





FLYING HIGH ATOP THE INDUSTRY



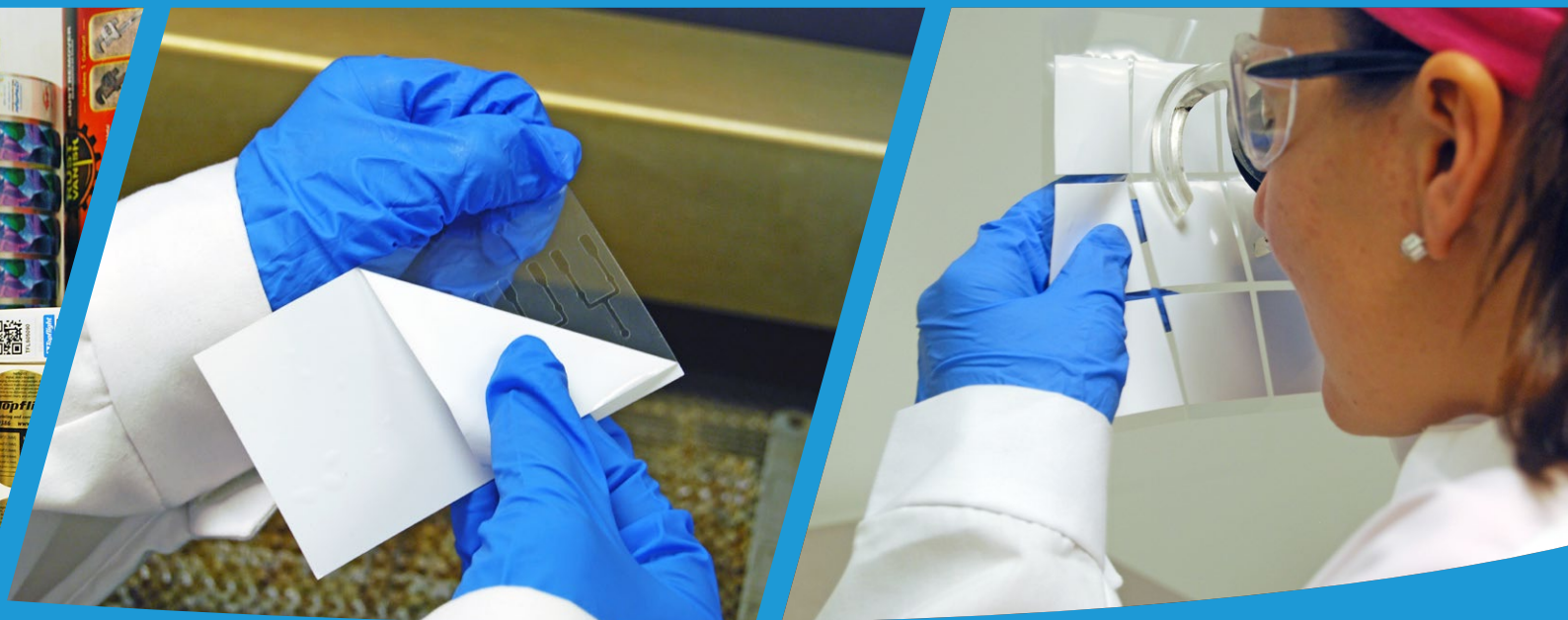
Since 1946, Topflight Corporation has consistently proven itself as a premier designer, developer and manufacturer of labels, shrink sleeves, die cut and conductive parts, maintaining collaborative partnerships with customers in various industries.

Written by Jessica Ferlaino

From design conception through prototyping and production, to marketing and product launch, Topflight Corporation has become a trusted resource and a key solutions provider for many who have come to rely on the team's expertise and longevity in the industry.

"We have a feeling here at Topflight that we are stewards of this business, and we have to be continually aware of what will sustain and grow this company over the years to come and do everything that we can do to make that happen," explained President Craig McClenachan. To this end, Topflight Corporation has invested greatly in its people, processes and capabilities to better serve its various customers in diverse markets.

Customers of Topflight Corporation represent diverse sectors including consumer goods and durables, cosmetics and personal care, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, food and beverage, automotive, electronics, and chemicals. To meet this breadth of client needs, Topflight Corporation's core com-



petencies encompass printing and conductive printing, converting, RFID (Radio-frequency identification), shrink sleeves and other package and assembly options, brand security, and in-house engineering services, as well as creative and supply chain services and support.

Innovative solutions have been Topflight Corporation's niche since inception – they are how its legacy began. As McClenachan shared, "Topflight Tool Company was originally formed during the Second World War to provide precision machine parts for World War Two-era aircraft, hence the name."

He continued, "We were doing quite a bit of metal fabrication as part of that program, but in order to accurately track the parts that we were producing, we also started creating tags and markers that were used on the individual parts to monitor where they were going internally and to our customers. After the war, when there was no longer a need for the aircraft parts we were making, our owner decided to leverage the capability of producing the tapes and labels into a new business. Our proficiency with metal fabrication gave us the ability to eventually produce our own printing presses, so until about 2000, Topflight not only manufactured labels, but we also manufactured many of the presses that we produced those labels on," some of which are still in operation today.

