



# ONE GOAL IN MIND

INDUSTRIAL MAGNETICS AIMS TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR CLIENTS AND PARTNERS. BY JAMIE MORGAN

If you break down the structure of Industrial Magnetics Inc. (IMI), you'll find three divisions that together serve more than 100 markets. Between its Automation, Mag-Mate® and Tramp Metal divisions, the company designs, engineers and manufactures magnetic assemblies and devices for lifting, holding, fixturing, conveying and separation. Although the company supports a wide range of industries, each with their different needs, IMI works with one goal in mind.

## DRIVING THE MARKET

"Our goal is to produce quality-driven products that make lives better," President Dennis O'Leary explains. "Eight years ago, we stripped the company down and changed from being a company driven by the market to being a marketing and solutions-based company. We look for market spaces and create products where we think opportunities exist to increase the efficiency or quality of the end-product, be it at the plant level or elsewhere in the usage stream. Our goal is making things better. That sounds like a broad statement, but it could be ensuring a bag of sugar is free of metal fragments or providing a magnet that makes lifting safer or makes work in a steel plant more ergonomic."

The company's manufacturing process is integrated into one 38,000-square-foot plant, but O'Leary explains that each division has a specialized sales and engineering team acutely focused on bettering prod-



INDUSTRIAL MAGNETICS' GOAL IS TO PRODUCE QUALITY-DRIVEN PRODUCTS THAT MAKE LIVES BETTER.

ucts within its division. IMI's Automation team provides innovative solutions to companies interested in magnetically conveying ferrous metal parts, lids and containers, as well as standard and custom-engineered solutions for stacking, de-stacking, lifting, transferring, conveying and tooling applications.

Within its Mag-Mate® division, the team uses rare earth magnets, ceramic magnets and electromagnets for a wide variety of industrial lifting, holding, fixturing and moving

applications. The Tramp Metal division specializes in industrial magnetic separators for the removal of ferrous metal contaminants from dry or liquid product flows used in industries such as food, chemical, plastics, and feed and grain, to improve product purity for consumer protection and protect capital processing equipment from damage.

"We split the company up this way to better serve the different market spaces and that's where we differentiate," O'Leary stresses. "Our engi-

neering teams are focused on one group as opposed to spanning the globe and taking different calls from different people in different markets. If you look at the tramp metal division, for instance, a lot of those products are for food processing, chemical plants, plastics, mining and the like, so the sales and engineering team is always working on the same types of products and applications and is focused on improving what we can offer every day.”

**‘WE’RE A FABRICATION SHOP THAT JUST HAPPENS TO SPECIALIZE IN DESIGNING AND HOUSING MAGNETIC CIRCUITRY FOR YEARS OF HEAVY-DUTY INDUSTRIAL USE IN THE MARKETPLACE.’**

*-Dennis O’Leary*

#### PRODUCT OF MANY USES

Continuous product improvement is one of IMI’s foundations. The company will take existing products and improve or tweak them to serve customers better and expand the products’ use. A good example is IMI’s Transporter® Low Profile (TPLP) magnet. The TPLP magnetically transfers metal blanks, stampings and parts in automated station-to-station, press-to-press transfer and robotic pick-and-place systems, and it’s typically used for stamped parts, tailor welded blanks, body panels and door panels from refrigerators to office furniture and automobiles among other uses.

The tool was designed for durability and outlasts most vacuum cups while using up to 95 percent less air. It’s able to grasp odd-shaped or perforated parts, operate effectively in any orientation and positively holds parts without dropping or shifting.



IMI MAKES ITS TPLP MAGNET IN A VARIETY OF SIZES TO BETTER MEET CUSTOMERS’ NEEDS AND EXPAND THE PRODUCTS’ USE.

IMI first produced the TPLP 30, which comes in a 3-inch-sized magnet “puck”. But as more customers began to see the efficiencies and benefits that could be achieved with the new TPLP, IMI began producing a range of sizes to meet different needs.

“The next one we introduced to the market was the TPLP 15 because many customers had bent or hydroformed parts in which the contact surface was narrower than three inches, so we designed an inch-and-a-half version for those tighter spaces,” O’Leary says. “A few years went by and people started asking for a heavy-duty version for larger, heavier parts transfer – this meant a bigger TPLP. Instead of using 12 to 16 three-inch magnets, they wanted to use only six to eight bigger ones. So then we came up with the TPLP 50, which is a five-inch version. We took it even one step further and created non-rotating versions, which prevents the transporter from spinning when traveling at high speeds. Our latest brand extensions feature BSPP

