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Focus Amid Change

By John Hollowell, Marketing and Technical Services Manager, Kerr Lakeside Inc.

The recent acquisition of Holo-Krome by Fastenal has prompted many distributors in the high strength fastener marketplace to question their relationships with certain product sources.

Indeed, there have been several significant changes to the landscape of socket screw products suppliers over the past several years. Now seems like the time to review them and to ask, "Where should I go for the best solution to my needs and the needs of my end users?"

For those who have sold socket screw products for several decades, it may only seem like recently that you were musing about Mac-It or the move of the manufacturing of

Allen socket screws to Japan. In reality that was twenty-five years ago. The Allen line of screws was rolled into the Holo-Krome product line when Allen and Holo-Krome were purchased by Danaher Tool Group.

The other day I was asked, "What about Blue Devil?" They continue alive and well as Safety Socket, but are now primarily manufacturers on high strength, specialty application and special specification product. Blue Devil product remains available in certain sizes through their distribution arrangement with

Kanebridge.

Today when we say Camcar and speak of socket screw product, it must be separated from Textron, the former parent company having sold fastener operations to Acument Global Technologies. They continue to maintain a strong presence in the automotive OEM fastener market along with some other well-known companies within our industry.

Unbrako, with its 107 year history from the beginnings of Standard Pressed Steel in 1903 based in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, is now a brand name of Deepak Fasteners of India. For the past several years they have partnered in North America with

Interfast of Canada to distribute socket product on the continent. Prior to the acquisition by Deepak, Unbrako had been owned by Precision Castparts Corp., an aerospace and industrial manufacturer based in Oregon. The manufacturing base for Unbrako has moved several times over the past 20 years from Pennsylvania to Ohio to multiple locations in several parts of the globe.

Kerr Lakeside Inc. of Euclid, Ohio has also undergone changes over the past 60 years since being formed in 1948. Beginning as a screw machine house,

the company also became a sales agent for several reputable fastener concerns throughout the 1950's and 1960's. The company began purchasing socket products for resale and eventually made a substantial investment in manufacturing their own products. This decision was born out of Dick Kerr's commitment to selling only the highest quality products. Today, Kerr Lakeside has a variety of cold heading and screw machines and manufacturers over 85% of the socket products we sell along with all of the cold headed and screw machine products that go to our customers. It is significant that Kerr Lakeside inspects the products that it purchases

For those who have sold socket screw products for several decades, it may only seem like recently that you were musing about Mac-It or the move of the manufacturing of Allen socket screws to Japan. In reality that was 25 years ago.



Kerr Lakeside is a manufacturer of Socket Screw products, Cold Headed products, and Screw Machine products.

for resale to its own manufacturing standards. For socket screw products, that means ASME and ASTM specifications, both inch and metric.

Customer service is the hallmark of Kerr Lakeside. The Kerr family, owners and hands-on executives of the company, have continued to inventory to a fill rate of 98+% on standard and semi-standard socket products through the difficult economic times of the past 15 months. With 150,000 square feet of manufacturing space and over 100 machines, the company does not face capacity issues even with

an anticipated upturn in the national economy. Recently, Charlie Kerr, President, responded to a question about that issue this way, "We have

capacity to handle any additional orders that our customers may need filled. Our loyal and our new customers will both receive the same attention to their needs as we have always done." Charlie referred, in part, to the same-day order entry and shipping that Kerr Lakeside's customers have always enjoyed. That responsibility falls to Mike Lantz, National Sales Manager, Socket Screw Products, who also wears the warehouse manager hat. Mike and his agile and able team are the reason that customers have a satisfaction rating as high as the fill rate.

C h a n g e management from a technical viewpoint is shared among the entire staff at Kerr Lakeside. Two managers along with three of our executives are involved in industry technical committees and the management of our ISO and A2LA accreditation requirements. Most recently the company again passed its annual ISO 9001-2008 audit. Several of the group also responded to IFI regarding the proposed merger of ASME/ASTM socket screw standards with ISO documents. The review considered several issues: dimensional reconciliation, manufacturing concerns and application implications.

A reply of this fashion to the IFI goes to the heart of what the Kerr Lakeside brand is, and what it will remain. From Dick Kerr, to Charlie Kerr, through their staff, and onto the manufacturing floor, Kerr Lakeside will only make and sell product that meets all the

demands of the high strength applications in which it is installed.

Charlie Kerr's belief of meeting the demands of the application extends into his salespeople as well. He knows that smiling, and willing-to-entertain-to-get-the-order salesmen are not effective anymore. Today's distributors and end users respond best to someone who can listen first then assist in finding solutions. Engineering staffs have been greatly reduced over the past decade and the person with industry experience and expertise must step forward to educate, and


advise wisely. Kerr Lakeside people have that experience and expertise.

So, this may be your time for consideration.

Consider who you want involved in your business. Is it a competitor, a brand that is reliant upon its history and not its present day status, or could it be a company that continues to stay focused on customers, service, quality, value and technical expertise? Your answer to that question will help you answer the other important and highly relevant question: Do you want your customers

to specify a brand name because of something that has been on their drawings for forty or more years, or do you want to offer them the best solution for today and tomorrow's product.

Kerr Lakeside invites you to share our focus. We offer Premium Products from a Premium Source. Please call us and let us assist you as your business

focuses on success amid these changing times. 

***This may be your time for consideration.
Consider who you want involved in your
business.***



Kerr Lakeside offers over 2,000 Socket Screw products in stock.

About the author: John Hollowell, Marketing and Technical Services Manager for Kerr Lakeside Inc., has 24 years experience in the fastener industry, the past 20 focused on high strength applications. He is a committee member of ASTM F-16.02 and serves as the fastener advisor to NAAMS, a technical committee sponsored by USCAR. John has been published several times in both industry and non-fastener publications. He may be reached at jdh@kerrlakeside.com or by phone at 800-316-5377.