50 Special Years
The Beginning Years
Dear Friends,

Deciding the format for an anniversary edition of IMPRINTS was a challenge as there are so many interesting items and stories to include. However, during my years as Human Resources Manager, the phrase that I would hear the most in describing Whirley Industries, and later, Whirley-DrinkWorks! was “It’s the people who make the company special; the people and their stories are fascinating.”

When you look at the following pages, you will find the story of our company and personal memories of TeamMates who have firsthand knowledge of those times. I know it would require another book to include everyone. Perhaps it will happen on a future anniversary.

Just one person never completes a project of this size. Terry Lyle, DiAnn Savko, Greg Leif and members of the Office Department deserve a large share of credit for its completion.

We hope you find the book entertaining and informative. These have been 50 Special Years!

Rita Bevevino
November 2010
Warren native Hal Conarro and New York City resident Bob Sokolski enrolled at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire the fall of 1950 without realizing they would become lifetime friends and business associates.

Bob and Hal joined a group of students who played Bridge regularly and when they joined the same fraternity their friendship grew. After graduating in June 1954, Hal took a job as a Bank Examiner for the Bank of New York. Bob was commissioned an Army officer due to his membership in the ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) in college. Bob served 16 months in Korea as an Ordinance officer and as a platoon leader, and the last few months of his term he was stationed at Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island.

Hal and Bob led active social lives. Hal introduced Bob to his friend, Sara (Sally) Plumb who became Mrs. Sokolski in August 1956. The future Mary Conarro was introduced to Hal by a friend; Mary and Hal were wed that same year.

Bob had been to Warren for a few visits before and after his marriage. He noticed that there were no coin operated laundry facilities in Warren, although they were very successful in New York City.

“I was working in New York writing advertising copy for an ad agency and a television station. I always wanted to have a business of my own and it would have been too hard to do it in New York,” says Bob. “I had an idea that owning laundromats could be an additional way to make money; I could moonlight nights and weekends and keep my ‘day job’. I took a job in Warren for one of Stuart Myers’ businesses and did their advertising for two years.”

Hal adds, “We opened our first laundromat and it was a huge success. I was working full-time and quickly Bob joined me full-time.

Mary Millard was the company’s first Team-Mate. She worked as Secretary/Receptionist until her retirement in 1991 with 20 years of service. “I recall the first day I was hired. The office looked like it needed a cleaning and so I returned in the evening with bucket and supplies. Bob and I were both surprised to run into each other. I didn’t know that he would walk in at any hour. He does that, you know.”
We added several other laundromats in the Bradford, Jamestown, Kane and Warren areas.” They decided to become distributors for laundromats to increase profits. Dry cleaning services and even a diner were added to their businesses. The company became known as “Whirley Wash” - a description of the motion of the clothes as they moved around the washers and dryers.

Bob and Hal performed the maintenance and repairs on all their equipment themselves until one day when Bob put a screwdriver into a washing machine that had an electrical problem and wound up on the floor from the shock. It was time to hire professional help to fix and maintain equipment. With the extra help, Bob began to look for other businesses to buy. The self-serve coin operated car washes were a possible “fit” with the laundry business.

Bob suggested to Hal that they try selling coin operated car washes. After testing a car wash they had purchased, Bob decided that he and Hal could build car washes in Warren that were of better quality.

“Hal was skeptical and I have to admit that getting it designed and operational was the hardest job I have ever done,” says Bob. “We actually built one prototype car wash and kept revising.

Their car washes began to sell and eventually about 200 car washes were manufactured in Warren and sold throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. There even was a Warren-made car wash installed in Fairbanks, Alaska. Most car washes also sold gasoline. In fact, Warren area radio listeners heard commercials written by Bob for “Beep Beep” gasoline to emphasize lower gas prices.

The addition of gasoline sales to the car washes and, when possible, using one bay of the car wash for a coin operated laundry facility, gave Whirley the recognition that enabled growth and profitability. The young company prospered in the 60’s and 70’s due to the combination of services available and the diligence of the owners and support staff to always have a clean, well-functioning facility at each location.

Never content with the status quo, Bob began to look at other business opportunities and Whirley Industries was about to take shape. The focus for Whirley Industries would be PLASTICS.
During the period that Bob and Hal were developing coin operated laundries, dry cleaning and car wash businesses, Bob’s father learned about the availability of molds used to make salt and paper dispensers and bought them for Bob who arranged to pick up the molds on his way home from a family vacation in Connecticut. The molds were put in the back of the Sokolski family station wagon and brought to Warren.

“We were busy with our businesses and so it took a while to get around to the molds. In the beginning, parts were molded in Erie and were assembled by here by our Team-Mates in Warren. We then used a shop in Pittsburgh where John Downey did some consulting and I convinced John to move his family to Warren and work for Whirley,” Bob explains.

Bob had taken the salt and pepper dispensers to a trade show. Sales were slow until a restaurant supply distributor in Jacksonville, Florida began ordering significant numbers of them. The distributor put samples on all the restaurant tables at no cost to the owner; customers bought the dispensers after trying them and sales in the Southeast rose steadily.

J.W. Carriker of Clinton, Georgia, another distributor, was talking with Bob one day and just happened to say that the salt and pepper dispensers were the best products since the ceramic Cow Creamer that he had sold. The idea interested Bob so John Downey was put to work designing a unique plastic version for Whirley. The rest is history. Millions of the “Moo Cow Creamers” were sold and they brought name recognition to Whirley. Today in 2010, Moo Cow Creamers are collectibles and sold on Ebay.

Two injection mold machines were purchased to mold the dispenser parts in house. In 1972, Whirley bought another mold machine at a bankruptcy sale in Ohio. That same year, Bob purchased a set of molds, one of which became the M20 - the original travel mug.

