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Growth Strategies



Matt Giese left his job as an account manager with a chemical company to start MidWest Chemical and Equipment. The De Pere business helps companies with wastewater issues. The Business News photo by Eric Popp

De Pere business takes waste out of wastewater

Started four years ago, Midwest Chemical helps others cut cost 'through precise process control'

By Betty Wall

bwall@thebusinessnews.com

Matt Giese believes you have to invest time up front in order to develop new business.

The account manager-turned-business owner of MidWest Chemical & Equipment, De Pere, provides an in-depth wastewater analysis even before a company has signed on.

"We really need to fully understand their system and their processes. To do that, we offer a free initial consultation and plant survey that includes a documented analysis and flow chart of their wastewater system," Giese said. "It's part of the service that we offer. We offer process improvement solutions in practically any chemical application."

MidWest Chemical & Equipment helps companies with wastewater issues such as odor complaints, high sewer surcharges, high chemical costs, poor sludge quality, and inadequate pH control.

They also help in cases where a manufacturer is out of compliance regarding their wastewater discharge.

MidWest Chemical & Equipment provides chemistries that include polymers, odor control agents, acids, bases, and other process chemistries. In addition to the chemistries, the company supplies a broad range of equipment, including chemical metering pumps, pH controllers, and other chemical-feed related equipment.

Giese has seen a real spike in chemical

costs in recent months. "One way we can save our customers money is through precise process control. They won't be using more chemicals than they need in order to get the job done. It is essential to pay attention to every ounce of chemical used, especially with today's escalating chemical costs," said Giese.

Giese has identified key measurements that can help his customers save money on wastewater treatment programs. Giese says MidWest Chemical can save a customer an average of \$150,000 to over \$250,000 a year in the reduction of sewer costs, chemical usage, and wastewater system inefficiencies.

Giese and his wife, Mary, started MidWest Chemical & Equipment four years ago in De Pere. The company recently moved to 809 Prosper Road in the De Pere Industrial Park.

Prior to starting the business, Giese had worked as an account manager for a chemical company and had experience in wastewater treatment. MidWest Chemical & Equipment serves customers in the meat packing, food processing, paper, and metals industries.

Through the business planning process, Giese credits Steve Van Remortel of SM Advisors in Green Bay with helping him communicate the tangible value of his company's service to current and potential customers. MidWest recently launched a new brand strategy that includes their positioning statement 'Taking Wa\$te Out of Wastewater.'

"Our business plan clearly helps us because it is a working document," said Giese.

"Every other week we have a meeting to go over our action items to ensure that we're getting things done. Our business plan focuses on working 'on' the business."

So far, Giese has been pleased with the growth of his company. He said they are currently in another growth mode. "For us, it's a long-term process. It takes time because we really need to understand the customer's process and every process is different.

"We're not a company that drops the chemicals off at the door," he said. "Rather, we are a service-driven chemical company. We help our customers select the proper chemical-feed equipment and make sure the employees know the safety behind the chemistries they're using.

Unfortunately, we've all seen the stories of chemical explosions in the news. If you mix the wrong chemicals together, the results can be deadly. We teach people how to contain and respect those chemistries."

Giese said corporate managers typically don't think about their wastewater until there is a problem.

"Manufacturers want to concentrate on making their product, whether it's sausage or cheese, or whatever," he said. "They don't want to worry about their wastewater. That's what we're here for."

According to Giese, communication is key to success in his business. "We communicate very well with our customers, whether it's through service reports, business reviews,

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— Matt Giese, co-owner of MidWest Chemical & Equipment, De Pere

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e-mails, or in person," he said. "We have a very good relationship with the guys on the floor, all the way up to the front office. Management wants to know what's going on, but they don't care about all the details. They want a solution. That's what we do for them. We create measurable process improvements and cost reductions by solving their wastewater treatment issues. Taking waste out of wastewater, that's what we do."