

Uncommon Dedication, Exceptional Service

“My father had a simple business philosophy,” says Michael Deese, “treat people fairly, and they will usually return the favor.” Deese is President and owner of Santech Industries, Inc., a company founded by his father in 1971. Based in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, Santech provides engineered replacement parts for specialized automotive markets.

Originally a manufacturer of sealing materials for the aerospace, military, oil field and semi-conductor industries, Santech today brings its full focus to automotive applications. “There is a vast difference between OEM requirements for an O-ring, for example, and those of the rebuilders in the aftermarket,” explains Deese. “To perform acceptably in a rebuilt component, the seals must be designed to compensate for different tolerances and dimensions in the used cores often the original design is simply not adequate to meet the rebuilders’ performance demands. We frequently discovered that it was more cost-effective to start with a completely *new* seal, designed for the specific application and fabricated from carefully formulated elastomers, than to simply copy an OEM design which frequently performed poorly in the rebuilt component environment.”

The Product Must Always Work

Although Santech divested itself of its manufacturing section in 1995, the company maintains an on-site laboratory and continues to do its own research and testing. Santech has freely shared its testing results with the industry and, in many cases, the company’s elastomer compounds which have been developed for use in automotive applications are considered an “unofficial” standard for durability and performance in an increasingly hostile environment.

As an example, the phaseout of CFC-12 and its replacement with HFC-134a raised a lot of questions about sealing material durability due to the increased pressures and temperatures inside an automotive air conditioning system, and the use of PAG and ester lubricants. The traditional elastomer compounds were no longer effective, and the introduction of blend refrigerants only compounded the problem. Santech has relied heavily on its own research to develop materials which will perform adequately under these new conditions.

Industry changes, brought about by the Clean Air Act and EPA regulations, encouraged Santech to focus on what the company has always done best — identify a problem, research the problem, and develop a viable solution. In 1992, the company’s research chemist began testing various elastomer compounds for their chemical, temperature, and abrasion resistance. The results were published and shared with the automotive industry.

The Most Important Resource

While many companies devote as much attention to product research and development as Santech, few match Santech’s dedication to its people and its customers. All employees are cross-trained, a full team-concept is in place, and employee satisfaction is reflected in their longevity with the company. “Michael may be the owner, but we can out vote him!” laughs Gary Villanueva, a member of the Santech Sales Management Team. “The team-concept really works here. It’s a ‘flat’ management system, instead of ‘supervised’ — we all know what our goals are and we all agree on the best way to meet them. Cross-training enables us to do *extraordinary* things for our customers. Any one of us knows how to take an order, how to pull and ship product. A real person answers the phone — we’re not going to lose you in electronic messaging or voice mail.”

Santech’s mission statement, the *Santech Vision*, comes directly to the point.

“Our focus is to be the technological leader in engineered replacement parts for specialized automotive markets. We will make it a pleasure to do business with Santech by providing exceptional customer service. We are committed to an ethical and professional work environment where individuals are empowered to make their own decisions and improvements.”

Embracing The Leading Edge

If you think Santech Industries’ approach to its employees and customers is somewhat old fashioned and behind the curve, rest assured that the company has embraced the emerging technologies and is busily honing the leading edge. State of the art computers, connected by a network system, provide individuals access to all areas of the electronic side of the company. A resident, full-time programmer has Santech “Y2K-ready” and waiting in anticipation for the next century.

Santech’s Internet Web site (www.santech.com) loads quickly, identifying Santech Industries as “The World’s Leading Supplier of Automotive Air Conditioning Seals & Accessories for Service And Internal Compressor Parts for Rebuilding.” The next item is how the visitor may contact the company. “Who we are, what we do, how you can reach us” — what a refreshing concept. How often have you visited a Web Site only to discover that the contact process between customer and company has been lost in the glitz of animated icons, stereo music track and clever font styles? “We know that time is very important to our customers,” Deese explains, “so we do everything we can to make the process of doing business as quick and pleasant as possible.”

Santech prides itself on its response time. “When we receive an order from a customer,” states Villanueva, “we verify the order usually within an hour, either by fax or e-mail. We average a 95% fill-rate, and in most cases can provide same-day in/out service.”

Empowered, effective employees; a genuine understanding of the customer’s needs; an uncommon dedication to product quality — isn’t that the way things *used* to be? At Santech Industries, they still are.