Bob used his new idea of returning a mug to the store and getting a refill. Coffee Refill Business in convenience stores was a revolutionary idea. The program was (and is) a phenomenal success and provided the momentum and funds to develop many new products. Whirley was on its way to becoming a world leader in the manufacturing and sales of drink containers.
The next decade was a period of steady growth and many new products were introduced. Whirley developed an ink that would stand out when printed on a dark surface. These inks were called “neon” and the demand for neon imprints overwhelmed the factory for a time in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

**OTHER PRODUCTS FROM 1980**

- Whirley Flyers
- Sun Visor
- Coloring Tray
- Blimp & Blastoff Pens
- Coasters & Coaster Set
- Non-Splash Lid
- Keep “HOT”... Keep “COLD”
- Virtually Unbreakable
- Drinking Well... Protects Lips
- Dishwasher Safe
- Stain & Odor Free

_John Downey_

V.P./Chief Engineer

John Downey was working as an independent mold designer in Pittsburgh and had done some work for Bob and Hal when Bob asked him to join his new company. “I decided that this was a good opportunity for me and my family so we (wife Renata and eight children) came to Warren,” says John. “Once the M20 became successful, the work pace increased and it hasn’t stopped,” he adds with a smile. The combination of Bob’s knack for knowing what products will sell well and John’s creativity in bringing Bob’s ideas to life have resulted in an array of products. “I like to tinker in my garage and the ideas just keep coming,” John adds in his usual soft-spoken manner.

John’s development of an printing plate alignment system is invaluable even today; multi-color imprints are easily aligned to avoid blurring of lines, words and images and overlapping colors. In the early years he used mirrors to avoid printing messages backwards. Technology has solved many of these issues, but John used his intuition and talent to solve problems long before the advent of the computer.
Whirley’s first plastic product was the Salt and Pepper Dispenser, a product that we bought for $500 because the previous owner couldn’t make it a sales success. The molds existed and were sent to custom molders to make the parts, which we then assembled. That’s when I first met John. He was a freelance consultant who redesigned the molds and helped us understand plastic molding. He then designed the Cow Creamer and I asked John to move from Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania (near Pittsburgh) to Warren as a full-time TeamMate 40 years ago.

John designed the assembly line for the Cow Creamer in the Bakery Building where the Sample Room is now located. It was our first “cellular manufacturing” system and it worked great! The parts started at one end of a long line and the Cow Creamers were packed in gift and shipping boxes at the other end – we made millions of Cow Creamers, thanks very much to John’s creativity and initiative.

Ever since 1970, John has been involved with our products in terms of design and implementation. Dave Klenck was John’s assistant in those earlier years specializing in automation and assembly. Together they made our product line successful. Start-to-finish.

John Downey is the most even-tempered, easy-going and great friend I have ever known. He is always ready to help others and never looks for the credit he so richly deserves. I think that John knows something about almost everything. Whatever the problem, he either knows how to deal with it or quickly finds a book to help solve any issues.

John Downey, Dave Klenck and now Ruth McClellan were all self-taught with limited formal education. Big companies might “turn up their nose” at not having fancy engineering degrees, but I wouldn’t trade John, Dave or Ruth for any of them. We are kind of a “blue-collar” company and that’s what works best for us.

Bob Sokolski

Eleanor “Toot” Larsen recalls there being a fire in the laminating section at Bakery. Toot says that she has the nervous response of laughing when she is stressed. She still shudders as she recalls putting out the fire with an extinguisher and laughing uncontrollably. She retired in 2005 with 32 years of service.

Jim Stewart worked on car washes and also made the transition to Molding. He served as Mold Department Manager, retiring in 2000 after 35 years.

Early Travel Mug imprint - 1977
Sally Sokolski came to Whirley in 1988 to work “a few hours a week for a short time” as a fill-in for the Human Resources Manager’s position. During her eleven years as Human Resources Manager she changed the culture of the company.

Sally and her assistant, Jen Lester, hired record numbers of TeamMates to support the company’s growth. Training the TeamMates was a major focus of her tenure. Team Building was the first program she initiated and it resulted in groups of TeamMates working together on production issues, developing a company newsletter, becoming more involved in the day-to-day problems and working toward solutions.

Another of Sally’s training programs focused on supervisory and management training with Manufacturers’ Association of Erie and Development Dimensions International (DDI), Many TeamMates also took part in customer service training, small group training in business writing, training trainers, and job-specific technical training. This major effort went on for several years and still continues on a more limited basis today.

Under her direction, the Safety Manager began a company-wide focus on ergonomics of workstations in the plants and offices. Rossiter workouts were offered to ease the effects of repetitive work motions. As the company became self-insured for Workers’ Comp, she and staff members studied in Harrisburg to make Whirley’s Case Management an effective program.

Sally followed Bob’s directive and upgraded the TeamMate handbook, helped develop and define the role of the Good Idea Coordinator, established a TeamMate recognition program based on years of service. She was (and is) interested in the well being of Whirley-DrinkWorks! TeamMates.

Her greatest interest was in mentoring new Managers and Supervisors and she did so with good advice and good humor. Her frequent comment when things were hectic in the office was “You know, I was really never meant to be a Manager, I was meant to be a princess!” She received a magic wand, cape and crown on her last day at work before retirement, but to everyone at Whirley-DrinkWorks!, Sally IS a princess every day!

**CONTINUING GROWTH**

Many changes took place in every department during the next few years. The following summaries are intended to cover the highlights only.
Developing Years
“During my first year in the Molding Department, there were three people on each shift: a Supervisor and two Packers; of course this was about thirty years ago,” Bruce Shreve says with a smile. “We only used two kinds of plastic and offered very few color choices for our products,” he adds. “We used a powdered colorant and it had a tendency to spread all over the place. Today’s colorant is vastly improved. We offer more than 100 colors for our products and we have far more types of plastic in use.”

Like other Whirley-DrinkWorks departments, many changes have taken place. “The addition of robots to our work processes has been remarkable. In 1994-95, as shift Foreman, I had as many as 27 people on my shift. Today there are eleven on the team and 15 during the busy season. The reduction in people is largely due to the robots.

