

MID-CITY SUPPLY

In Giving, Company Has Received – and Grown

By Anthony Schoettle

In the simplest terms Elkhart-based Mid-City Supply Co. is a distributor of plumbing and HVAC supplies – primarily to small and mid-sized contractors.

But that's not the way brothers Dan and Jordan New, the company's co-presidents, see it. And that's not the way their dad, Jeff New, who still serves as chairman, views it either.

The News are quick to say they are in the business of helping in any and every way they can.

That philosophy extends not only to their customers, but to their employees and a cadre of charities and community organizations with which they work.

"We care more about the people we're working with than the money we get from them," Jordan New offers. "We are driven by our morals and ethics, and not greed. That is something Jeff has instilled in this company for a long time."

Taking off

Mid-City was founded in 1947 by Sam New – Jeff's dad – and Mel Cohen. Sam and Mel didn't want to work for their own dads, so they opened a plumbing store in downtown Elkhart. Jeff, 70, initially had the same thought. After graduating from Indiana University in 1975, he went to work for another wholesale business before changing courses and joining Mid-City a year later. He took over as president in 1979 and later acquired the company.

Jeff New significantly grew the operation, expanding from one store to nine in Indiana and Michigan.

"Key to our success is listening to our customers and helping them do their job successfully," he explains. "We have a partnership philosophy. We are partners with our suppliers and our customers. We partner with them to help them be successful."

Mid-City isn't necessarily trying to be the low-cost provider.

"We sell good products – not cheap products. We offer good service to our customers," Jordan New states. "When our customers have a problem, we see that as a good opportunity to be a hero. If we can help customers when they're in trouble, they'll

remember that. Loyalty is a big deal. Most of our customers are loyal to us, and we're loyal to them."

When you call Mid-City, you'll always hear a real person answer. "The person who answers phone is called 'director of first impressions.' We're people here, and we act like it," Jeff New imparts.

A look inside

Mid-City works with a lot of small and mid-sized contractors – mostly in smaller cities and towns – and those customers get a lot more than plumbing and HVAC products. Mid-City offers consultation, training, help with marketing and advertising and other back office business services smaller companies often need.

"Contractors are critical to our society; they're the trained licensed and professional service providers that are the backbone of many of our communities," Dan New says.

"We like to help increase and protect their profits while decreasing their risks. Whatever we can do to help our customers, we're going to do it."

Mid-City has 145 employees, 90 of which are in Indiana. Its footprint extends through north central Indiana and southwest Michigan. Though the organization saw its year-over-year sales growth spike to 20% during the pandemic, it's typically in the mid-single digit range.

"Our people set us apart. They have a lot of expertise and allow us to adapt to whatever our customers need," Jordan New expresses.

While the brothers share the same title, they have distinct roles in the company.

"My role is visionary," explains Jordan, 36. "My job is to run a mile ahead, climb a tree and say, 'There's something in the road. Go to the left a little bit.'"

In addition to climbing proverbial trees, he handles big sales relationships and manages



Mid-City Supply Co. engages in charity efforts in every market it does business. Here, employees build a playground set for a girl with cancer as part of a Make-A-Wish Foundation initiative.

the firm's managers.

Dan New, 42, helms the financial side of the business and is taking over human resources.

Caring ways

The duo, who bought the company from their dad in January 2020, has continued to emphasize giving back to the communities where they serve.

Mid-City has joined the local chamber of commerce in every community in which it has a presence. All three News have or are serving on the board of the United Way. The company gives annually to the Salvation Army, various food banks and Toys for Tots to name a few.

In addition, Mid-City has been involved in building multiple houses for Habitat for Humanity. Mid-City also does work for the Logan Center, a South Bend non-profit dedicated to helping people with special needs, for which Jordan New is on the board.

For the company's 70th anniversary – in 2017 – its leaders decided to embark on a quest of carrying out 70 "random acts of kindness." It could be anything from buying

groceries for someone struggling financially to helping one of its contractor clients work with some of its customers in need.

"Throughout 2017, we did 76 random acts of kindness, and we've continued that each year since," Jeff New says. "It's our honor and pleasure to be able to help. Helping is at the core of everything we do."

He notes that Mid-City is dedicated to raising money and doing charity work in each community where it has a presence. The New trio also serves on a variety of industry boards, including the American Supply Association and the North Central Wholesalers Association.

Royal treatment

There's no shortage of fun baked into the helpful acts Mid-City undertakes including a hog roast and steak fry for customer appreciation held twice annually. For years, Jeff did all the cooking at these events, including 400-plus steaks. Now Dan and Jordan have taken over that job.

Employees know they're valued also.

"Our philosophy is we train people so well, they could go wherever they want, but

we treat them so well, they don't want to go anywhere else," Jordan New asserts.

The company has an employee appreciation event – a nice dinner for all employees plus one guest each in January – after the holiday rush. The firm also has employee events at the South Bend Cubs and West Michigan White Caps Minor League baseball games. And there are other benefits and perks, including personal profile assessments to help employees with their home life.

In addition, staff members help select charities Mid-City becomes involved with.

Sam New started profit sharing in the 1950s. "Dan and I have multiple people who make more money than us, and that's OK. Not only do we celebrate together, but we win together," Jordan New emphasizes.

"The simplest way to say it is we care about our people and we treat them the way we would want to be treated if we didn't own the company," Dan New adds. "It should be family, faith and work. Work should always be third on that list. We never want to forget that. That's what this company was built on."

RESOURCES: Dan, Jeff and Jordan New, Mid-City Supply Co., at www.mid-city.com

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