japan and Ohio, while his father, Craig Miller, served as president of Myers Spring.

Craig, 83, is president emeritus today and remains active by delivering products to customers and picking up parts from suppliers.

After the birth of his first daughter in 1996 and several other personal developments, Todd realized the next direction he wanted his career to take was back to Myers Spring.

"I talked to my wife and we both agreed that if we were going to give the family business a shot, it looked like that window of opportunity was closing."

Recipe for success:

Since he assumed the leadership role at Myers Spring in 2000, the company's sales have increased more than four-fold, from \$2.2 million to \$10 million.



While adapting to technology changes is part of the culture at Myers Spring, president and CEO Todd Miller says the key to success is people-to-people relationships.

In addition to monetary gains, the company has seen significant changes in efficiency, which he attributes to prioritization.

“We’ve seen massive productivity improvements. First, we focus on management issues – that is absolutely the first place we start always. Then we look at investment in the form of technology,” he shares.

International influence:

Miller’s time in Japan with Honda provided him with lessons and experiences he continues to apply to Myers Spring.

“It was a fantastic experience for a young, fresh out of college engineer,” Miller contends. “I was exposed to so many processes. They set the bar very high on quality and production techniques.”

The value Honda places on its customers and quality of product is something Miller still stands by. He claims his time with Honda is one of the factors that makes him eager to adopt new technology and embrace change.

Cutting edge:

The spring production of 1946 – or even 1996 – is not the same as today. As technology progresses, so does Myers Spring. Miller describes himself as a “change agent,” and he is proud of how adaptable the company and employees are to new ideas.

“Technology is an accelerator, not a solution, and we see that,” Miller believes. “You have to have a culture that embraces change as the mode of operation. That is what we have here. Our team gets nervous when change isn’t happening.”

For engineering coordinator John Brown, adjusting to technological advances has been a regular part of his job.

“It was all mechanical 30 years ago and it’s all CNC (computerized numerical

control) now. During that time, that’s allowed us to improve our productivity and efficiency to where we’ve been able to maintain a floor space but increase our product.”

Hometown glory:

Many Myers Spring employees are Logansport natives and predate Miller’s tenure. Office manager Janice Babb came to the company in 1971 as a receptionist, working with both Walt Myers and Craig Miller before Todd Miller took over.

“Our management team has grown to be what I consider one of the best,” Babb says. “I’ve worked for all of them, and it’s been a good experience. I’ve learned a lot and I’m blessed to be here.”

Though Miller, a native of Twelve Mile in rural Cass County, took some business lessons from Japan, he offers that one of the company’s greatest assets is the rich history his family has enjoyed in Logansport.

Previous generations of the Kiesling side of the family planted roots in Logansport as vegetable farmers. Family members also served in Logansport and Cass County’s political life as coroners, judges and sheriffs.

“Our family has always been involved in local politics and business.”

Looking ahead:

To keep Myers Spring on the cutting edge of technology, the company actively works with Logansport schools and the Purdue Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to encourage advanced skills.

Babb notes that educating students about the opportunities manufacturing holds is one of the ways the company works to enrich the Logansport community.

“We’re getting more involved with the schools,” she states. “We’re trying to figure

out how to get a good workforce. That’s our big task right now – going to the schools to start them young to get them into manufacturing. I think that’s a major thing, because right now finding good employees with technical abilities, it’s hard. People can do it if they put their minds to it.”

The power of people:

For Miller, regardless of the evolution of business, it is people-to-people relationships that lead to growth, profits and success. Even the company’s work with its current largest customer, Chore-Time Systems, can be traced back to one person: Todd Martin.

Martin began working at Myers Spring as a college student in the summer of 2001. He moved on to Chore-Time after graduating from Purdue and saw an opportunity to bring his old and new employers together.

“(Chore-Time) had a monstrous issue at hand that had been dogging them for quite some time,” Miller recalls. “(Martin) suggested that they work with us on fixing this issue. We fixed it.”

The strong partnership continues to this day.

Close relationships like these, Miller says, are what keep Myers Spring successful. This transcends springs or engineering and can apply to any business.

“Everything can be traced back to people – everything. Everything is an opportunity. The dollars aren’t worth it, especially if you don’t have friends and you’re not solving a problem and you’re not satisfying a need.”

Brown echoes this sentiment, noting that while Myers Spring specializes in spring engineering, the true role of the company is far simpler.

“We’re solving people’s problems. That’s what it’s about,” Brown contends. “It just so happens to be a spring sometimes.”