

# Business

## Company profits by fitness

### Dynaseal president takes lead in workout

By Paul J. Holley  
Journal Times

Each morning at 7, the 30 day-shift workers at Dynaseal Inc. gather for six minutes of stretching and light calisthenics.

They're led by company president John Saffran. "It's the same thing as if you're going to play football, or practice karate like I do," he says. "You stretch out a bit and you're less likely to get hurt."

The approach is a little out of the ordinary, but it's worked for Dynaseal, a custom vinyl fabricator which recently moved into a new 20,000-square-foot plant at 3801 South Memorial Drive.

#### Familiar products

Specialized cutting, sealing and packaging equipment helps Dynaseal produce familiar products like three-ring binders, billfold credit card holders, tool pouches, desktop planning books and downsouts for other firms.

Milwaukee native Saffran, a mechanical engineer, has been in plastics manufacturing since 1964. He and two other partners operated a vinyl fabrication business in Burlington for about seven years starting in 1972.

Dynaseal was launched in 1980 at the old Hamilton Beach complex with just two employees. The office consisted of a file cabinet, a typewriter and a couple of desks.

Today, there are 40 employees on two shifts and five computers to track finances, inventory and product specifications.

Dynaseal moved to rented space in Sturtevant six years ago. As the company outgrew that space, Saffran decided to find more room to expand.

He didn't look far.

#### Commutes on motorcycle

"I could've built this plant anywhere but I wanted to keep the people we've got," said Saffran who sometimes commutes to Racine from his Burlington home on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

"We believe a company's most important asset is its people," he said. "You can have all the machinery in the world, but it doesn't mean a thing without people."

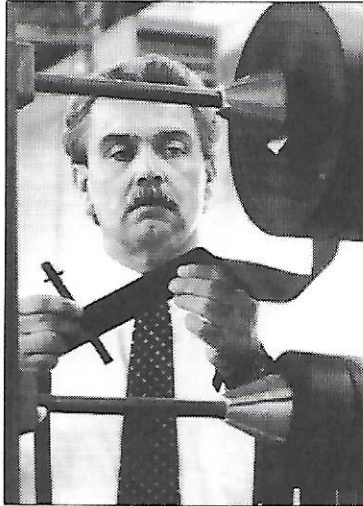
Saffran practices what he preaches.

- Believing the term "employee" is demeaning, he uses the words "people" or "persons" in conversation.

- Managers were generally given a free hand to design the new Dynaseal plant.

- Monthly plant-wide meetings are held to keep workers abreast of how the company is performing.

Maintaining a people orientation is a good way to do business, said Saffran. Turnover is fairly low as the average worker has been with Dynaseal for four



Chuck D'Acquisto/Journal Times

Saffran checks width of plastic.

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Dynaseal president

years. About a dozen workers have been with the firm since the beginning.

The workers have shown their thanks by presenting Saffran and his wife and company vice president, Renee, with a plaque at the new plant's ground breaking in April and an appreciation plaque in 1984.

#### Big crowd at ribbon-cutting

Saffran said he'll make Dynaseal workers part of "the world's largest ribbon-cutting" at the plant later this year.

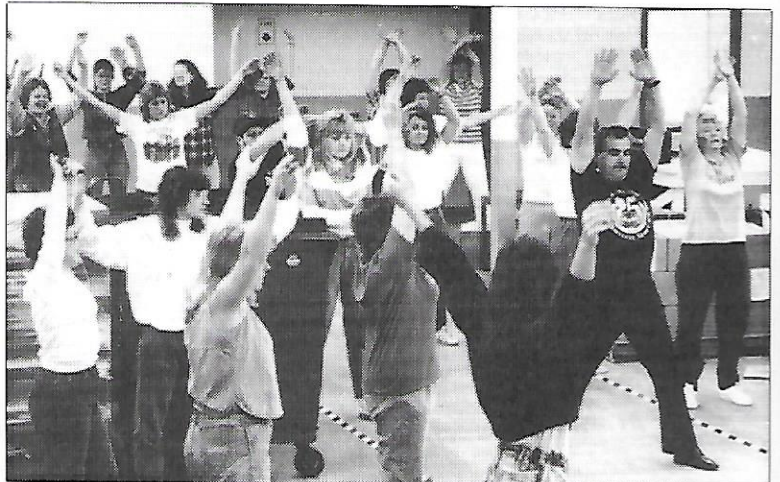
Saffran won't disclose Dynaseal sales figures but he said the firm has grown dramatically and is now set for more growth.

"We would like, within five years, to grow 50 percent. But, we have to control growth as best we can," he said.

The new, \$500,000 plant on 3½ acres in the Stephen F. Olsen Industrial Park is a key factor in the company's future growth.

Managers designed the plant's interior layout so raw materials and finished products would efficiently flow through the building. "I had a few suggestions, but basically they did it," said Saffran.

Like other Olsen Park residents, Dynaseal took advantage of a city program which allows companies to defer paying for the developed lots while new



Chuck D'Acquisto/Journal Times

John Saffran (in black) leads Dynaseal employees in warmup.



Chuck D'Acquisto/Journal Times

Ann Clausen, Sue Linden and Lynn Herman make credit card holders.

plants are built.

"I commend the city of Racine for their programs," said Saffran. "They've been aggressive in keeping companies here."

Another factor was a desire to stay relatively close to large Midwest customers, he said.

Much of Dynaseal's growth has come from a base of long-term customers. Saffran said vinyl fabrication

is a highly competitive business in which customers demand quality, prompt delivery and fair prices.

"Today, it's even tougher to get started," he said. Interest rates, competition, regulations and material costs mean that a small business operator must stay on top of things.

"It's a different ballgame. There isn't the room for error there used to be," said Saffran.