

Rich Tradition of Innovation at Hagie Manufacturing

Hagie Manufacturing has an unparalleled heritage in Clarion, Iowa. Three generations of the Hagie family have been focusing on innovation in the agricultural machinery manufacturing industry since the 1940s.

Starting out in the seed corn business, Ray Hagie witnessed the introduction of 2,4-D. Knowing there was no unit clearly suited to apply the product, he retooled his first piece of equipment, a detassler, and built the first self-propelled high-clearance sprayer in 1947.

Waves of innovation continued throughout the '50s and '60s. Throughout the remainder of the 20th century, Hagie Manufacturing continued to grow. For more than sixty years, it has remained a family business even amid widespread consolidation.

Strong Leadership Continues

Hagie Manufacturing used vision, great leadership, and family values to build a solid company. Ray Hagie had that vision, which has been carried on by his son, John, and now his grandson, Alan Hagie, as the third generation has taken over the business and welcomes the opportunities of the 21st century.

While increased governmental regulation will affect the overall design of tomorrow's application machines, focusing on what the customer wants will continue to be the key. "There's no limit to the innovation we can bring to the market," stresses Hagie. "We just need to understand what the customers want and give it to them."

CIRAS Partnership adds Dimension and Depth of Service

"CIRAS has been our invaluable partner," says Hagie. "Their professional staff members provide a wealth of technical support services and tools to assist with our growth strategies, human capital development, and company synergy."

CIRAS recently provided a seminar titled Eureka! Winning Ways®. The program is designed to generate growth strategies. "Employees from all areas of the company attended the workshop and brought different perspectives," says Hagie. "Innovation just doesn't happen, it lives in the entire company—and Eureka! Winning Ways helped spur that level of thinking for us."

Another key service provided by CIRAS this past year was business continuity planning. This was a very insightful exercise as it led Hagie to consider business disruption

planning, information technology operating system upgrades, and secondary power sources.

Connections to Valuable Resources at Iowa State University

CIRAS also provided Hagie's senior management team and R&D staff with access to the Virtual Reality Applications Center (VRAC) at Iowa State University.

Hagie was in the beginning stages of design for a new sprayer cab to use in their existing STS sprayer product line. VRAC gave Hagie's team the ability to create and evaluate virtual prototypes. As a result, potential design problems were identified in the early stages before investing in physical prototypes.

Focus on Company Culture

Over the past several years, Hagie has improved the workplace culture. "When you have happy, healthy, and motivated employees, the result is a superior product and experience for the customer," explains Hagie.

"We were experiencing tremendous company growth. In 2008 we had 140 employees, and currently we have just over 300 employees," says Hagie. "We didn't want to lose our small-company feel, and we wanted to ensure a high level of employee satisfaction."

Recent work culture changes include flexible scheduling on the production floor, where employees start anywhere between 4:00 and 7:00 a.m. Employees are also encouraged to decorate their work areas to reflect their personalities. Hagie has even moved his office to the center of the production area. His former office space is now referred to as the Innovation Lounge, where brainstorming blitzes frequently occur.

"As a result of all these and other culture changes, we have a workforce of engaged employees with positive attitudes and energy that is highly contagious," says Hagie.

Because of its legacy of innovation in the agricultural machinery manufacturing industry and its strong commitment to the employees, Hagie Manufacturing recently received the Iowa Farm Bureau's *Renew Rural Iowa* Leader Award.