

## Regional Spring Association Report - Winter 2010

### Wire Manufacturer Tells CASMI Members Why His Company Is Growing

Drew Greenblatt, president of [Marlin Steel Wire Products](#) of Baltimore, Md., was the guest speaker for the November 2009 CASMI Meeting at Rosewood Restaurant in Rosemont, Ill. Greenblatt presented the story of his company's remarkable growth in the midst of the economic recession and downsizing in the manufacturing sector.

Greenblatt outlined how Marlin has dramatically changed since he bought the company in 1998. The company was established in 1968 in Brooklyn, N.Y., and principally made [wire baskets](#) for bagel shops. "Every bend and weld was done by hand with hand cut wire," explained Greenblatt of the company he purchased. "And there were no prints made of the [baskets](#) we manufactured. If we got a reorder, we had clients return their [basket](#) so we could copy it."

He also mentioned how the company had no health insurance, 401k plan, brochures or technology to speak of (the exception being a recently purchased fax machine). He said most orders were still mailed via USPS.

Greenblatt said two seismic shifts occurred when the Atkins diet came along and cut into the bagel market for his clients and when his customers could buy cheap wire bagel baskets from China. "I knew at that point if we didn't change, we were toast," said Greenblatt.

Instead of closing the doors, Greenblatt decided it was time to transform the business through strategic change. He turned his focus to recruiting great talent, [investing in technology](#), focusing on profits instead of revenue, and adopting lean manufacturing. In his presentation, he outlined the steps he went through to achieve change in these four areas.

One of the biggest technology changes Marlin undertook was investing \$2 million in robots. "[Robots](#) have helped us stay on the cutting edge, and beat our competition," said Greenblatt.

Greenblatt said Marlin is now known as an engineering powerhouse, one of the [fastest companies in the world](#) and a company that places quality as king.

As a result of this transformational work, Marlin is now four times larger than it was 11 years ago with four years of record revenue/profit growth. In addition, Greenblatt said the average employee is now paid three times more, employee benefits are much stronger and the company exports products to [23 countries](#).

Regarding the future, Greenblatt said they will continue to execute from the same playbook that brought about strategic change which will include pursuing aggressive growth, focusing on more [engineering](#) and [robots](#), and to recruiting even more talent.

Greenblatt was recently elected board chairman of the [Regional Manufacturing Institute of Maryland](#). In addition, he is on the executive board of the [National Association of Manufacturers](#) and was recently appointed by Maryland's Governor O'Malley to the Governor's International Business Advisory Board.

He is a frequent guest of [Fox Business News](#) and has been featured in articles in the [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#) and [Fortune](#).

For more information on CASMI, contact Tom Renk, executive director at (630) 369-3466, email: [tom@associationenterprise.org](mailto:tom@associationenterprise.org), or visit [www.casmi.org](http://www.casmi.org).

### WCSMA Holds 2009 Tabletop Expo

(copy still to come)

**NESMA Report**

by Ted White, Hardware Products

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