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swarf by Lloyd Graff

I recently had a conversation with Brad Ohlemacher of EMC Precision Machining, the new name and incarnation of an ACME screw machine shop in the Cleveland area, called Elyria Manufacturing Corporation. Brad and his brother Jeff are two of the most studious and innovative job shop owners I know, constantly attending seminars, conferences and learning from proponents the black art of plant productivity. These guys are always on a mission to make their company not just profitable, but a group with identity and team spirit.

Brad and Jeff utilize Verne Harnish's Rockefeller habit of the morning huddle to stoke the production fire at the start of the day. Brad told me they are intrigued by a peer rating approach to filter the chaff from their staff as they continue their relentless push for manufacturing brilliance.

I asked Brad if his desire to build a gem in the contract machining world would ultimately be

thwarted by the ubiquitous bidding process which continually pushes prices lower and margins to zero. He says his firm's answer is to position itself as the company you call in a crisis. By continually honing their skills in the just-in-time world and machining creatively Brad feels EMC has found a niche market where price is not the primary determinant. When a company is down because a supplier just went Chapter Seven, or they had a fire, or a dog ate their software, the Ohlemachers want to be Batman to the rescue. If their plan comes to fruition, the company name, EMC would become synonymous with "emergency-manufacturing-capability." It is an audacious effort but it plays to the strengths of flexibility and teamwork they have been working on for years.

Brad told me that the company was started by his Grandfather, who began the business by repairing potato harvesters out in the fields to rescue farmers' crops after a machinery breakdown.

EMC is returning to its roots.