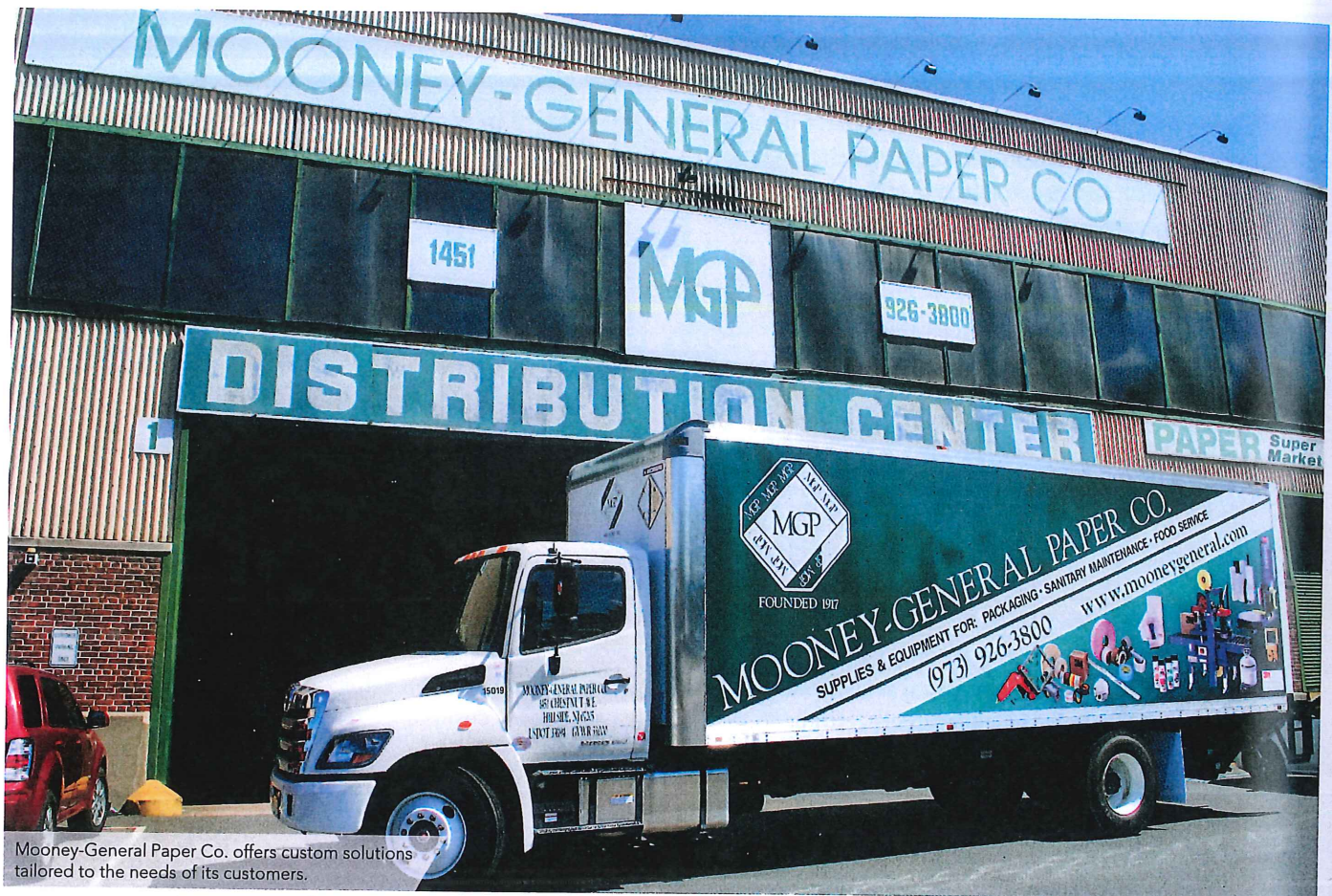


www.mooneygeneral.com / HQ: Hillside, N.J. / Employees: 70 / Specialty: Industrial packaging supplies and equipment, foodservice and food package processing supplies, safety and maintenance supplies / Andrea Ribakove, majority owner: "No matter who you are in the company, our door is always open."



Mooney-General Paper Co. offers custom solutions tailored to the needs of its customers.

The Personal Touch

Mooney-General Paper Co.'s experienced sales staff and close ties with manufacturers allow it to offer a level of service national retailers can't match. **BY JIM HARRIS**

Mooney-General Paper Co. knows its customers have plenty of sources for the products it carries, including national e-commerce giants or big-box stores. But while its competitors may have several of the same products, Mooney-General offers personalized expertise, which enables it to provide custom solutions tailored to the specific needs of its customers. This promotes efficiency and increased profitability for their customers.

"You can go online and order a prod-

uct, but the website you're ordering from probably won't know the specifics of the product or how to best use it," says Andrea Ribakove, the company's vice president, board chairwoman and majority owner.

Andrea Ribakove has been with the company for 36 years, having grown up in her family business, and is part of the third generation managing the company. The company was founded in 1917 by her grandfather, Joseph Riemer, and his partners Henry G. Mooney, George

Schuck and Morris Riemer. Her father, Gary Riemer, Joseph's son, and second generation in the business, remains as the company CEO and has been with the company for 56 years. Her husband, Richard Ribakove, joined the company 25 years ago after leaving his New York City law practice, and has been president of the company since 2006.

"When competing against Internet-based competitors, you have to make sure you're at the top of your game," says Richard Ribakove. "[Internet companies]

MOONEY-GENERAL PAPER CO.

don't have the level of expertise we have to serve customers directly."

