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SECRETS TO SUCCESS

How to take on Fortune 500 companies

Local small business owner sells mixers globally

BY TOMOYA SHIMURA
STAFF WRITER

ADELANTO • Hidden Valley Ranch, Diet Pepsi or Tylenol. If you consume any of these popular products, there's a good chance they were made using mixers from a factory in Adelanto.

Scott Turbon Mixer Inc. founded by Bill and Linda Scott 31 years ago, designs and builds stainless steel mixers for many of the largest food, pharmaceutical, cosmetic and chemical processing facilities. It ships products not just in the United States but to about 20 other countries around the world.

With 40 or so employees, the company has successfully competed against much bigger manufacturers such as SPX, a Fortune 500 company.

How? Bill Scott knows where to fight. The company goes after a niche market, sometimes even creating one.

"We want to be known as the stainless steel specialist, so when companies call for stainless steel mixing equipment they will call us first," Scott said.

Fabricating stainless steel machinery costs more than regular steel so the margins are often slimmer, but his company gets the order by manufacturing high-quality mixers, Scott said.

He compares it to an auto industry. "You have so many car companies, but how many look and perform like Ferrari and Lamborghini?" Scott asked.

A VISIONARY OWNER

Scott describes his strength as being a problem solver for his clients.

Before he started making industrial mixers, Scott owned a company that manufactured industrial filters. Back then mixers lacked power, Scott



SCOTT TURBON MIXER: Bill Scott, second from right, founder of Scott Turbon Mixer Inc. in Adelanto, with, from left, Mohammed Sial, electrical engineer, Linda Scott, wife and co-founder, and Christopher Vaage, engineering director.

"If you are buying from a small company, you are buying from a people. When you look at a big company, you are buying from a company, not from people."

BILL SCOTT • SCOTT TURBON MIXER

Once when he visited a client's insecticide plant in Virginia, he saw a "giant iceberg" of unmixed ingredients floating in the mixer and a pile of filtered remnants waiting to be disposed.

"They are throwing away this very expensive pyrethrin and they are throwing away tons of them," Scott said. "There's this Fortune 500 company that doesn't have the solution."

He sold the filter business in 1979 and was trying to come up with a new product idea when the image of the Virginia plant came back to him.

"I'm going to make a mixer that would eliminate lumps, he thought to himself, so we don't even need a filter."

Scott's employees describe him as a "visionary."

"He knows what customers want more than

they know sometimes," said Christopher Vaage, engineering director for Scott Turbon Mixer.

SON OF A CONSERVATIVE BANKER

Scott was born in Northern California to a banker father and a stay-at-home mother.

He says he inherited most of his personality from his mother, who wasn't afraid to take risks and told her son he could do anything he wanted.

His father, on the other hand, was a hardworking conservative who taught him honesty and integrity, Scott said.

"You have to be willing to take a risk and risk everything," Scott said. "But if you are going to take a risk, let it be an educated risk. Analyze and determine the market needs to minimize your risk."

SMALL IS GOOD

Competing against Fortune 500 companies, Scott doesn't think being a small business owner is a disadvantage.

Big companies have a large overhead burden and layers of management with little flexibility, Scott said.

Working closely with its clients and listening to their needs, Scott Turbon Mixer makes custom-designed mixers for each customer.

"Small businesses can be more responsive to customers or market demands," Scott said. "I think a lot of companies like to do business with small companies. If you are buying from a small company, you are buying from people. When you look at a big company, you are buying from a company, not from people."

Many of his workers have been working for the company for more than 20 years, Scott said, so they know their customers personally.

"We are more like their in-house mixer manufacturing company," Scott said.

While many American companies outsource their operations, Scott Turbon Mixer handles almost all its work in a 25,000-square-foot building in an area west of Highway 99S. The employees design, weld, polish, assemble and test the mixers in one facility.

"I can compete with (bigger companies) through creativity, being able to focus on a customer's needs, the ability to customize products and be successful on slimmer margins," Scott said. "Profit is not my primary motive. Providing solutions to my customers' problems is my primary motive. And that allows me to employ my people."

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Don't go back into debt

Dear Dave, We paid off our cars a few months ago and that freed up almost \$800 a month.

We have two small children and we'd like to take a camping trip in a few months, but we need a roomier vehicle. We found a used van and we think we could have it paid off in 12 months. We'd still have more money left than before, so would this be OK?



DAVE SAYS
DAVE RAMSEY

—Melissa

Dear Melissa, Are you telling me you just got out from under \$800 in car payments each month and now you want to go right back and pick up another one? The point is to get out of debt because living debt-free is less stressful. Live like no one else, so later you can live like no one else. I went without a vacation for four years trying to get my life back together. I'm not suggesting you live with this attitude for the rest of your life, but I'm sure there are other ways to make this trip happen.

You don't need a different vehicle to go camping. Buy a couple of tents, throw them in the back of the car and head for the woods. If your cars are just too small to handle everything, then rent a bigger car. I'd rather you spend a couple hundred on that instead of picking up another car payment.

He said he would help; now he's gone

Dear Dave, I think I made a big mistake when I bought my car. I'm having a hard time affording the \$500 a month payment because I earn minimum wage and only work 35 hours a week. My boyfriend, who was supposed to help me, moved out and left me. I owe \$20,000 on the car, but I know it's still worth about \$19,000. What should I do?

—Rachel

Dear Rachel, Sell the car. You bought a vehicle that was way out of your league.

Right now, your entire financial world is wrapped up in paying for this car. Depending on a boyfriend to help make the payments was a mistake, too.

At this point, all you need is enough credit to cover the hole you dug. Go to your local bank or credit union and try to get a small loan — about \$3,000. If the car will sell for \$19,000, then sell it and use \$1,000 to cover the difference.

Then take the remaining \$2,000 and buy yourself a little beater. We're not talking about anything cool, just basic, ugly transportation. After that, pick up another part-time job and work like crazy for a few months to get that loan paid back as quick as possible.

For more financial help, visit daveramsey.com.

BIZ BRIEFLY

Free seminars to help boost Google search rankings

The Daily Press will offer free online search-engine marketing seminars for area businesses on Wednesday.

The free seminars are aimed at helping local stores, shops, schools and firms grow their business through online and, in turn, grow their overall business. The workshop

will offer techniques and information to help organizations whether they are interested in an initial website or ensuring a business stays near the top of the Google search rankings.

Search engine optimization, e-commerce, online directories, websites, keywords and how to integrate all these platforms will be discussed through by Jason Smith, an expert from OrangeSoda,

a nationally recognized leader in providing online marketing solutions.

There will be two sessions to choose from, 9 to 11 a.m. and noon to 2 p.m. at the Victor Valley Association of Realtors Conference Center, 11890 Hesperia Road in Hesperia.

To reserve a spot, call (760) 955-5376 or email cmcmeans@vvdaily.com.

WIB offers human resources hotline

The San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board is offering a free human resources hotline for county businesses.

For more information, employers and job seekers can contact the county of San Bernardino's Employment Resource Centers at

(800) 451-JOBS or visit www.csb-win.org.

Job fair to be held at Stater Bros. Stadium

The Adelanto Job & Resource Fair will be held May 19 at Stater Bros. Stadium. The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call (800) 451-5627.

—Compiled from staff reports