A major change in operations occurred in the ‘90s when the department changed from eight hour to twelve-hour shifts based on the need for 24/7 production. Bob Sokolski learned of this Canadian work model and after investigation, dedetermined that it would work well at Whirley.

“This change has been a good one for the company and for the people. They only go to work 50% of the days and can organize their childcare, family life, medical appointments etc. to fit the schedule. The built in overtime helps the budget,” says Bruce. As a consideration for working a three-day weekend, the company offers lunch on Sunday. The resulting meals vary from hamburgers and hot dogs to full holiday meals where team members cook at home and combine their efforts to have a real feast.

There are more than 200 active molds in use by the department. Injection and Blow Mold presses and molds are reviewed on a regular basis and replaced when needed. The latest additions to the department are nine all-electric presses that are energy efficient.

In 1997, the company purchased three Blow-Molding presses. This was a new way of processing plastic and took a
team effort to master. Two years later, eight more presses were purchased. By 2009, Whirley-DrinkWorks! produced and sold over 9 million blow molded bottles, largely to the theme parks.

Reheated Stretch Blow Molding and Over Molding are the latest processes being utilized in the Mold Department. Continuous improvement in the production of molded products has been a big factor in Whirley-DrinkWorks! success as a business.

Kerry Abbott was originally hired as an Assistant to Mold Manager Jim Stewart. She was expected to concentrate on the Human Resources type of day-to-day tasks to allow Jim to spend more time on the Production floor. Her duties have expanded as the Assistant to Plant Manager Bruce Shreve.

“Kerry is an expert in knowing which molds work best in a particular press,” says Bruce. “Although we document the mold/press use, Kerry and Bill White (Mold Setter Supervisor) have the experience to do this and they schedule our work quickly.”

Kerry monitors quantities of more than 100 colorants and orders raw plastic for the department ensuring that there are always enough materials to keep production moving smoothly.

Machine Shop Manager Glenn Keith oversees the repair and proper maintenance of the molds currently in use at Whirley-Drink Works! This includes injection and blow molds. “Our work group reports to Bruce since we are so closely tied to molding operations. We have a systematic approach to mold cleaning and repairs. Preventive maintenance is a key factor in keeping molds in top condition,” says Glenn.

Production meetings are essential to know what molds will be needed and how long they will be in use. “Even though we set a schedule on Monday, by Tuesday morning it may need a total revision because of unexpected orders or a quick turnaround on re-orders,” Glenn comments.

It takes a concerted effort to meet customer demands and the Molding department is part of that effort. Bruce recalls a customer service story involving the Ringling Brothers Circus.

“I was working the third shift which was the last one before a Thanksgiving holiday shut down,” Bruce recalls. “We hurried to produce the parts for a re-order needed by the circus for the busy holiday weekend shows. At the end of the shift we were short on parts so Flora Colson and I stayed to complete the order. I stayed while the printer decorated the cups and we packed the order to be picked up. The circus sent a driver and trucked the cups to New York just in time for the shows.
“When John Downey hired me to work here everything was done in 2-D, (in two dimensions) which was a tedious process,” says Engineering Manager Ruth McClellan. “Using three dimensional software has enabled us to cut our mold design and mold building times by about fifty percent. Machining time decreases when you work directly from the computer files,” she adds.

Ruth and former TeamMate John Neal had to convince management that this system would work. To learn to use 3D, experienced Machine Shop personnel received training at the software manufacturer’s classes in Salt Lake City; they also studied locally at classes set up by the Hi-Ed Council. Other machining skills have been developed using tutorials and collective problem solving within the department.

“We have taught ourselves a lot of the new techniques by using common sense, by networking with companies and consultants and teaching one another,” Ruth explains. “Five years ago, if you had asked us to use the computer to sculpt a model for a new product that we would tool, we would have been dumbfounded. Now we know (or are learning) what to do,” says Ruth.

“We are much more sensitive to our customer’s needs than we were earlier. We ask a lot of questions before we start to design: What need are they trying to fill? What is the price point they are aiming for? Is it a one-time-only product for a specific event, movie etc or a standard product? We give input to the New Product Development Team; they are our internal customers.

Members of the department also do the designing of machines and parts for production departments at Harmar. “We partner with customers and other departments so that we communicate clearly what is going to be done based on what has been told to us,” Ruth adds. “We even communicate with Accounting to provide them with the components of the tool and their weights so that an accurate cost can be determined.”

“We have a good team of people who like working together,” says Ruth.

Working together to solve problems that affect the entire business is a company practice at Whirley-DrinkWorks!.
Silkscreen and hot stamping were the first steps in decorating Whirley products. Today’s customers have a wide variety of additional decorating options: four-, five- or six-color printing machines, pad printing, process printing, heat transfer labels, and pressure sensitive labels.

In the early 1990s Whirley developed neon inks that caused a sensation among our customers. We sold millions of sport quarts with neon imprints and could barely keep up with the demand for these products.

“Dave’s first efforts to help printing was to make the silkcreens; he made them in his garage and I think his family helped,”

Throughout this time, the production departments relied on Dave Klenck to lead their problem solving efforts since new products usually brought challenges. Dave and his team were ready to tackle and solve the problems.

“Dave’s first effort to help printing was to make the silkcreens; he made them in his garage and I think his family helped,” says Keith Shaw who worked closely with Dave. “He modified a welder (which we called the WL combo unit) so that it could do two operations-handle welding and spin welding making the machine much more useful.”

Manager Bob Zurcher adds, “Dave’s work is evident on most printing and assembly equipment. He was very interested in automation. For example, the descramblers and the Gaylord lifts he and his team invented reduce the amount of handling and lifting of products. He was able to “see” solutions. His untimely death robbed us of a terrific friend and co-worker. We still miss his quiet humor and his creativity.”

