



## “Our company quality policy is to ‘Meet or exceed customer expectations.’ This policy creates a healthy two-way relationship with our customers.”

### What’s a typical day like for you at KA-Wood Gear & Machine?

We have a very experienced team at Ka-Wood Gear that works with a very diverse customer base. I wear a lot of different hats on a day-to-day basis and deal with anything from answering the phone to working on a \$1 million machine investment. On a daily basis, I work closely with our employees to ensure that each job is processed to meet customers’ quality and delivery requirements. The vast variety of parts that we produce from a wide range of industries make every day interesting and challenging.

### What kind of new equipment and technology purchases has KA-Wood made to advance its presence in the gear industry?

In 2008, we bought our first Mitsubishi CNC gear hobber. This successful endeavor prompted us to purchase additional CNC hobbers and two CNC shapers. Our next venture was to upgrade our gear grinding abilities by purchasing two Hofler CNC gear grinders. These investments created improvements in productivity, capacity, and quality.

In 2013, we decided to add wire and sinker EDM machines. These machines allowed us to manufacture special prototype parts with non-standard spline and gear profiles. This was extremely beneficial when tooling is not available.

Our largest investment occurred in August 2019. We purchased a state-of-the-art CNC gear grinding machine, a Reishauer RZ 550. This machine is capable of generational and profile grinding. The efficiency has increased our gear-grinding capacity, and the quality capabilities have opened new markets. We can now control bias, fine grind, and polish gears. These technological advances have helped us to improve our current products and secure additional products like the electric vehicle market. The increased sales and the positive feedback from our customers have solidified that our efforts are steering Ka-Wood to a bright and successful future. We fully intend to continue investing in equipment as the gear industry changes.

### Why do you think diversification is important to KA-Wood Gear? And what have you done to advance that goal?

Well, we would not be around if we were not diverse. Our history has proven that, by servicing a wide range of industries, it helps to balance the peaks and valleys that individual industries go through. If one industry slows down, we’ve got work in other areas to maintain capacity and profitability. This creates a very stable business model. The industries that we support include automotive, aerospace, machine tool, off-highway, pharmaceutical, oil/gas, racing, printing, fastening, and packaging. This diversification and our fiscal responsibility have allowed us to flourish even during economic slowdowns. I’m proud to state that we have zero debt and have never laid off an employee in our 100-year history.

### What does it mean to be a customer driven, and how does that help improve your quality?

It means several different things to us. It’s our relationship with our customers, the quality of the products we produce, and our total team commitment to satisfying customers. Our company quality policy is to “Meet or exceed customer expectations.” This policy creates a healthy two-way relationship with our customers. This is a “win-win relationship” for customers and for Ka-Wood. The relationships create a healthy understanding of our customers’ needs, which is then communicated throughout our entire staff here at Ka-Wood. That empowers every employee to be part of these relationships. This in turn allows us to produce the best possible product for our customers.

Our customer-driven focus comes from the belief that both parties in a business relationship will thrive if they are working together toward a common goal.

### KA-Wood Gear & Machine turns 100 this year. What kind of events or celebrations are you planning?

2020 is the year! 100 years old! The company was founded in 1920. It started in a small garage located in Detroit, Michigan, and now resides in a 23,000-square-foot building in Madison Heights, Michigan.

We are planning a celebration in summer of 2020. Our celebration will include an open house, plant tours, and even a ride in a Ford Model T that has been in my family for years. We will encourage our customers to tour the plant, meet our employees, and see the advancements we have made.

### Where do you see KA-Wood’s place in the gear industry in its next 100 years?

Well, the next 100 years will be similar to the past 100 years. We plan to remain flexible and financially stable. Our experienced management team will continue to invest in new technology and develop quality products with our diverse customer base. We also believe that our incredible employees are instrumental in our current success and in our future success. Having fantastic employees is something we will always value, and we will continue to invest in the training of younger machinists along with our experienced ones. The range of experience in our staff varies from new hires to those who have been with us for 40-plus years.

Our relationship with customers, quality employees, and a drive to be the best will lead us to another 100 years of success. 🎯