

Written Testimony
of
Mike Mittler
President & Co-Founder, Mittler Brothers Machine Tool
Before the
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business
Wednesday, June 19, 2013

My name is Mike Mittler, President and Co-Founder with my brother Paul of Mittler Brothers Machine and Tool, a manufacturing company located in Wright City, Missouri. We are the classic example of a small business. We founded our company around the kitchen table at my mom and dad's house Super Bowl Sunday of 1980. The following Monday, we rented a 2,500 square foot building for \$400 and a hand shake with the owner. How little did we know.

Paul and I worked many long days and nights as the only employees of the company to build our reputation of quality work and great customer service. We honed our basic customer service skills with the first Mittler Brothers – cutting grass, raking lots of leaves, painting houses and many other odd jobs while in high school. With me the oldest of eight children and Paul the youngest, if we wanted to have any fun money, we had to earn it.

Mom and dad were great role models and while providing the initial startup money, they quickly said you boys are on your own and you have to make it. Always glad to offer advice, they did not meddle in the business and knew we had to make our own mistakes so we would really learn the hard way.

In 1984, we moved to our second location in a 7,500 square foot building we helped build with a lot of sweat equity. We added both customers and employees slow but sure over the years and moved to our current location the 50,000 square foot building in Wright City in 2004. I am a member of the National Tooling and Machining Association and there are thousands of companies like ours manufacturing in America, but together it is these small businesses who employ the majority of Americans.

Our most important asset is our people and we are proud to have 10 with over twenty years of service with us. Two of whom started right out of high school and who are now grandfathers! We currently have 60 employees and last year we paid out over \$2.5 million in payroll to our people. I am very proud to currently have five military veterans as part of our team and feel these are the real heroes of this country. We have always given young people a chance to work

for us and currently have several moving up thru the ranks including one still in high school working part time for us.

Our people are all highly skilled and we employ: welders, machinists, tool makers, engineers, painters and assembly technicians. Our people are guided by just three basic rules; SAFETY, QUALITY, PRODUCTIVITY. We provide a quality benefit package including health care, more on this later, a 401K gain sharing program that last year paid over \$200,000 to our employees and a flex work schedule to allow our people to deal with their family and job.

We utilize the latest technology in our manufacturing process including 3D solid model design software and computer controlled machines.

Our company has two main areas of focus, one is our own product line of special machines and components for the racing, hot rodding, restoration, aircraft and bike building industry. And the other is design and building of special equipment for industrial automation.

Our standard products serve both the professional racer, fabricator, and the do it yourself who has our products in is home workshop. We are proud to be able to sell our products globally with customers in much of Europe, Russia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Mexico. Our products have been featured in the hit TV series American Chopper and several other “how to” shows. Numerous trade publications and many online videos have also featured our products. We maintain a dynamic web site, publish a 90-page catalog and exhibit in several trade shows to promote and sell our product.

In our design build area, we manufacture custom machine and systems for large industrial companies helping compete in the global economy. Our customers include companies in the medical, building products, energy, heavy truck general industrial area.

While we have been successful over the years, many things I currently see really bother me and give cause for great concern. I often wonder would I do it all again? In today’s climate, could my brother and I succeed and create these jobs in Missouri? Unfortunately, I think the answer is no.

There is too much uncertainty out there right now and the costs of manufacturing in America are rising, making us less globally competitive. Uncertainty over the health care law, instability in the tax code, ineffective and costly regulations are the biggest problems I face. It seems most of our obstacles come from Washington. Small businesses don’t need a helping hand, they need a sensible partner in government which allows entrepreneurs to build a business and create jobs.

In closing, I am proud and thankful to live in the greatest country in the world and proud to have the opportunity to contribute in a very small way to that greatness. May God continue to bless America!