

## Q&A /// INTERVIEW WITH AN INDUSTRY INSIDER

ROSEANNE BRUNELLO /// PRESIDENT AND OWNER /// MOUNTAIN REP

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### **What do you and Mountain Rep do for the heat-treat industry?**

Mountain Rep is a manufacturing rep firm that has been in business for 35 years; however, we’ve only been in the heat-treatment world for about three years. I moved back to Cleveland, and this is kind of the way that my company wound up going into the heat-treat business. I currently sell nitriders for RUBIG. I sell gas and plasma nitriders, plasma-coating systems. I work with a rebuilder of vacuum pumps, a rebuilder of hot zones, and 3D-temperature uniformity surveys that take the data off the SSI data logger, and they make a 3D image from it, which is pretty cool because it helps with predictive maintenance and the furnaces. That relates to AMS 2750, and that spec keeps getting tighter and tighter, and now RUBIG, I think is going to be requesting everybody be computerized. They’re getting away from the paper that those machines used to use. It’s a good time for that. That’s the VVS, which is software created by Pete Husheck from Phoenix Heat Treat. He came up with this software where it takes data and it turns it into a 3D image of the inside of the hot zone of the furnace.

I’m very involved with ASM. I’m going to be the chairperson this coming year for the Cleveland chapter. Right now, I’m the vice chair. I’m a member of the Heat Treat Society. I reach out to the students at Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve to get them interested in careers in engineering. I’m just a nice girl from Cleveland, Ohio.

### **What made you decide to add heat-treat to your company’s offerings?**

When I moved back to Cleveland, I had a business for 30 years that dealt with the machining and the processing of aerospace components and sub-assemblies. I did that for 30 years, and I loved it. I did great. I repped lines like a CNC machine shop and an investment casting house – which I did really well with – and hardening ground gears, and all the aerospace-type commodities, but then I moved home.

When I moved home, everything kind of got scrambled, and HC Stark called me and offered me a regional manager job, and I learned all about moly and molybdenum. The all-metal hot zone is made out of molybdenum. When Stark hired me for a year, I learned all about moly. They put me in charge of the heat-treat furnace customers. That worked out great, and then and I decided to start Mountain Rep again, which was perfect because I had already been in business for 35 years.

### **What’s a typical day like for you at Mountain Rep?**

I start answering emails, and then I start calling customers. It’s very



hard to get a hold of people today. It is very hard to get people to reply to your emails and to your phone calls, and it’s a very fine line not being a pain about trying to call too much or being overly aggressive, so I’m on LinkedIn a lot. I connect with people there. I try to get them to let me come see them or send them an email. You kind of have to feel each thing out by itself. Every call is different.

### **The heat-treat industry is kind of a male-dominated world. Has that been a challenge for you being a woman-owned business?**

I started off in 1983 selling CNC machine tools when CNC came out to replace NC, and these guys would’ve never bought a furnace from me, because I was a girl, so I’ve dealt with that my whole career. This one is little tougher; you’re right. The good old boys are still around and God bless them, I hope they live forever, but when they do go, you know, I’m going to be right there behind them.

Actually, a lot of people are very, very nice to me. My whole thing about meeting with people is to see how I can help them. I like them to teach me. One thing I’ve always done in my 35 years, is I get them to teach me something. In fact, right now since I’m into nitriding now, my question is: Teach me something about nitriding. If I could get every single person that I meet to teach me one little thing, just one little thing, I’ll remember it forever. I’m like a little sponge trying to learn about it.

### **How do you approach customers when they come to you with a need?**

I pride myself on my customer service. If somebody comes to me with a need, I’m on it – whatever I can do to help make their problem go away. I follow up; I’m thankful; I’m eager; I’m enthusiastic. I *am* a girl, so now I can play my girl card. I could wish you Happy Valentine’s Day. I could bring you a little tray of cookies.

### **Where do you see the heat-treat industry in the next five to 10 years and Mountain Rep’s place in that?**

My five-year plan is to have local sub-reps in all four states. I already have one in Michigan. He’s great; his name is John Young, and he joined me in January. And I would hope that maybe they want to keep it going after I’m done.

I’m not saying I’m going to retire in five years. Maybe, that’s the 10-year plan. 🍪

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