

# A STRONG ALLIANCE

Allied Blower & Sheet Metal Ltd. is improving its processes and productivity to provide greater value to its customers.

{ BY STACI DAVIDSON }



For more than 35 years, Allied Blower has been a turnkey supplier of air system solutions.

Just as its name suggests, Allied Blower & Sheet Metal Ltd. engineers and manufactures air cleaning systems, and provides custom sheet metal fabrication services. Its complete offerings, however, can't be explained in such a simple manner. Allied Blower's value proposition involves a comprehensive collection of expertise and capabilities that ensure its customers receive the highest-quality environmental technology.

"Our goal is not to be just a supplier of sheet metal," General Manager Bruce Wendel explains. "We are a turnkey supplier of air system solutions, and we want customers to think of us when they need a system to remove particles and pollutants from the air. Everything we do has been developed to meet our customers' needs – our processes and our design capabilities and our technology."

Based near Vancouver in Surrey, British Columbia, Allied Blower has four fabrication facilities in Western Canada and serves customers' needs in Central and Eastern Canada, as well as in the Maritime provinces. The company specializes in creating systems that remove dust, fumes and residues from industrial processes, the pneumatic conveying of materials and the handling of waste.

The company completes more than 3,000 projects each year. In addition to creating systems for

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-Bruce Wendel, general manager

dust control, wood processing and pneumatic conveying, Allied Blower fabricates components and systems for gas cleaning and VOC control. It also provides service and repair of its systems, and replacement filter bags and parts.

"We are a niche player – dust control is our niche," Wendel says. "We are strong in our knowledge and expertise of this sector, mostly due to Allied's employees, whose experience and depth are unmatched in the industrial air-system industry. We offer a turnkey solution – design, manufacturing, supplies, installation and ongoing service."

"This presents a low level of risk to customers – they only have to deal with us, so it helps them reduce their number of suppliers. Also, because all of our services are part of the package, our clients get the lowest cost of ownership and cost of service."

Allied Blower's customers have traditionally been from the forestry industry, including sawmills, waste wood plants, engineered lumber manufacturers and pulp and paper operations. By expanding its capabilities, however, the com-

The **Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, Local 8** Executive and

Membership wish to extend congratulations to

Allied Blower & Sheet Metal Ltd. on their 35th Anniversary.

We look forward to our continued partnership with Allied in the years to come.



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pany also serves customers in grain handling, food processing and mining and mineral processing markets, as well as the energy sector. “Our company has been around for 35 years, and we have more experience than anyone else out there,” Wendel says.

“As a result, we are leveraging that expertise to go into other markets, such as energy, power generation, oil and gas, and oil sands.”

The diversification of its customer base helped Allied Blower work through the slowed economy. “We definitely saw our business slow a bit during the last half of last year and part of this year,” he says. “When the capital markets dried up, everything went on hold, but we are starting to see a reasonable uptick now. The green energy and bio-fuels industries are going strong, and we have significant expertise in those areas. Construction has started up again, and with more housing, the wood industry is coming back. We also are working a lot with the mining and energy markets right now.”

### REDUCING RISK

One of the company’s recent customers was the designer of a potash mine expansion. The mine’s processing system was expanded with new and old air streams routed into one system. This solution caused various balance issues, resulting in increased capital costs as well as ongoing

energy waste. Allied Blower proposed a system that solved this problem and reduced the mine’s operating costs.

“By having us design, fabricate, supply and provide start-up services, that customer was able to save close to \$100,000 in initial costs,” Wendel says. “Additionally, the system we created allowed them to save another \$100,000 in energy costs annually.”

Wendel explains that customers’ dust issues can lead to OSHA violations, add risk to their operations resulting in higher insurance costs) and increase unscheduled downtime. These problems can also dramatically affect throughput, which is costly to customers.

“We are like a customer’s black box – we can go in and figure out what is causing the problem,” he says. “Customers don’t necessarily need to understand the problem, they just need it to go away quickly so their operation is not slowed down. With our systems, customers can deal with their environmental concerns and address significant throughput issues.”

### IMPROVING CUSTOMERS’ ROI

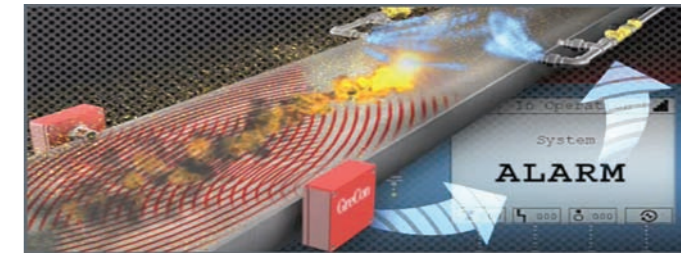
Customers increasingly want to improve their ROI with these systems, Wendel notes. With a push toward “a project-management mentality,” he says, Allied Blower’s customers want trans-

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According to Allied Blower, the green energy and biofuels industries remain strong.

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terms of time and cost.

“We also added 3-D design capabilities so we can show our customers what their system will look like via a 3-D as-built model,” he continues. “We’ve been training our people to use 3-D systems and we’ve made major investments in the necessary software and hardware. We’re also looking at upgrading our ERP system to ensure it links all of the areas of the organization.”

He believes these improvements will be important in Allied Blower’s growth.

“Growth simply for the sake of growth doesn’t make a lot of sense for us,” he says. “We are more focused on getting our costs down and increasing our profitability with our existing business. Our improvement efforts – a 50/50 split between process improvements and better productivity – will be key in our strategic growth. We will continue to design, build, supply, install and service our products, but these improvements will help us be more effective in all of those areas.” •

parency in how it creates their systems. As a result, the company is focused on upgrading its design and project management capabilities.

“Owners want project management methodologies to better track the projects we do for

them, which improves their ROI,” Wendel says. “Step one – the most important thing we can do – is to get the project built on time and on budget. Our people have been going through extensive training to improve our project delivery in

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