

# Small Business Success

## MTI Becomes a Global Leader

By Rebecca Patrick

**E**ight decades have come and gone since Conrad Adams founded the tool and die shop, Adams Engineering, in South Bend. The company provided engineering and special tooling for automotive, farm implement, aircraft engine and appliance manufacturers. That precursor has evolved today into Manufacturing Technology, Inc., or MTI, a high-tech venture specializing in transformational, custom-engineered joining solutions for manufacturing processes.

MTI – which received the Indiana Chamber’s 2009 Small Business of the Year honor at the organization’s November awards luncheon – has also gone global, working across six continents, and established partnerships in England and India. On the financial side, company revenues have grown by over 300% during the past five years.

Robert C. Adams II, MTI president, believes there was

### Through the Years

- In the 1940s, MTI became known outside of Indiana for its work for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft.
- The company sought and created partnerships with national clients in the 1960s. At that time, Adams Engineering also became a supplier to the inertia welding department of Caterpillar Tractor.
- In 1976, 50 years to the day after Conrad Adams founded the company, Adams Engineering purchased the inertia welding process and 250 related patents from Caterpillar.
- The tool and die operations were sold in 1991, with the remaining companies merged under the MTI name. Two years later, MTI surpassed \$100 million in sales.
- Under the guidance of the current fourth generation of the Adams family, MTI acquired three additional technologies that brought all major friction welding capabilities under the MTI umbrella, making MTI the only company worldwide to offer the complete line of frictional welders.



**In November, MTI was named the Indiana Chamber’s Small Business of the Year. Jennifer M. Borsodi and Robert C. Adams II, co-owners along with brother Daniel C. Adams, accepted the award.**

no single tipping point for the recent successes. Rather, it was a number of factors – developed slowly in prior years – that came to fruition when market opportunities presented themselves.

“The first factor was the development of our reputation in the world market for building high-quality machines. The next was our ability to position ourselves as the world leader in a smaller niche market, specifically larger friction welding machines that require in excess of 300 tons of forge force. This was accomplished through innovation and technical advantages,” he explains.

“Finally, over a history of cyclical demand, MTI has developed business processes for engineering, purchasing and assembly that were scalable based on demand. With these three factors in place, we were able to respond to a perfect storm of unprecedented market demand, which was caused by a worldwide boom in two industries – aerospace and oil well drill pipe – that require machines in our niche market.

“The aerospace industry rebounded during 2006 to 2009 after capital equipment spending was nearly frozen following 9/11. The demand for oil well drill pipe went through the roof in the same time period due to the extremely high price of oil and gasoline. Through sale of friction welding machines during this time period, MTI nearly tripled the world’s capacity to manufacture oil well drill pipe.”

MTI also counts the following industries among its customer base: aircraft, automotive, consumer products, construction, marine, military, power generation and transmission, research and transportation. Specific clients include: Borg-Warner, Caterpillar, Chrysler, Cummins, Federal Mogul, Ford, GE, General Motors, John Deere, Lockheed Martin, Mercury Marine, Rolls-Royce, Visteon and Xerox.

#### INFORMATION LINK

**Resource:** MTI at [www.mtiwelding.com](http://www.mtiwelding.com)