



U.S. Small Business
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Global Coating Company is SBA Western Pa. Exporter of the Year

PITTSBURGH – Not all Western Pennsylvania residents may know about the area’s century-old company, Sauereisen, Inc., but chances are when they safely turn on a gas oven, clothes dryer, grill or even get a drink of tap water it’s a result of a Sauereisen product.

“We’re not a commodity material provider, but a piece of the bigger picture,” explained Eric Sauereisen, president. “Our coatings protect concrete and steel or a piece within many appliances. We may be in just about every home in America and across the world.”

The family owned company’s storied beginnings can be traced to an 1899 working relationship between founder, C. Fred Sauereisen and industrialist George Westinghouse. That partnership led to the formulation of one of Sauereisen’s signature products -- a chemical bonding agent that still is used in high-temperature electrical assembly applications in the automotive and appliance industries. “In your dryer or oven, one of our products may be part of the ignitor ” Sauereisen said. “It enables persons to safely turn their ovens with temperatures going from zero to 2300 degrees Fahrenheit without worries.”

For the century-old company to compete in today’s marketplace, they enhanced their customer base through exporting. Sales and employment continue to grow where exports now reflect up to 40 percent of revenue. Their ingenuity in creating an international distribution network based around the globe earned Eric Sauereisen and his team honors as the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Western Pennsylvania Exporter of the Year. He and other local winners were honored during National Small Business Week, Sept. 22-24.

According to Sauereisen, their exporting success is directly related to the SBA’s involvement at both the local and national levels. “We wouldn’t be here without the SBA’s assistance,” he admitted. “We’re a poster child for their exporting programs, using the SBA’s State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) and the Duquesne University Small Business Development Center (SBDC).”

Celebrating its tenth year, STEP makes matching-fund grants for states to increase the number of small businesses that export and the value of those exports. Pennsylvania’s grant enabled Sauereisen to start pursuing new exporting opportunities 10 years ago. “It’s a great program that offers assistance getting you in front of customers you may not have otherwise met,” Sauereisen said.

Sauereisen complemented STEP by becoming a client at the Duquesne University SBDC. The SBDC’s extensive ties to Latin and South American markets and business contacts helped the company enter the Chilean market by securing space at a targeted trade conference and arranging for key face-to-face business meetings including one with the Embassy.

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SBDCs are SBA and state-funded entities helping small businesses in every phase of development. “In Western Pennsylvania, we have eight SBDCs,” said SBA Western Pennsylvania District Director Dr. Kelly Hunt. “And the best part is, those Chilean introductions were free, and so are counseling services.”

Apart from other material firms in the country, Sauereisen began developing a hands-on approach to deliver their company’s products into facilities and specifications across the world by employing a team of independent agents and distributors. These representatives showcase Sauereisen’s “Made in the USA” compounds: for clean water, clean air and other technologies.

Sauereisen adds their company’s product line applications and specifications are borderless. Their national and international sales rely on fostering strong communication and relationship strategies. “We’re proactive, visit and constantly communicate,” he said. “And it really is true that a picture is worth a thousand words.”

Through locally held marketing summits, Sauereisen provides agents with hands-on training in the uses and specifications of their products in many languages. “The one common language among our agents and customers is engineering and physical results,” he added. “And there definitely seems to be a halo over products made in America with overseas customers accepting technical information printed in English.”

Hunt said she never knew a century-old company based in Pittsburgh has been helping manufacturers make safer products. “It’s amazing a small dab of their compound not only was invented and manufactured here but found its way into so many global applications.” she said. “I’m happy the Duquesne University SBDC team not only nominated him for this award but utilized their exporting expertise and contacts to help Sauereisen expand into South America.”

Sauereisen said he’s pleased at what the award represents. “It’s exciting and I really appreciate the acknowledgement,” he added. “International sales are not always easy, and this award represents a job well done for many here who make it happen.”

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About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.