

Member Profile

Member Profile: E.A. Morse & Company, Inc.

Year Founded: 1938

Locations: Middletown and Hudson, NY

Products: Distributor of janitorial and maintenance supplies.

Website: www.eamorse.com

There are great stories of ingenuity in times of difficulty that can inspire us; the story of E.A. Morse & Company, Inc. is one of those. In 1938 Emerson A. Morse was given some V.T. Borax hand soap and dispensers by his employer in lieu of expense money he was owed. It was through this turn of events that E.A. Morse & Company began out of the Morse home and garage in Middletown, NY. Morse's wife Winifred handled the books while he sold the soap locally.

Another challenge was turned into an advantage during World War II, when Morse needed more gas than was rationed to be able to make trips into New York City to pick up the soap he sold to his clients. The enterprising entrepreneur leased a gasoline service station and enlisted his wife and children to help out. Morse was able to pump gas, service cars and continue selling his soap on the side until the end of the war. At this point, he sold the gas station to purchase the 800 square foot building on Harding Street in Middletown. Although it has since been expanded, E.A. Morse & Co. is still at this same location today.

Throughout 1950's the company grew and added product lines such as paper and packaging materials and expanded to service the needs of private businesses, restaurants and schools within a 40 mile radius. Then in 1958 there was yet again a situation which may have caused other companies to experience a setback, but Morse took lemons and made lemonade. When a local school failed to follow the instructions on some drums of oil-based wax distributed by E.A. Morse & Co., and added turpentine instead of kerosene a huge gooey mess resulted. Morse undertook the removal of the botched mixture from the schools wood floors, thus embarking the company on its foray into the



industrial cleaning supply business. This area has since proved to be a very profitable undertaking for the company.

E.A. Morse & Co. continues to be a family owned operation with Candace Morse Depew as the

current president of the company her father founded. The employees have a stake in the company as well since E.A. Morse & Company employees have been stockholders since 1960. Several employees are third and fourth generation descendants from the companies founder. The business has continued to grow and prosper and in 1984, Morse purchased the Charles M. Dagwell Co. in



Hudson, NY and combined sales from both businesses climbed above \$14 million in the last decade. The original Middletown building is now 60,000 square feet of ware-

house and office space and continues to serve as a distributor of paper, chemical specialties and maintenance equipment for numerous suppliers including some whose products E.A. Morse first sold back in 1938.

E.A. Morse & Co. offers more than just janitorial and maintenance supplies; there are training programs in these areas as well that can be conducted at Hudson Valley facilities. Topics include restroom cleaning, floor care for hard, soft or wood flooring, team cleaning

and cleaning for health. The sales people are called consultants for a reason. They can analyze your existing cleaning processes and make suggestions to increase productivity and lowering your labor costs which can represent 90 % of a cleaning budget. They are currently offering training and products to combat the H1N1 swine flu.

While E.A. Morse & Company obviously has overcome obstacles on the road to success, the lesson here is how to look at these bumps in the road and use them to launch the company in to something bigger and better.

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