“Cellular manufacturing greatly improved our ability to get the orders out. We used to move our components and products many times during the assembly process. Now we can handle weld, spin weld, pack the product boxes, seal and ship them all from the production line,” Bob explains.

Dave Klenck left us a legacy of technical ingenuity, creative thinking and kind humor.

Karen Lee liked working at the company. “There was no break room, so we heated up our lunches using the heat tunnels of the equipment.” Karen retired in 2005 after 25 years with the company.

**TeamMate Friendly Facts:**

- Whirley-Drink-Works! provides the expected benefits, such as vacation time, health coverage, holiday pay etc. The company also provides unique benefits to enhance work life. Examples are listed throughout the book.

- Good Idea coins may be used to purchase jackets, hats, tee shirts and other company-imprinted items at a favorable price. Coins can also be used at selected local restaurants and businesses. They can even be used to buy vacation days.
Job rotation has been helpful in keeping Team-Mates working without repeating the same job duties day after day. Alternating work duties helps to avoid fatigue and gives everyone the opportunity to work with different people on the shift.

The Engineering Department and Machine Shop are making parts for Harmar machines and repairing them “in house”. Engineering Manager Ruth McClellan has initiated frequent visits to the Harmar Plant and asks for input on machine problems and feedback on changes/revisions that have been made to production equipment. This helps to keep machinery in good condition and reduces down time.

Bob Zurcher summarizes: “Each one of the many improvements in our department make it easier to say yes to our customers’ requests and consistently produce the high quality products we all expect.”

TeamMate Friendly Facts:

- Not many companies have “FUN MONEY” as one of the benefits for TeamMates. Whirley-DrinkWorks! department Managers have an amount of money allocated per TeamMate to use for the benefit of all. Departments often use the funds for luncheons or special occasion parties.
"All art production was done by hand when I started at Whirley," Terry Lyle says, remembering his start in the Whirley Art department more than 27 years ago. "Graphic computers were non-existent back then."

There were 3 TeamMates working in the art department in 1983. "Shortly after entering the department, Bob called me into his office and told me I was the manager of the Art Department," Terry recalls. "My first task was to tell the person who acted as the supervisor that I was now her boss. Luckily we had become friends and the news went over fine."

In those early days art layout was done using the traditional "paste-up" method done by hand. Art elements - pictures, copy, line rules - were photographed on special photo paper using a stat camera. "It was really just an oversize bellows camera and you focused the image by cranking a handle," says Terry. "The paper went through a chemical processor then was hung up to dry under a fan."

The paper was then pasted onto the layout sheet using hot wax. When words had to be arced, which was necessary for all the M-3 imprints, an X-acto knife was used to separate each letter in a line of type then moved by hand. Terry explains, "Each of us had an X-acto knife, a hand-held hot waxer, and ruling pens at our desk. We guarded our individual tools closely."

Technology improved and in the late eighties the Art department advanced to a digital stat camera. It was state of the art with all the bells and whistles. The next great advance happened in the early nineties as computers appeared that were focused on the graphic art industry.

"With the advent of the Macintosh in the mid eighties, Apple focused on the graphics industry as an important customer base," says Terry. "It took me a while to convince the company to get this technology. I finally got the okay and art production techniques changed forever."

Art production became more efficient and diverse every year after. "At first, we could do only simple layouts and there were no color monitors," says Terry, remembering the early days. "Now we can do anything. Making art on the computer is one of the closest things to real magic I’ve ever seen!"

Today the Art Department combines old and new skills and equipment to assure customers receive top notch service. "Art TeamMates are very dedicated to meeting our production goals," says Terry. "Without that true commitment to excellence, all the computers in the world couldn't help."
Kevin says, “Hal Conarro hired me to work for Whirley Wash after I graduated from high school, “ recalls Facilities Maintenance Manager Manager John Nicklas. “I worked in Material Handling for Bill Turner for a couple of years, drove truck for a couple of years, worked in the Machine Shop and was asked to work in Building Maintenance.”

“Bob Shreve WAS the building maintenance department,” John adds. “He needed help as the company was growing and there was lots of work to be done. We didn’t have Genie Booms and man lifts. We had to carry items while we climbed ladders, for example. Tools were not as improved as they are today. Bob was a smart guy and I learned a lot by working at his elbow,” says John.

“There were no computers and we kept track of projects, material and time logs in notebooks we carried with us. We were so busy we didn’t have time to do all the preventive maintenance necessary to keep equipment running at its best.”

All that has changed for the better. Computers now keep track of the dates for preventive maintenance, supplies are ordered online, time worked and materials used for a certain project are documented. Safety training is an integral part of the department’s operations and is documented, as is training provided for new equipment.

“I am proud of the fact that I have worked on projects in each of our buildings and have been involved in completing many remodeling efforts in the Bakery Building,” John comments.

“Current maintenance TeamMates do a great job of maintaining our buildings, equipment, vehicles, etc to keep operations going without a glitch. We are fortunate to have such a great crew, “ John says with a smile.
Whirley Buildings Through the Years

Original bakery building with large fleet of delivery trucks around 1920

Whirley headquarters with new Distribution Center at the right around 1973

Whirley-DrinkWorks! 150,000 square foot Molding & Corporate Facility today

Whirley-DrinkWorks! 220,000 square foot Assembly & Warehouse Facility today
Vice President of Sales Operations Bill Turner tells this story of his early career at Whirley:

“I worked at Whirley during summers between school years in high school and college. Lincoln and Andy Sokolski would also work when school was out. We were members of the Shipping and Material Handling Department. When I decided to work fulltime in material handling, there were only two us-my supervisor and me. One day, my supervisor was hit by a car while crossing the street and was unable to work. For a brief time I WAS the Material Handling department.”

Needless to say, the department has grown over the years and Bill was promoted from the role of managing Shipping and Handling and the workshops to his present position in Sales. Being responsible for moving inventory from Mold to the Harmar plant or the warehouses and knowing its whereabouts is vastly easier since the use of Radio Frequency scanners using bar codes to identify boxes.

