

# PLASTICS NEWS®

## Mar-Bal, Atek, Bemis garner this year's Excellence Awards

By Bill Bregar  
PLASTICS NEWS STAFF

### Mar-Bal, Inc.

#### Customer relations

With about \$47 million in 2011 sales, Mar-Bal is a mid-sized plastics processor. But in the world of thermoset molders, that makes the company a big kahuna. So maybe it's not surprising that Mar-Bal counts some giants as customers, makers of well-known brands like Whirlpool, Maytag, Amana, Electrolux, Siemens, Eaton and Schneider Electric.

Mar-Bal's products for those companies include knobs, handles and trim vents for ovens and other home appliances, and heavy-duty insulators for electrical distribution such as switch gears, motors and circuit breakers.

Last year, the company invested \$1.5 million to build an in-house facility at the Chagrin Falls headquarters. The process, which Mar-Bal markets as Thermital, makes thermoset plastic knobs, handles and other such parts look like they have a metalized finish, to resemble stainless steel, chrome or copper.

Now Mar-Bal is adding Thermital to its plant in Cuba, Mo., which will make larger parts like rear consoles for



A Mar-Bal employee finishes oven handles at the firm's Chagrin Falls, Ohio, plant.

ovens and ranges.

Led by brothers Scott and Steven Balogh, respectively the president/ CEO and vice president, the family-owned molder forges an uncommonly close-knit bond with customers.

The most impressive example is Mar-Bal's linkage with Whirlpool Corp., a major customer for more than 20 years. Mar-Bal has become closely involved with Whirlpool's intensive Six Sigma Operational Excellence program. In 2003, Steven Balogh participated in Whirlpool's four-week program OpEx course, living at Whirlpool's Michigan training and conference center.

Since that time, three other Mar-Bal employees have participated in OpEx. The star has been Li Bradshaw, a Mar-Bal materials chemist, who was certified by Whirlpool in late 2010.

Bradshaw now leads OpEx training at Mar-Bal. The first class graduated last spring.



Plastics News photo by Bill Bregar



Pictured: Scott Balogh (L) – President and CEO, Mar-Bal, Inc. with Bob Grace (R) Editorial Director of PN Global Group.



Eaton Corp. named Mar-Bal a Premier Supplier of the Year, an honor reserved for the top half-percent of Eaton's global supply base. Eaton recognized Mar-Bal for quality, delivery, innovation and cost management.

Mar-Bal employees regularly hold face-to-face, cross-functional discussions with customers. Those so-called "knowledge shares" have resulted in more than \$2 million in new business, company officials said.

Customers said Mar-Bal management is willing to invest in technology. Company officials communicate well and move quickly to solve any problems, they said.

Food also is good for bonding. The Baloghs know the old-fashioned way to a customer's heart. Every year, Mar-Bal founder Jim Balogh, a native of Hungary who settled in Cleveland in 1962, joins with his sons Scott and Steven and colleagues to make homemade Hungarian sausages that are used in Christmas holiday cheese trays. A tasty treat from Mar-Bal!



From left: Tony Eagan (Plastics News); Jim Moore (Milacron LLC); Scott Balogh (Mar-Bal, Inc.); Tom Houdeshell (ATEK Plastics); Peter Bemis (Bemis Mfg. Co.); and Robert Grace (Plastics News).

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