

Rubber News

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Archer Advanced Rubber Components going strong at 25

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

George Halages is the CEO of a North Carolina-based manufacturer that is celebrating 25 years in business.

Halages credits his employees with most of the success at Archer Advanced Rubber Components, a manufacturer of seals, gaskets and molded rubber in Winston-Salem.

The company has benefited from consistent growth in recent years, and Halages and his team aim to double revenue by 2030, all while maintaining a family-oriented environment that offers big company expertise. That atmosphere is embodied by the company's "One Team—One Direction" motto which Halages believes emphasizes unity and shared goals.

Archer's success has been made possible because company employees bring skills and experience to their roles that allow company leaders to focus on strategic initiatives and long-term planning.

"We've done a good job of building a cohesive team that can run operations and manage the business," Halages said. "We're fortunate to have talented and accomplished people who are industry experts. It's not just a mom-and-pop place anymore."

Archer provides customized seals and gaskets for OEMs in the outdoor power equipment, irrigation systems, appliance and other commercial and consumer product industries. Those customers contract with Archer for precision die-

cut, extruded, lathe-cut and molded rubber components.

"We offer a comprehensive range of product and process capabilities with the flexibility of either domestic manufacturing or global sourcing," said Troy Scott, senior vice president of sales and marketing.

Halages started the business in his garage with co-founder Alyssa White. Among the company's first contracts was an order for 50,000 pieces of a lathe-cut part that Halages and White produced in about eight weeks. Today, that order could be fulfilled in one workday.

"And we still have that customer with us today," Halages said.

In recent years, much of Archer's growth has sprung from the



Archer Advanced Rubber Components CEO, George Halages



Die-cut seals being produced at Archer's North Carolina facility

implementation of new technology and equipment, specifically automated capabilities that enhance or replace the mechanical processes. Archer has invested time and money in what Halages refers to as “evolutionary” improvements impacting such processes as rubber molding, extrusions and die-cutting.

A few years ago, company leaders began investing in automated injection molding machinery, robotics and high-speed vision inspection, Halages said. A recent area of investment is materials technology development and innovation to enhance application performance, ensuring greater durability, efficiency, and reliability for our customers.

The focus on innovation led to the addition of rubber injection molding to augment compression molding for producing precision rubber parts. While compression molding still has its place in the business, investments in continuous improvement strategies have defined the company's path. The result has been faster throughputs and reduced costs for both Archer and its customers.

“One thing that we always try to do for our customers is to reduce their total cost of ownership,”

Halages said. “That's what we live every day.”

Archer can do this by offering a high level of flexibility and customization that sophisticated OEMs demand. The company is not tied to just one or two manufacturing processes or secondary operations. In addition to its four primary product lines, Archer offers splicing, assembly, marking and kitting services. This is how Archer can meet customers' needs and serve as a “true partner,” Halages said.

In fact, Archer is directly involved in many aspects of their customers' business from inventory management and reviewing supply agreements, to scheduling and product printing. “That's what customers want these days,” Halages

said. “They want true partnership.”

All current rubber processes and practically all of the firm's employees are under one roof in Winston-Salem. With nearly 150 employees currently in-house, the company's future growth and need for more hires will be defined by a continued focus on core capabilities and potential expansion through acquisitions.

Archer acquired extrusion and die-cutting companies several years ago, and subsequently built its own molded product capability. About 80 percent of its products are now made in North Carolina, up from 30 percent before the acquisitions and added manufacturing processes.

Halages still keeps his eyes open for acquisition opportunities. He frequently receives calls from rubber manufacturers looking to sell their business. He also gets calls from companies interested in buying Archer, but Halages said that's not happening.

“I have no interest in selling this company,” he said. “I enjoy helping a customer solve a problem or improve their product. That's how we built this business and it's what I love.”



A material expert measures material properties in Archer's in-house lab