

SHOP OWNER'S PERSPECTIVE



Robert H. "Bob" Burger
K.C. Jones Plating
Warren, MI

"Shop Owner's Perspective" is a new monthly column in *Plating & Surface Finishing* that will feature comments from owners of some of the industry's top shops.

The first column is an interview with Robert H. "Bob" Burger of K.C. Jones Plating, Warren, MI. K.C. Jones Plating has been in business since 1955, offering engineered metal finishing services for all industries. All of the company's locations are QS-9000 certified and ISO 14001 compliant.

Burger began his career in finishing by working in the family business during summers and holiday breaks in high school and throughout his college years.

After he graduated from college, Burger managed to land a job as a supervisor at General Motors AC Spark Plug Division. He was assigned quality control responsibilities in the heat treating, brazing and finishing departments.

Here's what Bob Burger told *Plating & Surface Finishing*:

P&SF: How can small finishing job shops in the U.S. prosper in today's market?

Burger: One of the advantages that small finishing shops continue to have is lower overhead rates. It helps them to remain competitive and nimble. Metal finishing has not been an easy entry business for some time, so the tremendous pollution investment at least provides a small shield to new start-up competition.

P&SF: What are the most important things that shop owners can do to help themselves and the industry?

Burger: Education and education. Whether it be management technique, latest processes, understanding foreign competition or managing regulation, we cannot run our shops by the seat of our pants, and have not been able to for some time.

P&SF: What do you see as the most challenging developments for the industry in the short term and long term?

Burger: Resourcing off shore. The flight to the Far East and Mexico has been unbelievable.

P&SF: Do you have any suggestions for finishing shops that will help them become more competitive in a global market?

Burger: To be perfectly honest, I'm not sure I've figured that out yet.

P&SF: Any other thoughts that you would like to pass along to other surface finishing professionals?

Burger: I firmly believe that the proposed merger of the three trade organizations will help put the best minds in our industry together more frequently. I think this will help us more effectively deal with the questions asked earlier in this interview.

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