“In the early days, we printed tickets that would be placed in a pocket on each inventory box. Another set of tickets went to Cathy Wills, a TeamMate in our department. Tickets would be removed from inventory boxes when Assemblers emptied them and then Cathy would match the Assemblers’ tickets to her set in order to know what inventory had been used. This was a time-intensive system,” Bill explains.

Sean Abbott, current Materials and Logistics Manager, adds “We have improved our method of locating inventory or finished products with the scanners; the only glitch arises when boxes are moved without being scanned and that is uncommon.”

TeamMates must be trained and certified before being permitted to operate material handling equipment. “We are in a program to replace all of our equipment, except for the newest pieces, in the next few years. The propane-powered forklifts have been replaced by battery-powered trucks eliminating the fumes of the old equipment.

How much “material” does the department handle? About 200 skids (pallets of boxes) or about 20 truckloads a day or 6,000 skids per month (600 truckloads). Sean Abbott says, “Those numbers are not the whole picture. We handle the skids again when we put them into the warehouse racks for storage until needed; most are moved to the production floor or to the workshops. When all is said or done, it amounts to an average of 9000 skids per month.”

It is easy to understand the necessity for radio scanners when so many boxes must be moved to be shipped or sent to the warehouse while awaiting a ship date.
“As the number of products, printing processes and colors expand, our jobs in Inside Sales and Marketing have become more complicated,” says Vice President of Sales Operations Bill Turner. “We are responsible for keeping track of orders while they are ‘in the works’ and providing outstanding service to our customers.”

“Our Inside Sales order writers group has not much grown larger, but there has been an increase in marketing-related personnel,” he adds. “We have also grouped customers into channels and designated a TeamMate to be in charge of that group. For example, Alec Conarro focuses his work on the theme park channel. This is especially helpful to our customers because Alec has a working knowledge of marketing strategies, products, and promotional materials that will help the parks to be more profitable,” he adds.

For the past few years efforts have been made to streamline work so that it is less stressful and moves smoothly through the factory. This is not an easy task and takes the cooperation of all the departments and the outside Sales Reps who deal directly with the customers. Circumstances outside of our control (like the economy or the weather) can impact the number of orders. For example, this hot summer of 2010 has increased our business dramatically; everyone is buying more drinks to beat the heat.

Today, there are more TeamMates who talk to customers, asking them what their needs are and explaining the services they can provide. Ruth McClellan of Engineering and members of the Marketing and Product Development team can be called in to work with customers who wish to discuss a unique product.

The acquisition of DrinkWorks! in 2004 brought a creative group of professionals whose impact is felt every day. Whirley had not fully explored the subject of manufacturing or purchasing products from China. The DrinkWorks company had already navigated the issues involved in importing, placing a representative in Asia, locating factories and certifying their work conditions to comply with regulations set by American customers. Though the initial weeks were hectic, Whirley - DrinkWorks! (the new name
of our company) now has the variety of products needed to attract new customers. “TeamMates in Warren worked a lot of extra hours to connect the DrinkWorks! Team to our computer system, phones, accounting; “I could name almost every department in the Company and their contribution to getting DrinkWorks aligned with Whirley. We got it done,” Bill adds.

NOTE: Sales and Marketing Today on page 31 gives a more complete description of Whirley-DrinkWorks! operations.

**ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS**

*Sales Administration, Human Resources, Accounting, Office Department, Vehicle Maintenance, and Quality*

Administrative Departments at Whirley-DrinkWorks! are filled with dedicated “behind the scenes” workers who prepare our payroll, measure the quality of our products, collect money owed to the Company, administer federal and state mandated programs like the Family Medical Leave Act, Workers’ Compensation, 401K retirement funds, oversee licensing, invoicing, pay the taxes, develop budgets, keep information systems operating effectively, provide secretarial services---the list seems endless. The company cannot function without them.

Managers in Administrative Departments have to stay current with developments in the business and government environments that affect the work of their individual departments. For example, Sales Administration Manager Sue Borland says, “We have to be aware of factors facing a company that may have an effect on our granting them credit for purchases.” “Certainly the downturn in our economy makes credit approvals challenging in some instances,” she adds. “We will work with our customers and can usually come to a consensus..

Administrative Departments have grown slowly and cross training is very important to cover the department’s work. “We would have a hard time getting the work out in my department if we didn’t know each others’ jobs,” says Office Manager Ruby MacWithey. ”When we’re in a time crunch with a looming deadline, it is vital to work together.”

Both Accounting and Human Resources are careful to note changes in government regulations. There are so many compliance issues to be aware of-

Barb Shinn, who retired in 1999 after 22 years of service, recalls that paperwork was a lot less involved than it is now. Her initial hiring papers listed her first name as “Shortie”.

In 1994 DrinkWorks! brings a new dimension to Whirley
Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, HIPAA and Privacy issues are the most well known. Accounting has its own regulations and has the added work necessitated by the importing of products from China.

Technology has made the workplace more intense because the text messaging brings replies to queries almost as soon as they are sent. No matter where you are, you can be reached by cell phone, email, and other electronic means.

As Whirley-DrinkWorks! has grown, more equipment has been added. Vehicle Maintenance is a two-person department responsible for keeping company cars, vans, trucks, Walk/Rides and other motorized vehicles in good condition.

The Quality Assurance department is vital to the consistent production of products that meet the standards expected by the customers and by our company. Precise testing of components and colorants help to assure that our customers receive a first-class drink container.

International Business can be complicated. At Whirley-DrinkWorks!, extensive knowledge of regulations and timetables for delivery by ship are key factors in assuring that Whirley-DrinkWorks! can meet order dates and products will meet our standards.

TeamMate Friendly Facts:

- TeamMates can purchase postage stamps in the Office Department in the Bakery Building, saving a trip to the post office.

