

NETPLUS MEMBER SUCCESS STORY

Renewed Partnership Drives Growth for Wright Tool & Midland Tool

Midland Tool & Supply chose to enhance their partnership with NetPlus Alliance preferred supplier Wright Tool this year for a few simple reasons: quality U.S.-made products, timely delivery, demonstrated brand marketing and a personal relationship.

Founded in 1927, Wright Tool specializes in mechanics tools, including ratchets, sockets, wrenches and accessories. "We make them here in Ohio from forge to finish," said Al Ryding, vice president of sales.

"The nice thing about Wright Tool is that it's made in the U.S. and that's hard to come by these days," said Chris Arthur, Midland's sales manager. "There are some things that just aren't made here anymore."

Midland Tool, a family-owned business since 1962, works with large contractors, as well as boiler makers, pipe fitters, iron work-

ers, electricians and plumbers in steel mills, power plants, refineries, hospitals, auto plants and more.

THE PLAN

Wright Tool and Midland Tool made a conscious effort to enhance their relationship in 2020. Culturally, the supplier and distributor just fit. "We took a good partnership to the next level," Ryding said. They started with a two-day meeting and tour at Wright's Barberton, Ohio, plant in February and launched a more proactive plan from there.

The partners focused on:

- Open and continuous communication
- Ongoing training, including tool demos and presentations
- Joint customer calls
- Shared market planning, identifying opportunities for sales reps

RESULTS

The partnership had a full-year growth of 23.1% in 2019. Through July 2020, sales of Wright Tool products through Midland Tool have increased to 32.4%. That is despite a year of across-the-board declines for distributors due to COVID-19 closures and limitations. "It's a solid relationship that we're very pleased with," Ryding said.

WHAT WORKED

Keeping it simple

Wright Tool prioritizes straightforward, simple growth programs with channel partners.

"NetPlus always says that when you have a



Midland Tool keeps a large supply of Wright Tool inventory in its warehouse.

plan, it's best to have it in writing and have it mutually agreed upon, and you can work on the plan throughout the year," Ryding said. The key is for both sides to buy in at the beginning. "With that type of agreement, you usually see growth." That approach paid big dividends for both Wright Tool and Midland Tool.

Timely delivery

Midland frequently needs finished and semi-finished products at the ready for repairs at their customer sites. Wright Tool offers what they call a 98/36 delivery promise, shipping 98% of its products within 36 hours of order.

Midland's initial visit to Wright Tool showed how the products are made and gave Midland a window into the stock on hand, including a room of partially finished inventory available to be finished in a day and shipped. Arthur said a lot of suppliers say they have product ready, but seeing it strengthened the trust Midland had in Wright. "If I need a hundred wrenches shipped out ASAP, they might have some in stock that they could ship right away," Arthur said. "Then they have the rest partially done and can be turned around quickly."

Learning about the product at its source

Arthur had always been a fan of Wright's product line, but seeing the products made first-hand was essential to improve sales. Learning directly from the manufacturing team and see-

ing the pride that goes into the process gave them insight and enthusiasm for the product that could be passed on to the end-user.

Ongoing communication

Wright values the relationship and makes a point to stay in front of Midland Tool with information and trainings. Ryding said it's the supplier's responsibility to keep the relationship alive so he's always asking what he can do and provide in the form of training, literature and more. Ultimately, he said the key to Wright and Midland's partnership success is trust. "They trust us; they know we're professional. It's just a good, solid working relationship," he said.

Arthur echoed Ryding's sentiments. The responsiveness and the personal relationship that Midland's sales team has with Wright's sales representatives keeps them excited and focused on increasing sales together.

"They do see a pretty solid future with us as a premium supplier. They're aggressive and hungry," Ryding said of Midland. "They want to leverage the value that we bring to them." ■



Wright Tool's products are forged onsite in their Ohio plant, and they maintain a stock of both fully and partially finished tools to fulfill orders quickly.