

Pittsburgh Business Times - August 20, 2007
<http://pittsburgh.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/stories/2007/08/20/focus4.html>

PITTSBURGH BUSINESSTIMES

BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY: [Who or what is to blame for the crumbling airline system?](#)

Family values kept Heyl going

Pittsburgh Business Times - August 17, 2007 by [Tracy Carbasho](#)

The top officers at Heyl & Patterson Inc. are not descendants of the company's founders, but their family has perpetuated the legacy of the business since 1918.

"We have learned from our parents and our grandparents," CEO John Edelman said. "Family values are part of our corporate culture, and it's one of the reasons the business has survived."

Founded in Downtown Pittsburgh in 1887, the company designs and manufactures barge unloaders, rail car dumpers, ship unloaders and other materials handling equipment.

Heyl & Patterson also offers engineering services and environmental processing equipment, including dryers, coolers and mixers.

The company now has headquarters in Robinson Township with a laboratory and warehouse in Green Tree. The company is not just surviving, but thriving with a robust order book filled with requests for new equipment and replacement parts for machinery that has been operating for decades.

"We recently received an order for a replacement part from a customer in the Great Lakes area for equipment that dates back to 1916," said Edelman's brother, Harry IV, who serves as senior vice president. "We still have the original drawings."

The Tennessee Valley Authority in Chattanooga has purchased equipment from Heyl & Patterson since the 1960s. The TVA, which has 11 fossil plants that receive coal from barges, trucks and railcars, uses six Heyl & Patterson machines, including three continuous bucket barge unloaders, two rotary car dumpers and one clamshell bucket barge unloader.

"Heyl & Patterson also provides TVA with annual inspections of our equipment, as well as replacement parts," said Greg Barker, a system engineer with the TVA. "The company's field experience and expertise on barge unloaders and rotary car dumpers, along with its willingness to help the TVA, has been a major asset."

In order to meet the increasing demand from customers, Heyl & Patterson has increased its staff to more than 50 employees in the past year by hiring engineers, administrative personnel and clerical workers.

"We are swamped with a backlog of business that is greater than it has been in the last 15 to 20 years because our customers are profitable and they are spending money," John said.

The average cost for one of the industrial machines sold by Heyl & Patterson is \$1 million, and the brothers say the average life expectancy of the equipment is 25 years. The Edelmanns declined to divulge financial information about their privately owned company.

Worldwide customers include Fortune 1000 companies in a variety of markets, including chemical, mining, environmental, electric, ports, river terminals, material transfer, railroads, soil remediation, steel mills and shipping.

"When we contract with a client, we give them an expected delivery date that is longer than what it used to be because of our backlog," Harry IV said. "We are maintaining the delivery dates by increasing our resources and our staff."

The family's involvement with the company began 89 years ago when the Edelmanns' grandfather, Harry Jr., started working in the accounting department and became CEO in the late 1960s. Their father, Harry III, started his tenure at the company in 1952.

John, who is 50 years old, spent summers working at the company when he was in college and opted to continue working at the family business after he graduated. Harry IV, 52, performed advertising and marketing duties on a part-time basis prior to joining the business full-time.

Tracy Carbasho is a freelance writer.



Joe Wojcik
 Heyl & Patterson Inc. CEO
 John Edelman, left, with his
 brother and company Senior
 Vice President Harry
 Edelman IV.
[View Larger](#)

[Contact the Editor](#) [Need Assistance?](#) [More Latest News →](#)

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.