


# AMERICAN GEAR, INC.

When everything fits perfectly,  
a gearbox hums. So does *this*  
company, where all of the  
professional pieces have  
fallen into place.

By Russ Willcutt



**W**hen Larry Brylski first asked his stepson, Greg Scott, if he and his wife were interested in joining the family company, they weren't sure whether he was kidding around or not. They already had jobs, after all—he was writing software for Musco Sports Lighting, and she worked as controller for a cabinet company—but when he asked again six months later they realized that he was serious.

"I'd spent some 20 years as a software designer, and my wife, Pam, was happy in her position," Greg recalls, "but we saw this as a unique opportunity to control our own destiny and finally decided to take him up on his offer."

Brylski had purchased the company where he worked—then known as MicroGear—in 1990 when it had fallen on hard times, renaming it American Gear, Inc. He and his wife, Ruth, who is Greg's mother, had gotten busy reclaiming the customers that had been affected by the original company's slump, together working many late nights to make sure that orders were completed and shipped as promised. It was slow going at times, but their dedication and accumulated knowledge eventually paid off, and American Gear soon became a trusted vendor once again. When Greg and his wife came onboard in June of 2006 the idea was to work alongside the owners, absorbing their knowledge and freeing them up from the long hours running the company on their own had required—learning about the equipment, and also the intricacies associated with the quoting process. As it turned out, they only had seven months to do so, since Larry Brylski passed away in December of that same year.

"That really changed things, since we were relatively new to the company and suddenly playing a more prominent role much sooner than we'd envisioned," Greg says. "But we were lucky to have even that much time with Larry. He was really good at what he did, and he was a great teacher as well."

What the two have found since taking over the company's reins is that their past business experience was the perfect training ground for their current responsibilities. "I've always been a very


hands-on, mechanically-minded guy, so I really enjoy the time I spend on the floor and working directly with our customers during the quoting process," he says. "And Pam was more than prepared to take over the company's administrative activities, so we've really found this to be a very good fit in terms of our personalities and backgrounds."

Other rewards have also surfaced, such as the pride associated with carrying the family business forward. "You have a totally different perspective when you're sitting on this side of the desk," Greg says, "and it's a thrill to come to work every day. You walk in on Monday morning, and before you know it it's Friday afternoon. It's an incredible blessing to be in that kind of situation, where your job just doesn't seem like work anymore."

Another blessing, he says, involves his mother's ongoing presence in the plant. "She has been in this business since I was six months old, and she is the core of all knowledge here. Ruth is our quality manager, and she is priceless. I just can't express how important she is to the company."

The gears she approves go into a wide array of equipment, with American Gear—which Greg describes as a job shop—supplying everything from the medical field, to trolling motors, to automotive parts. "We sell to every industry imaginable, and we do a fair amount of reverse engineering for customers who need an old gear duplicated. They'll send in the whole assembly, and we'll break it down and basically figure out how to make it run like new again."

With 15 employees, and 30,000 square feet of space, Greg says he has enough land to add as much footage as American Gear might need in the future. As for its customers, they are currently found in the United States. "And we're happy with that," he says.

Specializing in small- to medium-pitch gearing in small batches, and from 200 to 12 DP, American Gear is ISO 2001:9000 registered, "so we do have quality policies in place," Greg says. "But we also have Ruth, which should definitely give customers confidence in our products!" 

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