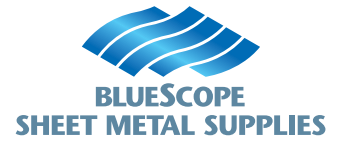


CASE STUDY

Smoothflo



Bernard Toohey (Smoothflo Products) with Peter Schepis.

CATEGORY:
Manufacturing

LOCATION:
Carrum Downs, Victoria

Ready To Take On A Challenge

From his AFL playing days in the 80's and 90's with Geelong, Sydney and Footscray, to his current role as owner of a component manufacturer for the air conditioning industry, Bernard Toohey has always liked a challenge.

During his 13 season career, Bernard played more than 250 games, but it's fair to say that his current role as owner of Smoothflo Products has been just as challenging as anything he faced on the footy field.

Smoothflo Products manufactures and distributes high quality duct components for use in the industrial and commercial air-conditioning industry.

"I'm only relatively new into the manufacturing industry," Bernard said. "Until two years ago, my family and I lived in the Albury Wodonga region and ran a line marking company and Red Rooster store."

"For family reasons we decided to move back to Melbourne and through friends of ours who own an accounting firm we were made aware of Smoothflo Products and bought the company."

"That brought me in contact with BlueScope, and let's face it, I needed all the assistance I could get."

"To produce quality air conditioning ducting and components you need everything to be right – including basic things such as the slitting of the steel."



Being able to work with Smoothflo as they developed their production processes has been a positive experience for both companies.



“We supply to guys who make air conditioning ductwork systems for high rise commercial buildings throughout Australia. Our components need to be durable because you don’t want to be replacing sections of ducting 50 floors up.”

“We pride ourselves on supplying a quality Australian manufactured product made from Australian steel.”

The duct components manufactured by Smoothflo Products include a range of bell mouth spigots, flex (fan) connectors, duct flange and corners, TDF & TDC corners.

The market is quite a niche one, but competition is nonetheless strong, both from other local manufacturers and products imported from the United States.

“A couple of the sections our roll formers produce look like a nightmare in steel,” Bernard said. “We’ve found that the steel which works best with our roll formers is the product supplied by BlueScope.”

“Various people told me that roll forming could be a nightmare without the right skills and materials. Over time we’ve come to find that the steel from BlueScope works best for us.”

“When we first took over the company it took a while for me to get my head around the industry and BlueScope was a big assistance with that.”

“They also hold stock on the floor for us. If I’ve miscalculated and need more steel, I can ring and have a next day delivery.”

“They’ve taken the time to get to know our business, and as a result, are good at recognising supply needs and timing.”

BlueScope Sheet Metal Supplies undertook a Steel Efficiency Review™ of the Smoothflo operations as one of the first priorities on becoming their supplier.

“The SER™ process is a great tool for a company in the early days of establishing their manufacturing operations,” explained Peter Schepis, Account Manager with BlueScope Sheet Metal Supplies.

“Usually we do these reviews when a business has been operating for a number of years and it can sometimes be more challenging to change existing behaviours and processes.”

“Being able to work with Smoothflo as they developed their production processes has been a positive experience for both companies.”

Through the SER™ process, Peter and the BlueScope team were able to identify the specific product attributes that best suited Smoothflo’s machines and ensure that material was supplied to match those specifications.

Also, through better understanding Smoothflo’s business, BlueScope Sheet Metal Supplies has also been able to develop a tailored stock management and JIT supply package.

“In the grand scheme of things, we’re a small operation, but BlueScope understand the variety of steel widths and thicknesses we require,” said Bernard

“The previous owner of the business hadn’t tried to expand into other states, but I have distributors now in Sydney, Brisbane, Perth and Darwin. We are looking to expand into Adelaide in the near future.”

“BlueScope has provided sales leads to assist with that process.”

Smoothflo Products is a small company that sees its strength in flexibility and commitment to fully servicing the needs of its customers.

In addition to its range of duct products, it offers a comprehensive in-house metal pressing and sheet-metal blanking service, utilising the latest in press technology.

Through its relationship with BlueScope, Smoothflo has access to quality steel to ensure that it will always be able to make the most of its equipment’s capabilities.

For more company information visit www.smoothflo.com.au

Phone: 1800 010 247

www.sheetmetalsupplies.com.au

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