- Birthday cards, including a gold coin minted by the Company, are given to each TeamMate on his/her birthday. Monthly birthdate calendars are posted so that TeamMates may remember a co-worker’s special day.
COMPUTERS at WHIRLEY

“When I came to Whirley there were 2 or 3 computers in the entire company. There was no such thing as a PC network, PC printers or the Internet as we know it today,” says Information Services Manager Tim Johnson. “In the 90s, we began to purchase PC’s and we installed a Novell Server3.12. PennCom, a local business, brought the Internet to Warren and Whirley was an early customer.”

Eventually Whirley received a free copy of Novell GroupWise, Whirley’s first e-mail system. Later, the company purchased IBM/Lotus Notes as a collaboration platform. We now use Lotus Notes to provide e-mail, instant messaging, web meetings and hosting our Relavis Customer Relationship Management program, the Whirley-Drink Works! Website and the Art Locator.

With the acquisition of DrinkWorks! the I.S. team brought the new company under our umbrella of services. We extended our PC network, AS/400, telephone and voice mail systems very successfully. We introduced a PC based RF system to track products throughout our manufacturing processes.

Computers were introduced slowly and TeamMates were wary of using them; the commands were confusing. It took several years of study and testing to find software that would mesh with the AS400. Currently, we use a customers contact program for sales, purchasing program for accounting, materials planning in production areas in addition to the WORD and EXCEL tools daily.

“Bob has always wanted a custom made computer programs written by TeamMates instead of a generic package that needs to be modified over and over again to suit our needs,” says former IT Manager Lana Creal.

The use of e-mail at Whirley-DrinkWorks! started very slowly. “We had contests in our department to encourage the use of e-mail,” says Sales Administration Supervisor Judy Anderson. “Our customers today prefer to be contacted by e-mail and we no longer have to encourage its use.”

“There are situations where e-mail is used too much,” comments Bill Turner. “I am always reminding the sales staff that two e-mail interactions are sufficient. If there are items for discussion, a follow up phone call is the best way to communicate.”

Vice President Andy Sokolski agrees with Bill. “With a phone call, you can catch the tone of voice and listen for any nuances that signal that more dialog is necessary.”

“E-mails cause a lot of work because there is little or no lag time,” says Manager Ruby MacWithey. “You don’t wait for a return letter to your question or request, it arrives very quickly. This can be a plus or minus depending on your situation.”

E-mail can be as e-ff ective as we want it to be.
Over and over again TeamMates comment on how fortunate they are to be employed at Whirley-DrinkWorks! Their situations have a common thread. They are hard working individuals who look at the glass and see these half full, not half empty. Promotion from within has provided TeamMates with the incentive to grow their jobs and be able to succeed.

“I appreciated the fact that I could work part time while my boys were little,” says Sue Borland. “I have been able to take classes and increase my knowledge.” Sue is currently Sales Administration Manager.

Manager Bob Zurcher recalls: “I had worked in the grocery business prior to coming to Whirley in 1990. My second day here, print supervisor Chris Kornreich came over to me and told me that I would be running the silk screener with Marie Frederick. Thank goodness Marie knew where the On/Off button was located!”

Manager Ruby MacWithey began her career here as a machine attendant on the second shift in molding. “Human Resources discovered that I had worked in a Doctor’s office in one of the cities where my husband worked. They needed someone to fill the position and I was selected.”

Cleo Nixon was hired by Bill Turner as a contract worker in the plant. Cleo showed lots of potential through his hard work. He was hired fulltime and today is the Benefits and Compensation Supervisor in the Accounting Department.

Many TeamMates in the Bakery Building departments begin the history of their employment by saying, “I started in the plant.”

“I was lucky enough to work under Dave “The Colonel” Klenck,” Lynn Schnarrs says. “He and the other leaders in this company have always treated me (and every other TeamMate) with respect. That gives you confidence to sign up for job postings which can lead to a promotion,” he adds.
**TeamMate Frendly Facts:**
Scholarships for children and grandchildren of TeamMates can be earned, on a competitive basis, provided the terms of the scholarship are met.

Reduced price tickets for the Warren County Fair, Darien Lake and Waldameer Park are sold.

TeamMates can receive free Whirley-DrinkWorks! mugs with a custom imprint to be used as wedding favors.

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**TeamMates make an impact at Whirley-DrinkWorks! and in the community.**

Jack Daley has created seasonal displays for the Bakery Building since 1998

Several Whirley-DrinkWorks! teams participate in the Terry F. Ristau Industrial Softball Tournament

Each year Whirley-DrinkWorks! TeamMates construct a float for the annual Fourth of July Parade

Many TeamMates enjoy dressing in costumes for a Halloween celebration

The yearly Easter egg hunt is enjoyed each spring by TeamMates and their families
Whirley-DrinkWorks! Today and into the Future
GREEN TEAM - An Ongoing Initiative

President Lincoln Sokolski is passionate about the company’s Green Team’s ongoing initiative.” His steady prodding has compelled TeamMates to commit to working toward becoming a “Zero Waste” company.

“I admit that I am driven by my belief that protecting the environment is crucial to the future of our country and the world,” he says. “We MUST make every effort to do all that we can to make it happen.”

Whirley-DrinkWorks! currently:

• Recycles every piece of aluminum, plastic, rubber, paper, cardboard, batteries and glass that comes into and/or out of our facility. Teammates may bring items for recycling from home to the factory for recycling if it is not offered in their community.

• Eliminates water bottles from our vending machines and offers filtered water and ice to be consumed in our reusable Whirley-DrinkWorks beverage containers.

• Collects and markets scrap cups, markets a lower grade of regrind, recycles our coffin box lids, and these efforts have reduced our compactor waste by 55% since 2003.

• Re-uses every pound of plastic that comes into our factory either in the manufacturing process or by recycling or re-selling it.