Throughout the 1960s, Topflight Corporation continued to design and manufacture presses, while at the same time focusing its attention on multiple advanced labeling solutions,

bringing new, shrinkable films, self-destructing materials and other unique label offerings to market.

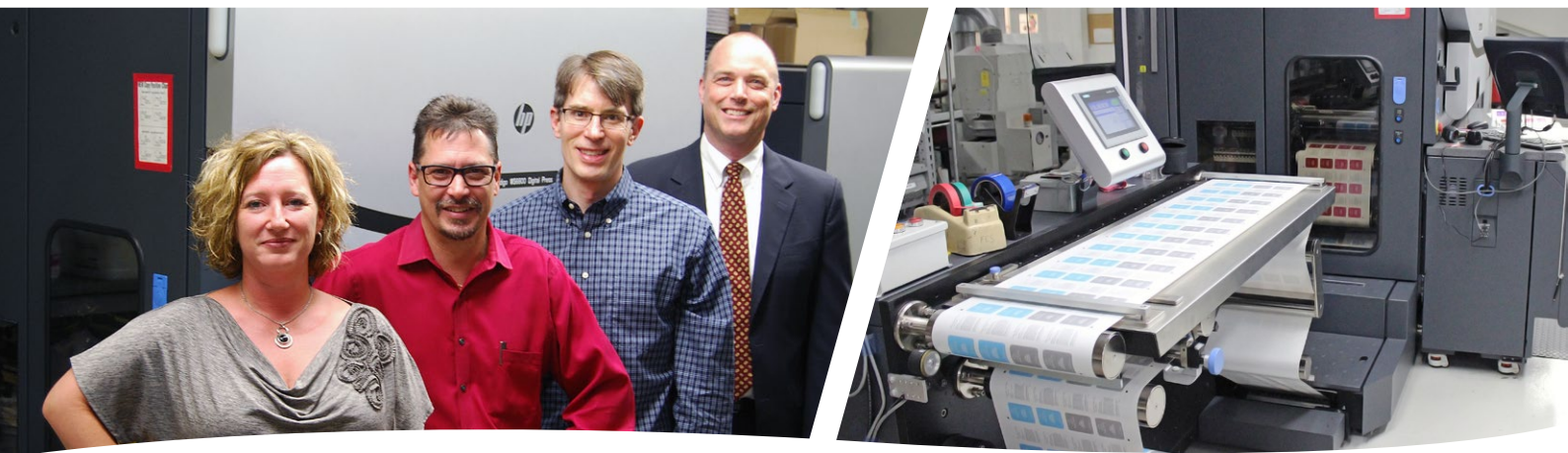
This paved the way for the first of two spin-off companies. In 1961, Adhesives Research was formed. "They are actually right up the street from us here in Glen Rock," said McClenachan. "They provide custom adhesive materials for a wide range of different industries but they were originally created to chemically engineer adhesive solutions that existing companies could not achieve."

"What really differentiates Topflight is our desire and dedication to find customers solutions."

For Topflight Corporation, the 1970s were defined by experimentation with emerging electronics and identifying alternative electronic solutions that could be achieved through conductive printing, sensors, and membrane switches. This resulted in a second spin-off company, Con-

ductive Technologies, formed in 1997. "They are based in York, and they do a lot of electrochemical sensors, biosensors, printed circuitry and membrane switches. At our facility in Glen Rock, in addition to doing standard printed labels, we also do printed conductives; we are able to print conductive materials onto films and papers, so that was a natural spin-off," said McClenachan.

Topflight Corporation continued to invest in its capabilities, specifically its equipment, adding rotary screen and combination printing, as well as its largest press, which can print 12 stations in line. At this time, it also expanded further into printed conductives and specialized pharmaceutical applications. »



“We were originally formed during the Second World War and Topflight Corporation was originally set up to provide precision machine parts for World War Two-era aircraft.”

► Over the next decade, Topflight Corporation would establish a specialized product development group to continue to encourage innovation and stay ahead of the latest technologies. The 1990s saw the first tests in the areas of digital printing, island placement and drug delivery systems. In 1994, a major milestone occurred when the company became ISO 9001 certified.

In 2000, Topflight Corporation moved into its existing 97,000 square foot facility in Glen Rock, Pennsylvania where it is currently operating three shifts. Together, its 75 employees help it to remain large enough to satisfy its customers' needs, while remaining small enough to be highly responsive, collaborative, creative and reliable.

“We’re a fairly small label company in a market that has lots of very big label companies, so where we fit is that specialization: our ability to bring our R&D department to bear, our ability to produce custom inks, do ink matching internally, do graphic design, and graphic development – if one of our customers has a concept or idea, we can help them to better understand how to turn that into a finished product,” said McClenachan.

