



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Keystone Product Development could double its size this year

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KALAMAZOO -- Alliant Engineering is now Keystone Product Development. The name change is one of a series of changes for the Kalamazoo company.

"We're on track to double in size this year," said principle Mike Zamora. "We employ 15 (on the Alliant side), and we're adding people. We're adding engineers and quality and regulatory people."

Zamora and co-principle Jim Medsker changed the name of their engineering arm this month to reflect the company's integrated approach to product design and distribution. Keystone Product Development joins Keystone Manufacturing under the Keystone Solutions Group umbrella. The personnel haven't changed and the address hasn't changed. But the 5121 East ML Ave. company is finalizing plans for 7,000 more square feet of working space to add to the current 8,000.

The parent company is a member of the West Michigan Medical Device Consortium, and that's helping business grow. The Keystone Product Development side of the company offers engineering and design work for any industry. For medical products, it also creates the design-history file required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Zamora said.

For both medical and nonmedical companies, Keystone Product Development can offer all the services needed to take a product to market. So far, Medsker and Zamora don't have a patent attorney on staff, but they do have alliances with some, as well as relationships with marketing companies.

"Someone comes to us with a napkin sketch, we take it from concept to production," Zamora said.

The supply-chain side of the business, Keystone Manufacturing, deals with sterile packaging for medical products. It also offers ordinary contract assembly and packaging assembly for customers that don't need to keep their products sterile, and distribution services. It can qualify new suppliers and manage the supply chain for a customer, Zamora said. The niche business, however, is the sterile assembly.

"There are other contract assemblers out there. Not a lot of them are doing sterile products," Zamora said.

The company began as a product-development consulting company in 1997 and has focused on medical, aerospace and automotive clients, but it also works for other manufacturing segments such as food-service products and retail items. The region's diversification also has helped growth.

"Obviously there are some very depressed segments of Michigan, but being in western Michigan, we're in the right place," Zamora said. "Another thing about western Michigan, there's a tremendous supply base here. There's not much you can't do here."

"Our goal is to make our supply base as local as possible. There are very few things we have to go out of the state for."

"I think you do tend to hear a lot of the bad things, but there are some very good things happening in West Michigan," he said.

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