



## 1916 – 2016: Germanow-Simon Corporation celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary!!

100 years ago, in October 1916, when the United States was in the middle of World War I, my grandfather Harry Germanow scraped together \$1000 to purchase two machine tools and open G-S Machine Works.



He had arrived at Ellis Island as a teenager in 1905. His skills as a machinist and his ability to play the fiddle were all that he brought with him from a small town near Minsk in what is now Belarus, formerly known as White Russia.

He grew up in a home where his father worked in the forest as a lumberjack and his mother baked and sold bread from the household kitchen to support the family. Opportunities for jobs in Russia for poor Jewish boys like him were limited due to discrimination and persecution.

A wealthy German Jewish philanthropist, Baron de Hirsch, had established several schools in Russia to provide training and experience in the skilled trades so the young men would be able to find better jobs.

Harry's life was forever changed when he was able to attend one of these schools near his town. In an autobiography he wrote 60 years later he said he was most fascinated by classes where he learned skills in machine work, sheet metal work, mechanical drawing, geometric drawing, and shop mathematics.

Today we'd call that training in Advanced Manufacturing skills!!

I often heard my Grandfather say that the skills he learned at that school gave him the ability to find work in various machine shops when he came to America and later the confidence and courage open his own shop.

Precision machining and tooling—advanced manufacturing skills-- remain at the core of the quality work we do at GS Plastic Optics and Tel-Tru and are the basis for the excellent reputation we've established in the marketplace with our customers and the products we supply.

Sustaining our businesses long into the future is our goal and requires that in addition to an upgraded work environment and state of art manufacturing equipment and processes we must have a highly trained staff.

In honor of our founder, Harry Germanow, I want to celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary by supporting initiatives to encourage the development of the advanced manufacturing skills so important to him over 100 years ago.

## **Skill development and training at GSPO and Tel-Tru:**

Support of skill development is a key goal in our strategic plans and for sustaining the long-term health and continuity of GS Plastic Optics and Tel-Tru.

SMART goals and skill development for each individual are driven through the Performance Review process.

SMART goals are: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely.

Each of our team members work with their supervisors to define the individual SMART goals for the skills needed to be developed in order for each them to become most effective in their role of helping the entire team achieve the overall strategic plan goals for GS Plastic Optics or Tel-Tru.

## **Support of skill development in the community:**

Support of skill development by other young people in the Greater Rochester Region is part of extending the legacy of GS Plastic Optics and Tel-Tru in the community.

Helping to build a base of skilled workers will assure the future of manufacturing and skilled jobs as a key component in long term stability and growth of the regional economy.

GS Plastic Optics and Tel-Tru are members of Finger Lakes Advanced Manufacturing Enterprise—also known as FAME. FAME has developed a number of programs dedicated to building workforce talent in advanced manufacturing.

One of those programs is to create a [FAME Student Award Fund](#). This is a tuition assistance program to help students enrolled in training programs in advanced manufacturing skills development.

**In honor of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a manufacturer of precision products in Rochester, NY, GS Plastic Optics and Tel-Tru is helping FAME reach their fund raising goal by pledging \$5,000.**

**We are also challenging other manufacturers to help FAME raise more money to support workforce development in our region. If FAME raises at least \$10,000 from other companies in 2016 GS Plastic Optics and Tel-Tru will match it with an additional pledge of \$5,000!**

In that way our pledge of \$10K has the potential to be leveraged to raise an additional \$10K for total of \$20K for the fund.

GS Plastic Optics and Tel-Tru Mfg. Co. have evolved out of that original 1916 machine shop. Over 100 years you can be sure there are many, many stories about the products developed, factory operations, and the scores of people who worked here.

There have been a lot of successes and failures over 100 years. Successes we've enjoyed in recent years are built on continuously trying to understand, learn and adapt to those activities and decisions that worked and those that didn't.

We thank all of the many people who have worked with us over the years—I feel very fortunate and proud that their continuing commitment to our customers has enabled our companies to reach 100 years old and celebrate this milestone!!

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