

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

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### **Noble is expanding its services. In what way are you expanding?**

We’ve been working on a service expansion called Noble 1-Stop. We have begun working in partnership with companies’ maintenance and purchasing departments to oversee their heat-treat facility maintenance and inventory. Noble 1-Stop can free up their maintenance & purchasing personnel to do other jobs. We start with an evaluation of the facility, processes and equipment then identify all their consumables and critical spare parts.

It’s something new that we’ve done, and we’re having some success with it because of the list of benefits that go with it. It’s convenient because your critical spares are readily available; it’s efficient because you can schedule preventative maintenance and reduce unscheduled downtime; it brings cost savings. It’s our way to connect with a heat-treat shop, and the big thing is that we’re there to help out the customer. In the heat-treat world, reducing downtime is primarily the main objective because whenever you have downtime, costs go up.

### **What was involved in Noble 1-Stop’s decision-making process?**

It’s Noble 1-Stop, one source for what you need when you need it. Things have changed with COVID and some industries have slowed down. So, it was an idea we had that started out of the necessity that customers are reducing expenses wherever they can and downsizing their workforce. We’ve had a preventative maintenance contract with some of them, so we could identify their needs. We want to offer our solution to current customers and to more businesses in the heat treat industry.

We track equipment operations and modify some of the procedures, suggest ways to standardize between facilities, equipment and related consumables. We put together a report. Businesses love reports that show where they’re making money and if they’re losing it where they can save it. So it was more or less a necessity that we recognized where they were downsizing, cutting maintenance and cutting costs. Unfortunately for many customers, that means they are cutting experience. And that’s where we can help them out.

That was the decision process. You could see a hole, and we would fill it. And it works out for everybody, from major aerospace and tooling companies to smaller, family owned heat-treatment shops. Wherever you see a change in management or key facility/maintenance personnel, we can help them get up to speed and make sure important details don’t get lost in the transition. We help maintain their equipment, manage their spare part and consumable inventory whether it is maintained in our shop or theirs. This ensures they have what they need to keep production up and running.



### **How does 1-Stop set Noble apart?**

Noble, as a contracting service company, goes on the road troubleshooting and repairing equipment almost every day. You get the experiences and benefits of a quality furnace designer and manufacturer because we have an eye for flawed designs and how to correct them. We’re able to recognize the science at work. We incorporate that into a design upgrade or a rebuild. I believe our experience in heat treat allows us to evaluate and look for ways to improve or streamline your thermal process. We can get in there and see

what makes a good furnace run and a bad one break.

Noble 1-Stop can even help standardize across multiple facilities and all brands of heat treat equipment and related components.

We also have a good team, and I credit our success to us hiring the right people for the right job.

### **What does this mean for your existing products and services?**

Our existing products, like our new builds, will benefit from increasing our presence on the road and out in other shops. We’ve been a contracting company for over 47 years, and there are very few things we haven’t seen. Our business is pretty much split 50/50 with new builds and maintenance service. Servicing equipment helps us with refining our design — seeing what works and what doesn’t. It gets us out of the bubble; we get fresh ideas, and it increases our exposure.

### **What kind of market response are you getting so far?**

So far, it’s been positive. A couple of the customers that we’ve been dealing with on a small scale, we do an inventory evaluation for them, mainly in-house where we go through and catalog everything they have, and they purchase it and keep it in-house. We’re also trying to do that on a different scale where you can catalog all the perishable tooling or consumables and have it in our shop so they don’t have the expense of managing it. We work with each customer on a case-by-case basis establishing the cost saving method best for them. Some shops don’t have the space, or they get new management, and things get cleaned out. We can keep a better inventory.

We source multiple vendors and get competitive pricing for them. Instead of the customer trying to get the best price, we do all the legwork for them. I think it’s a win-win for us and for the customer. The way of doing business is changing and this is our response. Noble 1-Stop is beneficial to our customers. With our experience, we’re able to help them, and they appreciate it. 📞

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