The 2000s were also when Topflight Corporation would successfully construct its first flexible converting system to meet the converting challenges of the earlier RFID tags. Supply chain initiatives and brand security solutions were added to its service repertoire and this timeframe also marked the beginning of the company’s lean journey.

In the interest of improved efficiency and profitability, all activities were streamlined, wasteful processes were overhauled, and a focus on continuous improvement and improved bottom lines was reaffirmed. Through reorganization and teamwork,

restructuring and cross-training, Topflight Corporation was well on its way to being lean.

All of this was done without compromising the company’s unwavering commitment to quality and safety. A lean committee was struck to unify the mission dedicated to training and standardization, ensuring the culture and the lean journey became one and the same.

“We’ve been on a lean journey for a long time so we continue to try to sustain the level at which we operate through 5S walks, housekeeping walks, safety, and streamlining our processes to be able to manage the kind of work that we put through here as quickly as we can,” explained Tonya Nye, director of sales operations and logistics. 5S is a Japanese workplace organization methodology employing five phases – Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain – to improve a workplace’s efficiency and effectiveness.

Indeed, Topflight Corporation has achieved great results along its lean journey such as improved percentage run times, efficient scheduling, greater ease of set-up and clean up, and decreased downtime, as well as greater productivity, delivery times and ultimately, customer satisfaction. Whether the savings are derived from shipping efficiencies, packaging process improvements or facilities operations, Topflight Corporation is improving throughput.

In recognition of the success of its lean journey, Topflight Corporation was the recipient of the 2014 Mantec Manufacturing Award for Excellence in Continuous Improvement, which recognized the company’s improved efficiency and the commitment to sustainability and operational excellence.

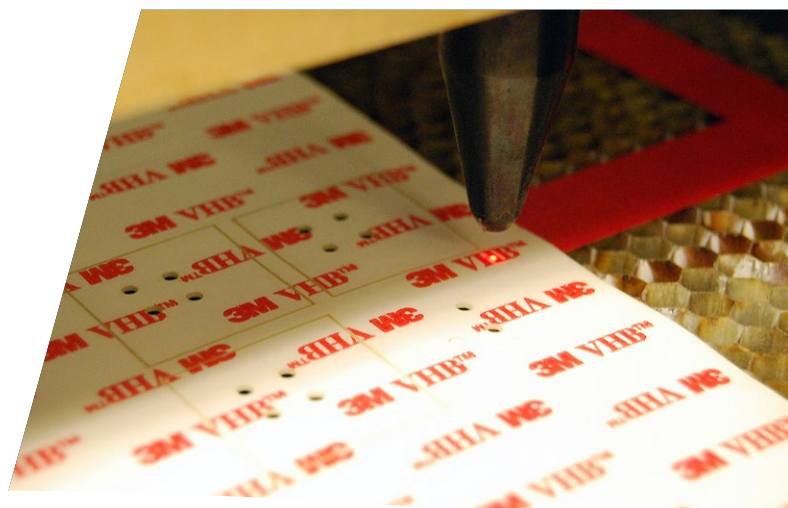
Since 2010, Topflight Corporation has added a full prototype lab and several precision converting presses, as well as a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system called Radius, which has helped streamline operations and reduce entry and paper-work errors through integrated data management.

Over the decades, the company has invested in advanced digital printing and conventional printing capabilities, including flexographic, letterpress, flat screen and rotary screen printing, as well as precision die and laser cutting, complex laminations for converting applications, prototyping and so much more. In 2013, it achieved ISO 13485 certification, which further reinforced its place in the medical market. 2014 brought additional investments in its digital printing capabilities, continuing to remain on the cutting edge of advancements in the marketplace, whether through new equipment, materials, or processes.

For Topflight Corporation, the goal is to complete every project “the first time, on time, every time,” doing so with the highest standard of care and a true understanding of the sense of urgency of its customers, according to **topflight.com**.

Tonya Nye shared Topflight Corporation’s mantra, which is, “safety, quality, throughput,” which can only be achieved through continued investment in the people and processes who are employed in its operations and execute on its mantra each day. “What really differentiates Topflight is our desire and dedication to find customers solutions, so a lot of the things we attack, whether it be in a part or whether it be in the logistics of managing parts, we try to find a custom solution that works best for our customers to make them successful,” said Nye.

This is achieved through Topflight Corporation’s inherent understanding of the materials being used, printing applications, processes, and new product development. This attention



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to detail and high level of specialization is how it has differentiated itself from its competitors.

The corporate culture at Topflight Corporation is such that employees feel they are a part of a close-knit group and are able to play a critical role in the success of the company. “We’re a small business at 75 people but I think everybody here feels like they have a real stake in the success of our business going forward,” stated McClenachan.

In the short term, Topflight Corporation will continue to focus on the niche markets it serves, identifying new opportunities that can successfully be processed through its development cycle, finding new sources of profitability and growth in those markets, and growing its capabilities and its offerings – a strategy for growth that will support the company long into the future. ■

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