

Precision Engineering fuels global demand

The origins of the Spellman Group can be traced back to the founding of Spellman Television Company in 1947 in New York by William Spellman to sell high voltage transformers and projection television equipment. Merrill Skeist purchased Spellman in 1968 changing the name to Spellman High Voltage Electronics Corporation to reflect a broad focus on electronic systems requiring high voltage.

Englishman Brian Saltwell founded Start Electronics in 1989 to design and manufacture precision high voltage power supplies. His strategy was to start with standard products requiring precision high voltage power and to gradually broaden the product portfolio and grow the engineering team and production capability. While high voltage power is required in a wide variety of niche applications, there are few applications which require a high volume of high voltage power supplies, so this strategy requires a wide range of specialised products. To grow more rapidly Brian looked to partner with a US company that already had a range of designed products that would complement those being developed in the UK.

Having previously evaluated Spellman as an acquisition target for his previous company, Brian decided to approach Merrill Skeist regarding forming a partnership. Dennis Bay, Managing Director of Spellman UK, said: "Brian crossed the Atlantic in the early 1990's to find a partner who would sell his high voltage products in America and whose products he could sell in return in Europe. The combination of a strong engineering base in the US and UK enabled support of product with the added advantage of using each other's equipment to co-design systems to meet demanding customer applications. He and Merrill Skeist were like two peas in a pod. They shared a customer and innovation focused vision with an entrepreneurial mindset; and Start Spellman High Voltage Electronics, Ltd. was formed."

Dennis Bay, an Electrical Engineer from Long Island, New York joined Spellman in 1992 as European Sales Manager, when Spellman was a regional US high voltage company with sales of around \$15M. However, the trans-Atlantic partnership was beginning to change all that.

When Brian announced his impending retirement in early 2000, Dr. Loren Skeist, who succeeded his father Merrill as President of the Company, said to Dennis: "You know the people, technology and the territory. If we acquire Brian's shares, how would you like to live there and manage the integration of Start Spellman and Spellman?" In April 2001 Mr. Saltwell retired, his outstanding shares in the Company were acquired by Spellman High Voltage Electronics Corporation, and Dennis stepped into his new role at the UK headquarters in Pulborough, West Sussex.

"They wanted me to come for five years, but my wife insisted we only commit to three, so I did, to avoid divorce court," he joked. "I always say, I came over in 2001 as an experiment and I'm still experimenting." The



Dennis Bay
Managing Director,
Spellman High Voltage
Electronics, Ltd.

name of the UK business changed again in 2002 to Spellman High Voltage Electronics Limited to complete the integration process into the US Corporation.

In 2001, the fiscal year of Brian Saltwell's retirement, turnover for UK operations was £7M. "In my first year after Brian retired, the revenue went down by £2M due to the market conditions in the world and everybody was nervous the facility was going to close, and the technology would be sucked out to America. A big part of what I had to do was build up the trust between UK staff and Corporate leaders and reassure the local team that Spellman "was in the UK to stay and grow".

Dennis utilised Merrill Skeist's concept of "homologation" - a customer centric strategy emphasising multi-level communication channels to develop custom solutions, deliver services and adapt business processes that provide our customers with "No Worries". Describing himself as having "a light touch" as a boss, he thanks the Skeist family for trusting and empowering him to do things his way, which in turn has allowed him to empower others. It is an approach that has certainly paid off. Spellman UK's fiscal year 2020 finished in March and last month, Dennis and his team signed off the latest accounts - with a

turnover figure of £35M. "I'm very proud of what the team has achieved, and we've had a lot of fun in doing it," he said with a smile.

The process of integrating the UK design and manufacturing facility into the Spellman worldwide organization has provided an exciting opportunity to merge resources, products, design, manufacturing, sales and customer support. Accordingly, we continue to build on the benefits of the combined company, to further enhance our ability to meet our customers' needs. The combining of resources affords us the worldwide resources and advanced capabilities that are required to become a sustainable, world class global enterprise. Today, Spellman High Voltage Electronics, the world's leading independent supplier of high voltage power supplies with five design centres, six production centres, eight repair centres and more than 2000 employees in Europe, North America and Asia, providers of direct current high voltage power solutions for the medical, industrial and scientific communities, serving diverse applications such as: CT Scanning, Bone Densitometry, Non-Destructive Testing, Analytical X-Ray, Ion Implantation, Scanning Electron Microscopes, Explosive Detection/Baggage Screening, Telecommunications, Mass Spectrometry, Air Purification and numerous others.