



INNOVATIVE SUPPLIER

AMERICA'S INDUSTRY LEADING CERTIFIED WBE SUPPLIERS

Boulevard Machine & Gear

BY JOY MERCER BARKSDALE



Susan M. Kasa

Down to Details

Boulevard Machine & Gear, Inc.

WBE Certified:
Center for Women & Enterprise (Boston, MA)

Capabilities:

- Aerospace, defense, paper and commercial parts manufacturing
- Customized gear manufacturing

Contact Info:

Susan M. Kasa,
President
Kazimierz Kasa,
Vice President
785 Page Boulevard
Springfield, MA 01104-3090
(413) 788-6466
info@boulevardmachine.com
www.boulevardmachine.com

When Susan M. Kasa acquired Boulevard Machine & Gear, she was stepping into territory that for her was uncharted. Kasa had an extensive public relations background as a technology-company executive, and although she knew one day she'd have her own business, machining wasn't the first business that came to mind. But when Boulevard went on the market in 2006 after being family owned since 1954, the opportunity was too good to pass up; the company had built a solid reputation and an extensive client list. Kasa took a chance on an industry that was new to her, forged ahead and has never looked back.

"I had been looking for a business and this had the right roots," said Kasa, who as president is responsible for everything from marketing and sales to purchasing. "It had a great customer base that I knew I could expand on and build out."

Boulevard Machine & Gear's core capabilities are general machining for the aerospace and commercial markets, and manufacturing gears for the commercial, food and paper industries. The company makes everything from the common spur gears that are found in such tools and appliances such as electric screwdrivers and washing machines to the more complex helical gears that are found in transmissions.

For the aerospace industry, Boulevard also does stamping, which involves imprinting and affixing, to a set of strict military restrictions and guidelines, the identification tags that are bound to the edges of airplane hoses. In addition, Boulevard does assembly work for the Olympic Manufacturing Group, an Agawam, Mass. company that makes fasteners and construction accessories. The mix makes for a "happy medium," Kasa says, because if business is slowing down in one core area, activity in the others makes up for it.

The company's 22 employees are specialists in their areas, whether it's turning, milling or gearing. Although Boulevard still uses several manual machines for building prototypes or fine-tuning products, most of its machines are controlled by computers, in deference to the critical role that computer-aided design plays in manufacturing today.

What distinguishes Boulevard, aside from its employees' craftsmanship, is the company's focus on quality. Boulevard complies with AS 9100 and ISO 9001:2000 standards for all of its processes — from design consultation and in-house fixturing to metal cutting, finishing and final inspection. "High quality is a day-to-day policy for us, so those standards are practiced regardless of who the customer is," says Kasa.

Over the next three to five years, Kasa would like to expand the business because the company has space to grow and is in an ideal location, about a quarter-mile from two major highways.

However, its ability to expand depends on whether the company can hire more machinists. Boulevard is involved with a National Machining Association project to encourage more young people to consider the field. The project begins as early as middle school, when students are beginning to see the connections between math and science and careers. "We're trying to show the kids that this is really a viable option for them," she says. "They can come right out of high school and be making \$60,000 a year in this field."

Kasa says that being certified as WBE means that Boulevard can get its foot in the door. But after that opening, it's the company's craftsmanship and quality standards that enable it to get — and keep — customers. "It's truly the product that has to stand on its own," she says.

