

TAB Member Profile:
MARSHALL W. NELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.



THE ALTERNATIVE BOARD
Change Perspective. Improve Business. Enjoy Life.

Marshall W. Nelson & Associates, Inc. is a family-owned business which has been providing services in the heating and engineering field for over 50 years. Operating out of two locations in the Midwest (Eagan, Minnesota and Milwaukee, Wisconsin), the company currently represents manufacturers, distributes and warehouses products, and specializes in systems integration in the combustion marketplace. Marshall W. Nelson & Associates, Inc. applies gas fired equipment and controls into any industrial process that requires clean heat. The company's stated goal is "... to provide the finest in combustion system solutions."

The heating industry has been transformed dramatically during these 50 years, and Marshall W. Nelson & Associates has changed with it. Technologies have improved, and there have been different demands for various types of heating. In addition to the advances in technology, there have been changes in the company's customer base, especially during the last 20 years. Manufacturing has been in decline throughout the Midwest, which has required the company to diversify its product offerings.



Marshall W. Nelson & Associates
Process Heating and Control Engineering Since 1958

Mark Nelson has been the president of Marshall W. Nelson & Associates since 2004. His father founded the business in 1958; Mark started working there at the age of 15. After earning a degree in

mechanical engineering in 1981, he focused on sales and service of combustion and fuel systems for industry. As president, he says he is an entrepreneur, the CFO, the COO and the "fireman" of the company. He notes that there is no college curriculum that could have prepared him for everything he needs to do now. He says, "This is where TAB has been invaluable to me."

Added to the long-term stresses caused by manufacturing changes, current economic factors have also impacted the business. The two biggest challenges for the company during the last three years have been to expand the services offered, and to implement "Best Business Practices" within the company. These challenges needed to be met to help the business prosper in today's marketplace. TAB has helped in both areas.

Mark's TAB facilitator has been of great assistance helping the company change with the market. He says, "Alan Wallach has been instrumental in working with us to help us balance our portfolio of products so we aren't so dependent on any particular product line or marketplace. Currently we have ventured into the water market, offering products which play off of our core competencies and have good revenue potential."

Adopting "Best Business Practices" and improving the entire organization meant realigning the way everyone viewed things within the company, which Mark says TAB helped them to accomplish. He says, "Changing the mind set of an organization is a difficult task but the changes we have implemented, with the help of TAB, have had positive impacts on our employees and on the way we operate the business. I look forward to continued growth of our employees as they continue to implement the changes we've worked on together."

Involving all the employees in the continued improvement of the company meets another one of Mark's goals, striving for excellence at Marshall W. Nelson & Associates. This is an ongoing process involving everyone. He explains, "Empowering our employees encourages them to seek out deficient areas in the organization, implement corrective actions and continually raise the standards of our performance. The results of working on our systems together has given our employees greater job satisfaction, improved our customer service and relationships, reduced operational costs and tightened up our internal procedures."

Mark feels TAB membership helps him in other ways. He believes that the guest speakers offer excellent information, guidance and motivation. He can also get the input from business owners who often deal with similar problems even if they are in a different industry or market. "At various times, companies of all sizes will face similar obstacles," Mark says. "The diversity of the organizations I have worked with, within TAB, has given me valuable feedback on delicate, difficult and demanding situations. They are a great sounding board for ideas, problems and opportunities."

His company wants to continue to provide excellent service, above and beyond what is expected. He says, "Everyone has expectations when they make a purchase of any kind. Meeting and exceeding those expectations is always a great goal. We strive to conduct our business as though we were the customer. This means responding to the customer's needs in ways which go beyond the product itself."

He is confident that Marshall W. Nelson & Associates will continue to do well going forward. He says, "We believe that trust, integrity, honesty and competency are the cornerstones that have made us successful with our clients. This is reflected in every phase of an application from engineering, procurement, installation to post sales support through field service and preventative maintenance programs."

Mark adds. "As the economy improves, we should be well positioned to expand our markets, manage the growth process and provide the level of service our customers rely on," he says.



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