

Coghlin Cos.'s DCI Engineering Primed For Growth

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Chris Coghlin, president and CEO of Coghlin Cos., and Matthew Haggerty, president of DCI Engineering, plan to double revenues this year and hire 10 to 15 new workers.

Pundits say the economy is lagging and job creation is slow, but that's not the case at Worcester-based DCI Engineering, a subsidiary of the more than 125-year-old Coghlin Cos., which expects to add about 10 to 15 employees this year.

The company's \$15 million in sales from last year are expected to double this year, which is fueling DCI's need for more workers, according to Chris Coghlin, president and CEO of the parent company.

DCI Engineering is a contract engineering firm that works with companies to manage product development, meet industry and government standards and maximize efficiency in production.

The company's 67 employees are engineering experts from a wide variety of backgrounds, allowing DCI to advise clients in an equally large swath of sectors.

And the business model that allows clients to contract out engineering work on an as-needed or project-specific basis seems to be catching on in the market.

Product Development

Coghlin purchased DCI in 2000 as a way to supplement its other two businesses, Columbia Tech and Cogmedix. Those two brands specialize in contract production and manufacturing, but Coghlin said he wanted a way to advise clients in earlier stages of product development.

At the time of the DCI purchase, Coghlin retained only three of the company's workers. Today, the division's employees join the more than 400 that work for the family-owned business, which was started in 1886. Chris Coghlin is the fourth-generation president and CEO of Coghlin Cos. Inc.

DCI expects to add about a dozen or more employees in the next year. The company is looking for project engineers who have at least five to 10 years' experience in capital equipment development.

Coghlin said DCI Engineering is the economic engine of the three sister companies. About 70 percent of Coghlin's clients work with two of the three companies, and many begin with DCI.

For example, a company may have a prototype of a widget that is ready for mass production. DCI Engineers will work with a company to determine all the specifications that are needed to mass produce the item.

The client company keeps the intellectual property rights to the product, yet is able to outsource parts of the development, subassembly, production or testing of the product to one of Coghlin's companies.

DCI can also help companies ensure their products and production processes comply with government regulations in the United States and Europe.

Some companies DCI works with have downsized their internal operations, so outsourcing engineering work on an as-needed, project-specific basis is an attractive solution for bringing products to market, Coghlin said. Furthermore, DCI can help businesses manage multiple projects at once, noted Matthew Haggerty, president of DCI.

Other companies use DCI to bring their products to the final stages of commercialization.

Walter Surface Technologies, for example, is a Canadian-based metal finishing and cutting company that recently hired DCI to work on one of the company's newest products. Officials from Walters developed a new bioremediation product that helps clean metals.

The company developed a small series of the products, but when it was time to ramp up manufacturing, the company turned to DCI to help work out the kinks of product development and manufacturing.

Claude Vandemeulebroocke, vice president of R&D for Walters, said he's happy with DCI's work so far.

Central Massachusetts has been a good place for Coghlin Cos. and DCI, Coghlin noted.

The company works out of its Briden Street offices in Worcester and has additional offices in West Boylston and Westborough. Coghlin said about 90 percent of DCI's customers are headquartered within a four-hour radius of the Central Massachusetts area and many of the companies have international sales and operations.