• Re-uses oil from molding machines by recycling it and then using it to heat our buildings, thereby saving about 880,000 cubic feet of natural gas annually.

• Reduces lighting and electricity consumption by circulating water from molding machines outside and re-circulating it back inside to cool down our machines. Replace lighting with T-8 fluorescent fixtures and reduce the number of transformers in molding.

Building awareness is key to the success of this mission. Whirley-DrinkWorks! is making every effort to assist TeamMates in this vital initiative by “walking the walk” to keep the company and its extended families “GREEN”.

Teammates may bring items for recycling from home to the factory for recycling.

The Green Team in 2010: Kevin Downey, Mary Hagan-Double, Jennifer Olsen, John Geiger, Denny DeRalph.
WELLNESS

TeamMate “wellness” has been a long-term area of interest for Whirley-DrinkWorks! TeamMates who are healthy are more productive, are absent fewer days and enjoy a better quality of life at work and at home.

To make access to health professionals easier, the company schedules twice-yearly health screenings to give TeamMates the opportunity to learn about their own health-related data.

A group of TeamMates who have a strong commitment to wellness have formed a group called NEWS (Nutrition, Exercise, Weight Management, Smoking Cessation) For Life. Members aim to promote health and wellness throughout the company and extend it to family, friends and the community.

Renee Shutters heads the Nutrition Team. Her group will focus on workshops and food sampling to inform TeamMates about healthier food choices and build an awareness of the effect of additives in food.

Tracey Munch’s focus is on Exercise. “Being physically active combats chronic disease, aids in weight management, boosts mood and improves sleep quality. What could be better?” asks Tracy. Her team plans to update TeamMates on community events that promote fitness, provide resources to learn more about exercise, offers encouragement to TeamMates who find exercising a challenge.

The Weight Management team is under the leadership of Julie VanEvery. Julie’s team has started “The Biggest Loser” contest and they are more than willing to share tips they have used in their own weight loss programs. “We’ve all been there—weighing more than ever and being ready to take charge and do something about the problem,” says Julie.

Michelle Williams is leading the Smoking and Tobacco Cessation program. Her team members are all former smokers who can give very personal insights and practical tips to overcome the use of tobacco products.

Whirley-DrinkWorks! concentration on wellness is a reflection of programs throughout the United States to wage “war” on obesity in adults and in children by exercising, good nutrition and eliminating unhealthy lifestyles. This will be a continuing effort throughout the years ahead. Adopting a healthy lifestyle will make that MANY more years ahead.
A Message from Gregory M. Gross, Executive V.P. & Chief Operating and Financial Officer

I am proud to have been a part of the last 14+ years of Whirley-Drink-Works! 1st 50 years and congratulate Bob and Hal on their accomplishment of building a strong, healthy business where both customers and TeamMates are highly valued.

The greatest asset of any company is its people. At Whirley, our culture revolves around strong core values that emphasize Team, Teamwork and Continuous Improvement. Mutual respect and cooperative, helping attitudes where everyone takes personal responsibility for producing results enables us to continue to meet customer expectations on even the busiest of days. By thinking creatively, we solve problems and find solutions that enable us to capitalize on opportunities. Each improvement, small and large, helps us to be a stronger, more competitive company.

It is very fitting that we have experienced significant sales growth in this, our 50th year. It has been a very busy year for all and has required continued overtime in our factories in order to meet our customers’ needs. Our TeamMates have responded to this increased business level achieving a 93% on time production of customer orders and 95% on time production of individual order line items. Safety, Quality and Customer First!

We have made and continue to make significant investments in new tooling, injection and printing presses, new molding and decoration technologies and automation of production processes while maintaining our facilities to a very high standard. Considerable research and experimentation is done with materials, additives and production processes. Computer hardware and communication system upgrades and new and enhanced business systems have provided us with the information, tools, and measures to better manage our processes. These steps are taken with a view to the future and what will be required to successfully compete in the ever-changing world and the challenges it presents.

Our most significant internal challenge remains staffing, planning inventory levels and scheduling production to meet dated order customer requirements during our five-month busy season where we do the majority of our business. Managing product cost and operating costs is an on-going internal challenge. The cost of resin (largely driven by oil prices) can fluctuate significantly one year to the next and have a very significant impact on profitability. Healthcare costs and energy costs continue to rise significantly each year. Government regulation, including consumer product and environmental regulation, are examples of external challenges we face. Our products go through extensive product safety testing before they reach our customers and end-consumers. We are a Green company promoting reuse and recycling of our products. We use environmentally friendly materials (such as PET) and follow the development of new Green resins.

I am confident we can and will meet these challenges head on by drawing on the creativity and resourcefulness of our TeamMates and by continuing to go about our business in a responsible manner. The culture of Team and Continuous Improvement instilled by Bob and Hal will continue to serve us well into the next 50 years.
Whirley-DrinkWorks! is a world leader in the manufacturing and sales of souvenir beverage and food containers. Our incredible customer service, insight into our industry and consumers, innovative products and integrated marketing have made us successful.

Since the purchase of DrinkWorks! in 2004 we have increased our product line to over 100 choices. Core products are produced in the Warren facility and custom products can be designed and engineered by our staff and/or they may be manufactured at one of our approved factories in China.

The New Product Development team uses a five-step process to bring new products to life:

1. Product Idea Sessions are used to discuss business objectives and develop product concepts.
2. Graphics team develops complex sketches and prototypes.
3. Engineering department reviews feasibility, time frame and budget.
4. Product is tooled in Warren, PA or China.
5. The in-house Quality Assurance team and third party auditors inspect the tool and product.

About 80 custom projects are designed by this system annually and have had great success in the marketplace.

To enhance the sale of our products, Whirley-DrinkWorks! sells product displays and point-of-sale materials like vinyl banners, table tents, floor and counter signs all designed to increase sales.

Our Marketing Department works with customers to offer options and expertise in special ways to present products and promotions. Whirley-DrinkWorks! partners with customers so that their business will profit from our experience.

