

By Steve Colm

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." - Henry Ford

If ever a small company proved the wisdom espoused by the father of the modern assembly line, SNP Technical Services Inc. (SNP-Tech.com, 420 Kildare Avenue in Windsor) must be it.

Formed as a minority business enterprise in the aftermath of 2008's global economic meltdown, SNP provides design services in industrial, manufacturing and process engineering and related disciplines, including building work.

As a Licensed Engineering firm in Ontario and a Licensed Engineering and Architectural firm in Michigan, SNP achieves maximum impact by vetting and partnering with specialized engineering companies and matching them with some of the world's most demanding clients, including Chrysler's assembly plants in Windsor, Brampton, Belvidere (IL), Toledo (OH) and Sterling Heights (MI); NemaK Industries' Windsor Casting Plant; General Motors; American Axle Manufacturing, Vistaprint Windsor Operations and even the Detroit/Windsor Tunnel.

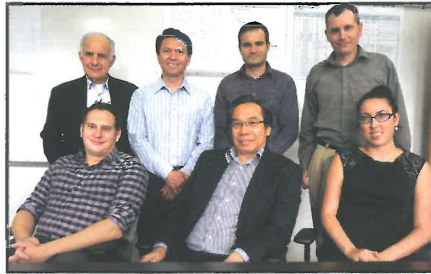
It's a strategy that sets SNP apart, says Vice-President and COO Richard Letts.

"We work with different engineering companies to fit the niche markets and we'll manage the projects to make sure the clients get what they want," Letts explains. "So we've formed a lot of partnerships with smaller engineering firms to make sure our clients get the specific services they want, at a really competitive price."

"We rose from the ashes when everybody was negative about the economy," adds President and CEO Santiago Pablo, the company's founder who brings more than 41 years of experience to the table.

SNP entered the engineering service supply chain as a cost-effective, minority-certified

Ambitious, Nimble SNP Technical Services Inc. Thrives In Demanding Business World



The SNP Technical Services team (Back Row) from left: Tito Marzotto, P. ENG., P.E., Executive Consultant, Alan Ko, P.E, MBA, Troy Office Manager; Fonda Asprakis, P. Eng, PMP, Engineering Director and Josh Lewis, EIT, Certified Energy Manager (CEM). (Front Row) from left: Richard Letts, Vice President, COO; Santiago Pablo, President, CEO and Alyssa Helferty, Office Administrator. Photo by Rebecca Wright.

alternative to the kind of high-overhead companies that suffered most during the economic downturn, Pablo says. As experts in programming, planning, engineering, mechanical and electrical design and quality systems implementation, SNP's agility remains a key facet in their success.

The firm's diversity status also ensures tax benefits for the large automotive companies tapping into the Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council (MMSDC) and the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC).

It all means SNP has been in position to thrive. In fact, from a core of four people in 2009, SNP now employs 35 people across three offices in Windsor, Troy, Michigan and Oakville.

"We virtually doubled in size almost every year up to last year," Letts notes. "So we're still growing, but now we're growing at a more stable rate, which is probably a good thing."

In fact, SNP's reach and influence is expanding.

"SNP is establishing a presence in Europe and Russia by partnering with a European company," Pablo says. "At present, SNP has an Agreement of Understanding with this company in Europe."


Closer to home, SNP has earned a stellar reputation with industry and government in the area of energy management and energy cost deployment. In layman's terms, SNP helps clients to assess their energy costs, identify potential savings through government-sponsored incentive programs, and guides them through the bureaucratic maze and paperwork.

"We've been involved since the beginning of the (government) programs," says Fonda Asprakis, SNP's Director of Engineering.

For example, SNP identified the Chrysler plants in Windsor and Brampton as prime candidates to reduce their energy load through strategic projects.

"And since they were the highest energy consumers, that was a major focus," Asprakis states. "We've provided incentives back to these companies, of more than \$1 million from the hydro companies."

Amid the dire predictions that energy costs will rise dramatically in the near future, "Our next step is to work more with small and medium sized companies, because they are often unfamiliar with them (the incentives)," Asprakis says. "We provide the information and audits to help them to identify projects and opportunities to save energy." The hydro companies usually cover the cost of such preliminary engineering studies, Asprakis says, "so there is normally no additional cost to the client company to produce the report."

Looking ahead, Pablo believes SNP's "flat" organizational structure will keep the firm moving in the right direction. By eliminating most middle-management functions, SNP's top management works in direct contact with its frontline people and clients. SNP benefits from many of the advantages enjoyed by small companies, such as lower overhead and faster response time to changing conditions and customer preferences. "We're a very young company, and we adapt very quickly to the needs of the business world," says Pablo. 



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