

Its name may change, but Okay remains tops

By CHARLES PAULLIN
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have been around for more than 100 years and have changed names, but they have always been leaders in their field.

Located at 200 Ellis St., Okay Industries makes parts and assemblies for other businesses with a primary focus in the medical industry. The manufacturer has a second location in Berlin at 245 New Park Drive.

The business began in 1911 under the name B. Jahn Manufacturing as a tool and die company. Then in 1968, it changed its name to Okay Industries as a tribute to a plant supervisor at B. Jahn who had a long Polish name but shortened it to Okay.

“We like to say ‘We’re better than average,’ but that’s where the name came from,” said President and CEO Jason Howey. Howey’s father bought the company with some outside investors in



Wesley Bunnell | Staff
President Jason Howey on the Okay production floor in Berlin.

1990 and he later asked to come to work for Okay Industries.

Along with the name change came a change in the business to a contract manufacturer. Nowadays, it manufactures parts for the medical industry such a stapling tools, and inflatable pacemakers and defibrillators.

Parts for endoscopic cutters, arthroscopic surgery tools and robotic surgery tools are other components the manufacturer builds.

The engineering and innovative driven company takes pride in the importance of their very complex parts and sets themselves apart from other manufacturers with their attention to precision.

“They’re mission critical,” said Howey. “If there is a failure, someone’s life is at stake.”

Throughout the years, the technology driven company has stayed on top of emerging trends in the industry and made sure its employees are the best

and brightest.

They were early adopters of a cloud-based Enterprise Resource Planning system, which helps organize the business, and are leaders in applying automation and the software behind robotics use, said Howey.

“We spend a lot of money on training,” Howey added. The business has just under 300 employees across their two facilities.

Going forward, parts are getting more and more complex, with different materials and smaller sizes, Howey said, meaning staying on top of technology trends is of importance to his business.

Applying big data and augmented reality are some of those changes, said Howey. “Your machines and equipment are becoming much more sophisticated, how do you leverage that technology to make you smarter?”

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