

Minnie Mouse and the U.S. Military Share Balls

MILFORD, Conn. -- Rising labor costs and ambush-style competition have some domestic manufacturers crying "Uncle". But "just south of \$50 Million a year" Alinabal Holdings Corporation of Milford, Connecticut isn't one of them. And they have the balls to prove it.

One thing Alinabal does best is balls. Ball bearings to be exact. The United States military puts them in smart bombs and mortars, and Disney uses them for animatronic characters.

Alinabal started in 1913, when the company supplied Henry Ford's Model-T with laminated materials. It's since diversified into the aerospace, defense, industrial, recreational and medical sectors.

But you'll find the company's products in places other than the battlefield and theme parks. They're everywhere. Alinabal manufactures printers for ATM machines and the New York Stock Exchange, movie ticket dispensers, and in-store wedding registry kiosks. They also manufacture a sophisticated shutter for night vision devices used by firemen and soldiers.

<i>FILTERED Facts:</i> Alinabal Holdings	
CEO	Samuel S. Bergami, Jr.
Products	precision stampings and assemblies, spherical rod end bearing and linkage assemblies, as well as special purpose printers, aircraft instrumentation and advanced optical shutters

What distinguishes Alinabal is their track record of mission critical design excellence, and their precision manufacturing capabilities.

We recently sat down with Alinabal's CEO, Sam Bergami, to learn more about what drives this company. Bergami was personally involved in the development of the wind driven turbine alternators used in the smart bombs - a project so precise and functional that the product has remained unchanged since 1985.

"The Alinabal alternator has a 25 year shelf-life and a safety and arming device that is set off as the part spins down the mortar shaft," says Bergami, "The alternator dually creates electricity for an on-board microprocessor and protects the person operating the bomb, so it doesn't go off until it's as far away as possible."

LIKE A ROCK

Bergami compares the value of Alinabal's products to other technology achievements that withstand the test of time: "My son just bought a brand new truck with all the latest technology, but it's got the same engine it had 50 years ago," he says, "The Chevy small block engine turned 50 this year and it still gets the job done."

Bergami says the company has enjoyed a 45 percent growth for the past five years, a success he attributes to the company's reputation for service and delivery. "The most striking difference between now and 10 years ago is the number of Chinese firms that provide competitors with components," says Bergami. But Asian competitors can't offer the same level of service.

Bergami says Alinabal enjoys a 99% delivery rating, an achievement impossibly matched by the Chinese because of sheer geographic time obstacles. The delivery rating measures both the accuracy of when Alinabal says they'll deliver the product and when the customer says they want the product delivered. "We believe we have the best delivery performance in the markets we serve," says Bergami.

Editors Note: Know any innovative Connecticut based startups or established companies? Shoot us an email and tell us what makes them interesting.

-- Paul

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The UConn Health Center, Farmington, offers labs and adjoining offices from 350 to 450 sq ft depending on the rooms selected. 3500 sq ft is available.

Storrs offers 500 sq ft labs with adjoining 100 sq ft offices.

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