

Q&A /// INTERVIEW WITH AN INDUSTRY INSIDER

JOHN NIGGLE /// BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER /// PELICAN WIRE

“Pelican Wire specializes in fine gauge alloy wire used for temperature measurement applications such as thermocouple and RTD wire.”

What’s a typical week like for you at Pelican Wire?

Pelican is a custom wire manufacturer, and for that reason, it is a little difficult to describe a typical week succinctly. To begin with, every day of the week we make something we never made before. The variety of processes and capabilities Pelican has is necessary because we are a solutions-based company. On the production floor, there are multiple extrusion lines running bunchers, cablers, tapers, braiders, and other specialized equipment as well. We can get some pretty interesting requests from our customers. If there is a pattern that we follow, it is regularly scheduled intra-departmental and inter-departmental meetings.

These meetings can be focused on design and development of wires for new and unique opportunities, for example. There are collaborative discussions between the sales and operations team daily to ensure priorities are coordinated. Continuous improvement discussions take place weekly as well. While it looks like there is a lot of talking taking place, in the end we believe good communication ensures we are living our company values and in turn bringing value to our customers.

What types of products in your inventory are ideal for the heat-treating industry?

We focus on high-temperature resistant insulations such as FEP and PFA, as well as E Glass and S Glass, high-temp textiles, and tapes. We have quite a bit of finished wire in stock because, in the temperature measurement industry, which heat treating is a part of, speed of business can be critical. Because we are a custom wire manufacturer, we have a broad selection of alloys, gauges, insulations, and capabilities available to make unique thermocouple and RTD wire constructions.

Another core competency for Pelican is custom resistance heating applications using, again, fine gauge alloy wire. We strand wires to customer-specified resistances and dimensions and insulate the wires as required for the application. These insulations can be high temp like mentioned previously or can be a variety of other thermoplastic compounds. Our resistance wires range from fractions of an ohm to 10,000 ohms per foot. We can incorporate strength members such as glass or aramid fibers if needed and can braid or spiral-wind glass or textile insulations on the wire, also.

What makes Pelican’s products unique in the heat-treat field?

About 10 percent of our employees are engineers — either design engineers who work closely with the sales team or manufacturing engineers who spend much of their time on the manufacturing floor. And we have a great mix on the engineering team of long time, wire-industry professionals and a few more recent graduates. So, with the



combination of experience and seasoned judgment on one hand and a fresh set of eyes on the other, Pelican is up to the challenges that customers bring us. We have been in business for more than 50 years and have developed systems and processes directed toward accuracy, repeatability, and customer satisfaction. While all this may sound somewhat standard, the customer-focused attitude and attention to detail that the employee-owners of Pelican Wire possess really make us unique. Pelican has been an ESOP since 2008, and the pride of ownership is evident. Regular town hall events

keep the employee-owners aware of what and how the company is doing. Discussions about who our customers are, how they use our wire, what they expect, and what Pelican needs to do for them are routinely held.

How do you approach a potential customer when they have a need that doesn’t exist within your standard inventory?

Pelican is, at its core, a custom wire manufacturer. As such, other than a substantial amount of finished common thermocouple and RTD wire, we do not have a large amount of finished inventory. We do have a significant and varied inventory of alloys, gauge sizes, insulating compounds, shielding and overbraid material, tape, strength members, and other components used in wire and cable construction. We also have the resources and willingness to develop customer specific solutions for temperature-measurement and resistance-heating needs.

In fact, Pelican is not limited to those areas. We make a number of unique sensing wires, precisely wound variable pitch heating wires, and other wires and cables. We routinely make our own equipment, tooling, and fixtures in house to achieve the desired results. We also have a detailed and formal on-boarding procedure for evaluating and developing new opportunities to ensure the desired outcome for the customer and Pelican. This on-boarding procedure is inter-departmental and promotes collaboration between the customer and all the teams at Pelican to increase the likelihood of success.

Where do you see Pelican Wire’s place in the future of heat treating?

Pelican Wire recognizes the importance of supporting the industry with new ideas and capabilities. This has long been a philosophy of Pelican. Through recent acquisitions, we have added to our portfolio and have positioned the company to be even more suited to assist with custom-wire requirements from prototype to production. ♣

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