To ensure product quality, all parts and products go through a series of tests during production to make sure they meet all regulatory requirements and industry testing standards. The Warren factory is audited on a regular basis and has received excellent ratings for conditions and programs for food safety management.

Whirley-DrinkWorks! sales representatives maintain 17 regional offices located in North America and 8 international offices to better provide that personal touch that comes with face-to-face meetings to discuss business needs.

There is quite a bit of difference between the simple approach used by the early salt and pepper dispenser salesman and the complexity of modern day marketers, but the goal is the same: We are committed to creating and delivering quality, innovation promotional products that will provide great brand advertising and profitable solutions to our customers’ business.
Question: Although the recovery from the U.S. economic recession is moving painfully slow, Whirley is experiencing one of its highest sales volume years in history. How is this happening?

Answer: The main channels or industries we serve are still seeing strong customer visitation numbers to their theme parks and convenience stores. They need to remain active with their promotions to increase their sales. Whirley-DrinkWorks! provides great products that our customers can truly promote while providing a great value to consumers. We are all trying to get more for our dollar and our customers use Whirley-DrinkWorks! to help deliver that value proposition.

Question: Do you see any interesting or promising new trends in the market place in terms of products or potential customers?

Answer: The convenience store Chain RaceTrac ran a great promotion with the SC-20 this summer and we think it might help change the way C-Stores promote fountain drinks. Right now we are working (and having some nice successes) developing new markets in the Colleges & Universities, Fairs & Festivals, and International Markets. We think there is the possibility of adding new sustainable business in these channels to help drive our future growth.

Question: What do you see as the greatest competitive threats to Whirley in the foreseeable future?

Answer: The biggest threat is complacency and thinking we have everything figured out. Competition never sleeps and our customers always want new ideas and new products. Our world is also getting smaller and in some ways it is easier than ever for someone to decide that the time is right to become a new competitor.

Question: Do our manufacturing capacity and technical capabilities here in Warren have an impact on our ability to grow sales even further?

Answer: Most definitely, you see this in two ways. We often get calls for help at the last minute and we perform quick turnarounds, creating opportunities to increase sales at crucial times. We also see how investments in molding and printing technologies improve our quality and capabilities and this really makes a difference when we compete head to head.

Question: You are the VP of Sales in a “sales driven” company. What gives you the greatest satisfaction in the growth and success Whirley has achieved?

Answer: Seeing how Teamwork brings about success. We had a great year managing the Sea World, Six Flags, and RaceTrac accounts and the many challenges each one brings. Our Team (from Molding all the way through to Shipping) continually rose to the challenges and made everyone look good in the eyes of the customer. This is also true when we go out and present for new business. Our Marketing Team, Art Department, and Sales Team work great together!
When President Lincoln Sokolski was asked to comment about the “big picture” business areas under consideration currently at Whirley Drink-Works! and/or plans for the future of the company, he responded with the following:

One major topic of discussion is Generational Leadership Planning. At this time, we’re looking at the transition from the first to the second generation of our family. We want to be respectful of each other’s strengths and weakness and leverage them for the greatest good of our company. We want to keep what has worked and is working and at the same time to be proactive to change and embrace that change to drive creativity and innovation.

Strategic Planning plays an important part in our success. We continue to use the three P’s as our focus. People, Products and Profits have been key pillars for developing our long term strategies as we plan for long term success.

People are key to our operations. We want to support TeamMates by creating development plans for growth, creativity, innovation, leadership and morale. This is a long-term plan that coincides with our “promotion from within” philosophy.

Products and programs keep our company alive and thriving. We will continue to build a pipeline of new products utilizing consumer research to drive implementation of these innovative products and programs into the marketplace.

Profits keep our company sustainable. We must have a practical plan to foster growth and longevity.

We will continue to emphasize the Green Initiatives. It’s the “right thing” to do and it certainly isn't going to go away. Whirley DrinkWorks! products eliminate massive amounts of waste and that is important to colleges, convenience stores, theme parks and anywhere else we can find an opportunity to incorporate a Re-Fill program.

New Technology to drive change and growth will not be restricted to advances in the production processes. The company is in what may be described as the” infant stage” of placing Radio Frequency Identification chips (RFID) in Whirley DrinkWorks! products. The same technology used in the EZ Pass toll system, inventory control in retail and many other applications in our changing world is also now being applied to the beverage containers. For example, a patron at Walt Disney World could receive free drinks and refills for a week when the cup is programmed for that time span.

Of course, continuous improvement is our “mantra” and we plan to use it to keep us moving ahead for fifty more successful years!
Our Vision

Whirley-DrinkWorks! is a progressive company built on integrity and continuous improvement, driven by an empowered and talented team. We are passionate about creating lasting partnerships by designing and delivering innovative food and beverage products and programs that provide powerful solutions to our customer’s business goals and consumer’s lifestyle needs.
Our Mission

Create an inspiring, fun and safe work environment that promotes teamwork, respect and creativity and gives back to the community.

Develop an empowered, talented, passionate team that is proactive, provides amazing service and is committed to excellence.

Build a continuous new product development pipeline that is the foundation for creating the industry’s most compelling consumer driven products and programs.

Establish the most highly trained consultative sales organization that delivers extraordinary results.

Generate the profits needed to grow and run our business recognizing that profitability is essential to our future success.
Core Values

Commitment to Excellence
Quality, Continuous Improvement, Amazing Service, Pride.

Integrity
Fairness, Honesty, Trustworthy, Do the right thing.

Respect
Recognition, Listen to each other, Dignity, Value everyone’s contribution.

Proactive
Responsible, Anticipate problems, Take the initiative, Provide solutions, Go the extra mile.

Team Work
Co-operation, Helpful, Think in the best interest of the company and customer, Each department works together to succeed.

Progressive
Forward thinking, Innovation, Best practices, Leadership.

PASSIONATE IN ALL WE DO