Mooney-General prides itself on having a sales force with in-depth knowledge of the diverse product lines it carries. Those sales efforts are backed by strong and invaluable field support from many of the company's suppliers, who provide added technical expertise and even provide product testing to deliver best solutions to their customers' unique needs. For example, Mooney-General is the largest family-owned 3M Premier Distributor in the New York/New Jersey market selling a diverse array of 3M product lines. The company also has its own in-house 3M Specialist.

Serving customers does not end with the sale as the company has factory-trained and certified service technicians who help maintain and service the equipment it sells. "We have a talented and professional salesforce that works together as a team to help the company grow," Richard Ribakove says.

Each salesperson has a niche area of expertise that he or she shares with colleagues. "We have fostered a very collaborative environment where everyone helps one another," he adds. "Rather than having a traditionally competitive atmosphere, our salesforce works together to make the company successful."

The company's positive environment has helped it retain many of its sales staff for an extended period to time. The company's 20 outside sales representatives have a combined 529 years of experience. One salesperson, Ron Lindy, joined the company in 1948 after graduating from Cornell and is still actively selling for it 67 years later. "Our experience and reputation is why people want to work here," Ribakove says. "The tenure and longevity of our work force speaks for itself."

Another reason for the company's success is the relationships it develops with customers that in some cases span decades. "Relationships are critical in

providing optimum value to customers," Ribakove says. "Our sales force learns the full operation of their business to be able to provide not just conventional products but also creative solutions customized to their specific needs, something Internet selling cannot possibly do. Our selling mentality is to provide solutions, not merely take customer orders. With our extensive product lines, we can offer our customers a truly 'one-stop' shopping experience."

DIVERSE OFFERINGS

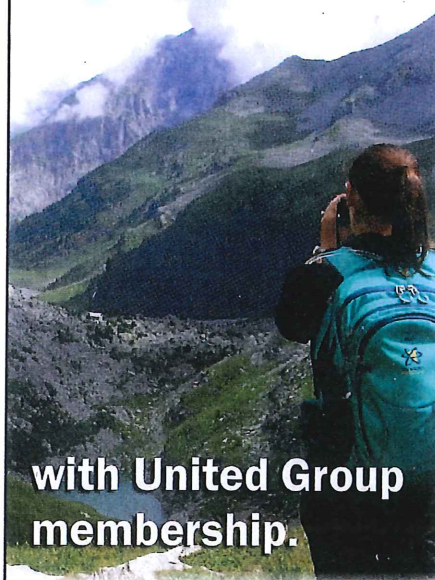
Truly a family business in every sense, the Ribakoves and Riemers are not the only families represented in the business. Over the years, several families have left their mark. Office manager Cheryl Borden succeeded her mother-in-law in that position and had three prior members of her family who were long tenured at Mooney-General prior to their retirements. Two other families are currently represented in the warehouse. Both the company's sales manager and leading sales producer had their own progeny join the company during the last year and are both rising members of the sales force, only natural since they grew up exposed to the business on a daily basis.

The Hillside, N.J.-based company offers industrial packaging products and equipment, janitorial products, chemicals and floor care equipment, foodservice products and sanitary supplies.

"We sell to everyone from *Fortune* 500 companies to mom-and-pop stores," Ribakove says. "Having a vast array of product offering allows us to have a very broad customer base. Our salespeople can walk into just about any business and be able to offer a line of products and solutions."

Mooney-General serves New Jersey and parts of New York and Pennsylvania from a 64,000-square-foot facility in Hillside New Jersey. It delivers to customers within its home region via its own truck fleet and by drop shipping to anywhere throughout the United States.

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The company was founded in 1917 and is now in its third generation of family ownership.

The company adapts its offerings based on changes in the markets it serves. “As we see the landscape changing, we change with it,” Ribakove says. “We try to be relevant to meet the changing demographics and needs of the marketplace.”

Mooney-General continually looks to expand into new and

improved product offerings and to broaden its reach into new markets. Green initiatives, tamper evident packaging and other products designed to create efficiencies and cost savings enables Mooney-General to provide additional value to its customers. Food grade shrink packaging and flexible films enabled them to better service the growth of food processing and packaging companies within its home region. Packaging equipment offerings include stretch wrap machines, case erectors, case sealers, tray formers, shrink equipment, vacuum chamber machines banders and strapping machines are just a few of its offerings.

Mooney-General is also a proud member of The United Group, a member-owned nationwide buying group representing all of the company’s market segments and which enables Mooney-General greater access to preferred suppliers and aggressive programs as well as strong networking with other distributors throughout the country. Mooney-General has been recognized as “Member of the Year” by The United Group three times and Richard Ribakove has served on the group’s Board of Directors for the last eight years.

Mooney-General’s manufacturing partners also help the company train and certify service and other personnel in the use of their products and equipment. This training takes place both on vendors’ sites as well as in the company’s headquarters.

OPEN DOORS

The spirit of collaboration that exists within Mooney-General’s sales staff and among the company and its suppliers and customers extends throughout its operations. “The camaraderie among our sales staff is contagious, and has spread throughout the company,” Andrea Ribakove says.

The Ribakoves and other managers practice an open-door policy when it comes to all levels of the company’s staff. “We want everyone to feel good about themselves and know how valuable they are to the company,” she adds. “No matter how long you have been here, our door is always open – anyone can walk into the president’s office or up to a manager. We’re not a layered company.”

The Ribakoves attribute the company’s positive and collaborative culture to its long history of family ownership, as they look forward to celebrating the company’s 100th anniversary in just a year and a half. The company is a certified woman-owned business enterprise (WBE) in the state of New Jersey, helping customers meet their diversity goals.

“We’re proud that we’ve been able to stay relevant in a competitive market and consider ourselves a leading company in our field that is able to provide such a broad and diverse offering to our customers at a high level,” Richard Ribakove says. “There aren’t too many companies at our size that are able to service their customers as well as we can.” □



Delivering Performance

