



FilterTalk

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65 YEARS

FILTRATION GROUP CELEBRATES 65 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

1942 Founded in 1942 as Midwest Air Filters, a regional filter distributor

1979 Midwest Air Filters purchased by Larry Ost

1981 Began manufacturing in 1981 when Owens Corning discontinued manufacturing disposable filters

1990 Acquired Bebco; renamed FGI Industrial and Process

1991 A 50/50 joint venture with LUWA AG of Switzerland formed to produce high efficiency filters

THE BEGINNING



The Atomic Age began in 1942 with the first controlled nuclear chain reaction at the University of Chicago. The 1942 Chicago Bears football team finished their regular season undefeated, and Elliott I. Larson opened a small business in Chicago and named it Midwest Air Filters. Elliott quickly secured the distributorship rights for Owens-Corning's first retail consumer product, the Dust-Stop disposable filter. Air conditioning and high efficiency air filtration was basically non-existent, and all the Dust-Stop filters sold were

installed in residential and commercial furnaces.

A big break came when Elliott secured an order with Sears, Roebuck & Co. for a whopping 15 railroad cars of fiberglass disposable filters. In those days filters were packaged two per box and sold mostly via mail order. More orders followed over the years from other Chicago based mega-merchants of the day such as Montgomery Ward, Ace and True-Value Hardware, and an emerging industrial supply house with a small catalog named WW Grainger. Elliott continued to distribute Dust-Stop disposable filters throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s.

NEW MANAGEMENT

The year was 1968 and Midwest Air Filters sales reached one million dollars, had 12 employees, and operated from a 10,000 square foot location in the Bucktown area of Chicago. Elliott made the decision to ask his new and energetic young son-in-law to join the business. Larry Ost accepted and joined Midwest Air Filters with the title of Assistant to the President. During the 1970s Larry's responsibilities grew to cover all areas of the company, leading to him purchasing the company from his father-in-law in 1979. Larry, originally from New York City, and his wife Louise found themselves with three young children and owners of a small air filter distributorship in Chicago. Midwest had a very limited product line and sold almost exclusively to local retailers.



In 1980 Owens-Corning made the decision to shut down manufacturing of Dust-Stop disposable filters or sell it off. Larry had a decision to make. Buy the equipment from Owens-Corning and become a manufacturer or find a new line of disposable filters and continue as a distributor. Larry knew the business climate was changing, so he and a partner purchased the equipment and began manufacturing disposable air filters. In the late 1980s, and still operating under the name Midwest Air Filters, the company purchased the equipment necessary to expand manufacturing into extended surface pleated filters and heat-sealed panel filters. Minor investments by today's standards that positioned the small company to expand out of the Chicago area into a larger arena.

FILTRATION GROUP IS FORMED

Larry recognized the potential for rapid growth during the 1990s and began establishing the infrastructure and creating the product line necessary for expansion. Filtration Group, Inc. was officially formed in 1990 to better represent the coming national and international position. The 1990s brought together a string of activity that increased the scope and size of Filtration Group.

1991 – Filtration Group and the Swiss company LUWA AG create a joint venture in the United States to manufacture the 4-V FP high efficiency, low resistance filter. The success of the European style filter in the U.S. market helped establish Filtration Group as a market

leader in air filtration technology and opened up premium filter sales to new distributors coast to coast.



FGI began manufacturing and introduced the FP to the US market in 1991.





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1996 Acquired Moldan Nonwovens, York, SC

1997 Acquired Air Filters International, Dallas, TX

1999 Acquired Environmental Filter Corporation; Santa Rosa, CA
Benson, NC
Toronto, ON

2000 Acquired Biological Cabinet Filter Business from Donaldson

2003 Began production of Titan® and Novapleat® products

2004 Acquired Filtrair with headquarters in Heerenveen, The Netherlands

Joint venture to form Shanghai-Filtrair

2005 Merged FGI Canada and Dafco Filtration Products

Formed a joint venture, Tec-Pac, with Econofilter to produce "Geopleats"

FGI manufacturing facilities exceed 1,000,000 square feet

1996 – Filtration Group acquires the South Carolina based textile nonwoven manufacturing company Moldan, Inc from Katy Industries. The Moldan acquisition allows Filtration Group to vertically integrate and established manufacturing on the east coast, adding an additional 120,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

1999 – Filtration Group acquires California based air filter manufacturer Environmental Filter Corporation from McLeod Russel. EFC was a national manufacturer with operations in Santa Rosa, CA, Benson, NC, and Toronto, ON. Filtration Group also acquired the EFC melt-blown technology required to produce high efficiency air filtration media and design patents on the sonically sealed SoniQ® pocket filter. The EFC acquisition provided Filtration Group with manufacturing facilities strategically located on both coasts of the United States, as well as in Toronto, ON and distribution branches across Canada. It further expanded Filtration

Group's manufacturing space an additional 160,000 square feet.

During the 1990s Filtration Group grew from a single Chicago area operation with 40,000 square feet of manufacturing space, to 8 manufacturing facilities and 6 branch offices located across the U.S and Canada exceeding 800,000 square feet.



FGI installed the first robotic production process in the industry.

THE 21ST CENTURY BEGINS

The year 2000 began with Filtration Group continuing to grow both organically and by acquisition. The company had become much larger during the past decade supporting the addition of a highly skilled engineering department, an advanced information technology group, as well as a complete in-house testing facility. The increase in engineering expertise and technology systems allowed new acquisitions to include more sophisticated products and manufacturing processes.



FGI continues to invest in state-of-the-art production equipment.

2000 – Filtration Group acquires the BioSafety and Cleanroom divisions from Minnesota based Donaldson Company. The manufacturing and testing equipment are transferred to the Aurora, IL facility forming the High Purity Products (HPP) division of Filtration Group. Filtration Group now began manufacturing HEPA filtration products up to ULPA range on a much larger scale on both a national and international level.

2004 – Filtration Group acquires the Dutch nonwoven company Filtrair from Holland based Borkent BV.

Filtrair is a recognized world leader in automotive paint facility filtration with branch offices and JV's located in Italy, South Africa, and China. Filtrair expands Filtration Group's ability to produce high-end nonwoven textiles for use in high efficiency air filtration products.

2005 – Filtration Group enters into a joint venture in Canada with Toronto based Dafco. The JV (Dafco Filtration Group) creates the largest manufacturer and distributor network in Canada for replacement air filters. Manufacturing in Mississauga, ON is expanded to include higher efficiency filtration products.

In 2007 Filtration Group celebrated reaching it's 65th anniversary in the business of air filtration. Times have changed since 1942. Under the leadership of Larry Ost Filtration Group has grown from a small shop buying and reselling disposable fiberglass filters in Chicago to a multi-national company with 11 manufacturing facilities across the globe and well over 1,000 employees. The product line has grown from the basic furnace filter to include BioSafety Cabinet HEPA filters, cleanroom ceiling modules, high efficiency Filtrair textile materials and filters for automotive facilities, a complete line of fore-market equipment products, and AeroStar® HVAC air filters for use in hospitals, turbines, airports, and office buildings world-wide.

Since 1942 Filtration Group has continued to be a privately held family company that strongly believes in reinvesting earnings to continually upgrade equipment, technology and people. Filtration Group has achieved and maintains a leadership position in innovation and new product introduction in the air filtration industry.



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