



Creating World-



From Chicago, Illinois, HydraForce provides companies worldwide with hydraulic valve cartridges and manifold circuits. Long time customer Haldex relies on HydraForce for custom solutions and high quality.

HydraForce President Jim Brizzolara is not one to shy away from a challenge. His casual, blue-jeaned appearance belies a fierce competitiveness and deep knowledge of his industry. When he states the hydraulic valve manufacturer's vision is to provide innovative technical solutions that can change the world, he means it. And topping that, in the next breath he defines the company mission as creating world-wide customer delight. "It's our only job description," says Brizzolara of the company he helped found in 1985. "It's my job description. It's everyone's job description. We don't just care about customer satisfaction, because if you satisfy the customer and someone comes along and delights them, you're out!"

HydraForce is the largest cartridge valve systems manufacturer in the world. Headquartered in Lincolnshire, Illinois near Chicago, its large, bright manufacturing facility pumps out a steady stream of directional, pressure and flow

wide

customer delight



control valves to a client base that includes the construction industry, agriculture, lawn care and crane makers. And in a business that is increasingly viewing valves as a commodity and moving manufacturing to low cost countries, HydraForce remains steadfast in its commitment to its U.S. workforce and using technology to create custom solutions.

The stats are impressive. A sales increase of 22% in the past year. A doubling of the business in the last five years. Five hundred employees at Lincolnshire representing 37 countries, and never an employee layoff in the history of the company. Part of that success, says Brizzolara, comes from a commitment to continuing education. They

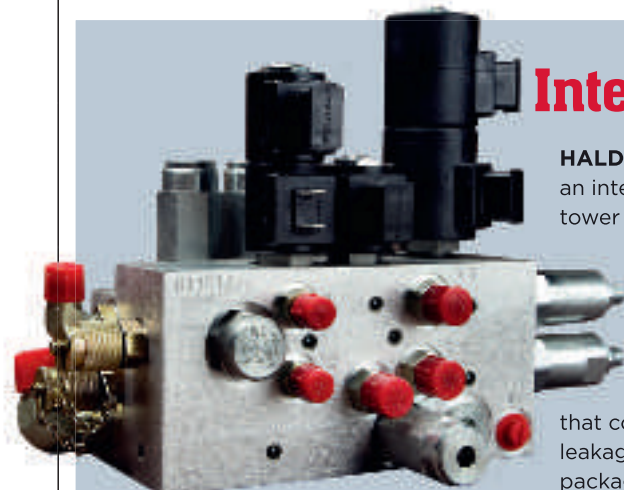
Integrated power with combined expertise

HALDEX AND HYDRAFORCE collaborated on an integrated power unit for a portable light tower used on construction sites. To prevent damage to the light bank, the need was for smooth and precise extensions and retractions in both the articulated and telescopic boom sections of the tower.

Starting with the HydraForce valves that combine efficiency with extremely low leakage, Haldex provided a final integrated package with all the hydraulic system controls,

including 3 position/4 way directional valves, pilot operated check valves and relief valves.

While traditional systems use hoses to connect a power unit to a separate valve block, Haldex integrated all the valves into the power unit, providing a streamlined, highly efficient package that reduced potential leak paths and eliminated the cost for additional hoses and fittings. It was an elegant solution made possible with the combined expertise of HydraForce and Haldex engineers. ■





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Jim Brizzolara

employ four full-time instructors to teach hydraulics and continuous improvement methodologies, or Kaizen as it is known in industry. Brizzolara himself estimates he spends 30% of his time teaching new technologies.

HydraForce is still selling 60% of its products in the United States market, and Haldex is a long-time and important customer. Incorporated in 1985, HydraForce became a subsidiary of John S. Barnes Co within two years. Then when their parent company was sold to Haldex in 1988, HydraForce was spun off as an independent company. They remain a privately owned firm to this day.

Art Smith is the vice president of international sales and marketing for HydraForce. He once worked for Haldex. He explains how HydraForce as a new company did a survey identifying 37 hydraulic cartridge manufacturers. Today there are only about a dozen. To stay alive, he says, you have to be good. "What we offer is a focused, engineered product for our customer applications," explains Smith. "We focus, and we do it very quickly. Speed, quality and delivery are our core competencies."

A FLUID POWER CUSTOMER like Haldex recognizes that quality, and buys products from HydraForce for shipment to its United States and worldwide locations. Haldex will take the various cartridge valves and install them in their many power unit systems, including pressure controls,

dump valves for hydraulic motors, and valves that control truck tailgate lift systems.

Says Brizzolara, "The primary reason we won the Haldex business initially was reliability; a product that worked all the time." They now ship to Haldex every week, explains Smith. "Haldex buys from us because we have the most cost competitive valves with the highest quality, a five year warranty, and the shortest lead time. And we're working on newer solutions, in which we marry our cartridge valve technology with their pumps, motors and power units."

Echoing that sentiment is Brian Nelson, Haldex Senior Vice President. Says Nelson, "They follow us globally, their quality is excellent, their performance is excellent, and they generate leads for us." The symbiotic aspect of the relationship proves very beneficial to Haldex. "When HydraForce goes out to sell their valves," says Nelson, "they might need a hydraulics product. They will come to us and say, 'We have a great opportunity, but we need a pump to go along with it.' We can then collaborate on the project and pick up new business."

HydraForce is pushing hard to find new markets. If it's still done pneumatically or mechanically, they're right there asking, "Can it be done hydraulically?"

"In the early days in the industry," says Brizzolara, "hydraulics was perceived as a kind of dirty way of doing things. There could be oil spills. You wouldn't dare take a hydraulic lawnmower onto a golf course green for instance. The quality has improved dramatically over the years, so now you see hydraulics in hospital rooms, in food processing plants." That's why HydraForce now employ 63 designers, providing custom solutions for a wide range of customers in the U.S. and around the world. ■