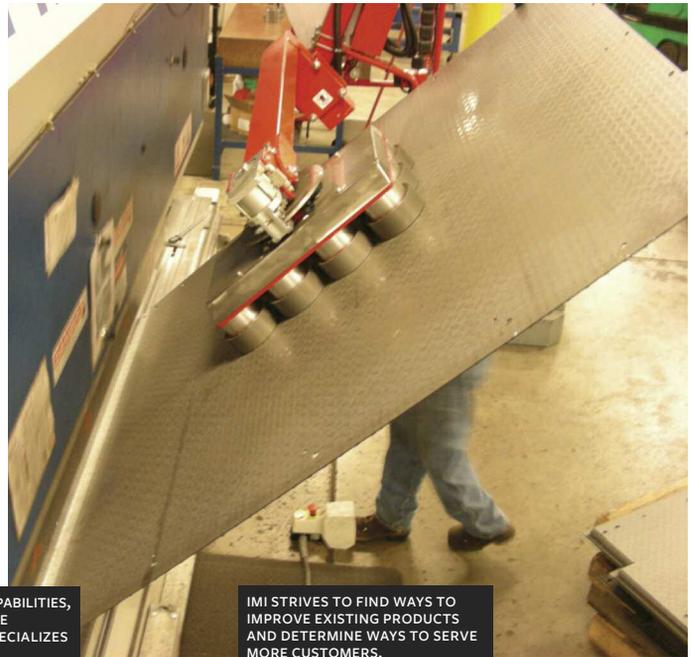
fitting options, de-stacker and extra strength circuits.”

IMI is able to accommodate these varied needs because of its in-house capabilities. The sales and engineering teams might be focused on specific products, but the manufacturing team handles them all. O’Leary says the company is a true fabricator and will showcase its diverse skillset at the upcoming FabTech tradeshow that will be held in Chicago Nov. 18-21.

“We do everything in-house,” O’Leary confirms. “We bring the material in and we will flatten it, bend it, burn it, turn it, grind it, weld it – anything we need to do. We are truly a fabrication shop; there’s no way around it. We’re a fabrication shop that just happens to specialize in designing and housing magnetic circuitry for years of heavy-duty industrial use in the marketplace. This affords us the chance to customize the proper magnet for every application – which often results in a design that is unique and very specific – and provides IMI that differentiation >>



WITH SO MANY IN-HOUSE CAPABILITIES, IMI CONSIDERS ITSELF A TRUE FABRICATION SHOP THAT SPECIALIZES IN MAGNETIC CIRCUITRY.



IMI STRIVES TO FIND WAYS TO IMPROVE EXISTING PRODUCTS AND DETERMINE WAYS TO SERVE MORE CUSTOMERS.

» from the clutter and noise in the markets we serve. We are proud of our team and what we accomplish every day we show up to work.”

IMI recently invested \$1.2 million in a laser and laser press that O’Leary says revolutionized its manufacturing process. The investment has made the company leaner, less wasteful and improved its lead-times. The new equipment meant IMI had to modify its drawing packages to reflect the new processes, but once that was done, the company saw immediate return on its investment.

“It’s changed the way we bring product through the facility and from a manufacturing perspective, it’s eliminated virtually all downstream waste after product comes from the fabrication department,” O’Leary explains. “Before, things would take a lot more measuring, scribing, fixturing and prep work. Now, things fit like a jigsaw puzzle. We’re able to bend material into much more efficient shapes and it just makes for a better end-product.

“Before, the welders and machinists would have to continuously measure, but this investment has eliminated

that,” he continues. “It’s sped up the whole process.”

### GROWING TREND

Looking into the future, IMI will continue to seek ways to improve existing product and find new ways to serve more customers. Last year, the company hit a record number with 12,134 orders booked and it wants to continue that streak. O’Leary says growth over the past few years warrants a plant expansion. The company has nearly tripled in size over the last 12 years and O’Leary sees opportunity to manufacture larger industrial products. No expansion date has been set yet, but the company hopes to expand sooner rather than later.

“Business has been good,” O’Leary says. “The last 10 years we’ve had phenomenal growth here and we expect to continue down the path of profitable and sustainable growth. There is opportunity to grow in all three channels. The only thing restricting us is our capacity, which dictates the size of product we can build – specifically within the tramp metal division. But our growth really dictates the need for expansion. One critical goal we will never take our eye from is ensuring we satisfy our customers and channel partners. We provide them what they ask for and when they ask for it. That was true in 2000, it’s true today and will remain true as we expand and continue our growth.” **mt**

### HOME-MADE

*As a Michigan-based manufacturer, Industrial Magnetics Inc. (IMI) is always looking for ways to keep more of its manufacturing in-house. The company proudly labels its USA-manufactured, assembled, designed and engineered magnetic assemblies with a USA M.A.D.E™ logo.*

*IMI recently announced that its line of magnetic welding squares used to hold steel sheet, plate or tubing during the welding process is now being produced in the United States at its Michigan facility.*

*“We are really excited to be offering an American-made product for the North American worker,” states IMI Strategic Accounts Manager Peter Friedrich. “Manufacturing this product in-house gave us the design control we needed to better respond to our customers’ requests.”*