

Applications

Ford Motor Company and Microsoft Corporation have a lot in common with Filling Marble and Tile, Inc.

Pioneering companies significantly improve the way business is done - for the better of themselves and their whole industry. These are companies that take a chance - a chance so big that the entire existence of the organization hangs in the balance.

But brave leadership, who possessed an in-depth knowledge of their industry, followed their instinct and took a leap of faith.

Ford Motor Company pioneered the automotive industry with the invention of the Model-T and the implementation of the assembly line. Microsoft Corporation pioneered the computer generation with the advent of Windows. KMT Waterjet Company pioneered the waterjet cutting industry with its Streamline I ultra high-pressure intensifier.

In the same regard, Filling Marble and Tile revolutionized the decorative stone, marble and tile cutting process with the implementation of an abrasive waterjet system.

This 72-year old New Jersey-based company was one of the first to see waterjet cutting technology in action back in the mid-1980's. At the time, only a handful of waterjet machines existed in the entire United States, with none available on the East Coast for inspection.

"There were only six or seven machines in the whole country," said Ron Simoni, vice president of operations for Filling Marble and Tile. "But it didn't matter. Management saw what the waterjet cutting technology could do, and knew it was how materials would be cut in the future."

Waterjet offered superior machine versatility, was extremely easy to set up, added no excess heat or stress to the cutting surface. This was definitely the future.

So they took a chance - a true-to-life leap of faith - and in 1986 purchased an KMT Waterjet waterjet cutting system complete with an SL-I Streamline intensifier, booster pump, high-pressure valve and cutting head.

Fifteen years later, that unit is still running. And Filling Marble and Tile is running faster than ever.

Filling Marble and Tile has its roots in the residential and commercial plastering business. As the demand for plastering walls weakened, the company changed its focus to ceramic, and also began installing fireproofing materials and tile floors.

But soon the company started to focus its efforts toward the tile installation business. And as this business grew, management realized and seized an opportunity for expansion.

The catalyst for change was the rising cost of purchasing pre-cut tile. Suppliers were raising prices constantly, but consistently delivering late, and often inferior products. So instead of purchasing the cut tile, the company decided to cut the tile themselves AND install it.

Having already recognized the potential benefits of using the waterjet technology, Filling decided the time was right to make the commitment to the waterjet cutting business. The rest, as they say, is history.

The company has grown into an organization that serves a who's-who client list that would make any vendor salivate. Names like Ralph Lauren's Polo Jeans Factory Stores, Disney Corporation, Sony Studios, ESPN and its ESPN Zone Café in Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Fila, Lancombe Cosmetics, Showboat Hotel & Casino, Claridge Hotel & Casino, Bally's Wild West Hotel & Casino, Resorts Hotel & Casino and Nike.

This is not a resume of past Filling clients. These are current clients that keep coming back to Filling for repeat orders.

"Everything leaves here in perfect condition, and our customers rely on that," commented Simoni. "And we go the extra mile to make sure our products get delivered just the way they leave here."

A more accurate description would be that Filling goes thousands of extra miles - the owner of the company personally delivers more than 80% of the jobs produced by Filling.

"Every company says they are committed to customer service, but we want to show our customers that we stand behind our products," explains Dennis Wigglesworth, vice president of Filling Marble and Tile.

"We like delivering our projects because it helps build the kind of relationship you can't build any other way. And we want them to come back and work with us again."

And not only do the customers come back, they tell all their friends, too.

"We don't advertise much, and to be honest, ninety-percent of our business comes from personal recommendations and referrals," admits Simoni. "The way we figure it, if we do a good job for you, you'll tell somebody and they'll use us, too."

Rest assured that the project managers for Bally's Wild West Hotel and Casino told plenty of people about the great work Filling produces.

"Prior to the casino's grand opening three years ago, several employees worked for more than three months straight, for up to 16 hours each day, to meet a deadline that an entire army of men would have had trouble meeting," said Wigglesworth.

But the company developed a plan of attack and worked diligently to stick to it. And to help expedite the job, Wigglesworth and Simoni even slept in a trailer on the premises.

"That was one of those situations that you just did what had to be done," said a humble Wigglesworth. "And if we had to, we'd do it again."

But for all of the high-profile work they do, one of the company's more recent challenges came from, of all places, a high school in Mississippi.

"Our designs are only limited by our customer's imagination," said Simoni. "And Oak Grove High School was ready to put that promise to the test."

School administrators wanted to add their school logo - the face of a traditional American Indian — to its lobby floor.



School logo completely fabricated using KMT Waterjet to meet the Oak Grove High School Administrators' requirements for lobby floor "school logo" decoration.

Around the logo, they also added a ring of text, "Oak Grove High School: Home of the Warriors." The logo required more than 2,000 individual cuts in 260 pieces of Fritz tile. The 1/8" Fritz tiles measured 12" x 12". A total of nine colors were used on the project.

An 80-grit garnet abrasive and water pressure of 40,000 psi were delivered through a 0.010-inch diamond orifice to produce the necessary cutting features.

"The customer wanted the entire job cut with no visible joints, so we spent a lot of time creating a computer program that provided the necessary tolerances and materials overlap," said Simoni. "But all of the computer programming in the world would be useless unless you have the right cutting tools at the point of material contact. Luckily, we have KMT Waterjet for that."

Filling's entire waterjet cutting assembly consists of KMT Waterjet components, including an SL-1 intensifier (which is the original unit purchased in 1986!), booster pump, focusing tube, high-pressure valve and cutting head. KMT Waterjet's

Autoline™ abrasive cutting head is characterized by, among other things, cost-effectiveness, high-efficiency and superior performance.

With KMT Waterjet's Autoline™, Filling Marble and Tile uses diamond orifices that are significantly longer lasting when compared to sapphire/ruby orifices.

"Using the KMT Waterjet waterjet system makes jobs like this routine," said Simoni. "The KMT Waterjet machine can cut just about anything."

Simoni continued, "Our experience with the KMT Waterjet system, as well as the assistance provided by the KMT Waterjet service technicians, has significantly reduced our operating downtime. And ongoing maintenance of the unit has become routine."

Cutting of the Indian head pieces, as well as final assembly of the entire project, was the responsibility of production assistant and Millersville University student Sam Siniavsky.

"Before we started the job, Ron and I created a detailed plan for cutting and assembling the whole job on the computer," said the Industrial Technology major.

"It made the assembly process a lot easier and faster."

Filling Marble and Tile is once again poised for growth. The company is ready to bring another unit on line full time - it will be the company's third. And as Filling continues to expand, KMT Waterjet will be there to support them.

"We continue to purchase and use KMT Waterjet products because they are the best," said Simoni. "And when we have a question or a problem, KMT Waterjet responds in a flash. Their service people explain things very well and help us keep our machines running."