

National Polymer Wins *Excellence in Manufacturing Award*

By: Paris Wolfe

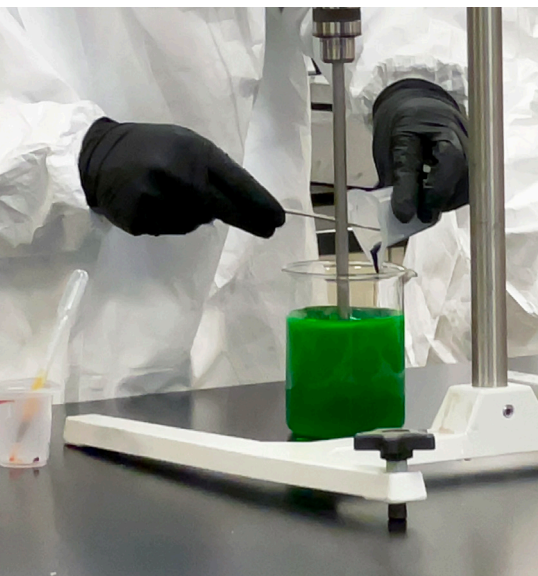


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National Polymer, a 17-year-old company in Chagrin Falls with 24 employees, won the 2022 Excellence in Manufacturing Award from the Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network (MAGNET), in coordination with Geauga Growth Partnership. They are the second winner of these honors. Last year, GGP presented the inaugural Excellence in Manufacturing Award to Solon Manufacturing in Chardon.

MAGNET is a non-profit consulting group that works to grow the manufacturing industry in Northeast Ohio. Geauga Growth Partnership facilitates interaction among business, education, and government to accelerate economic growth in Geauga County. Together the organizations created this award in 2021 to recognize manufacturers that are growing and expanding their customer base and workforce.

“Their ability to continually meet the needs of their customers by developing new technologies and solutions has propelled their company as a leader in the coatings industry,” she says. “In addition, their flexibility and ability to think differently around workforce development, has allowed them to hire individuals who provide quality work and has allowed these employees to meet the demands of their busy lives away from work. As the name suggests, National Polymer focuses on polymeric materials like adhesives, sealants, coatings, and engineered laminates. Polymer Coatings are coatings or paints made with polymeric binders that provide superior adherence and protection from the environment and/or physical detriments.



According to founder Adrian Dekrom, “Our growth efforts have resulted in business with multi-billion-dollar, global technology companies. Because of this we have increased our top line more than 200 percent and our collective bottom line more than 500 percent over the last two years. This has allowed significant reinvestment in the facility and equipment and people in the organization to sustain growth in the future.”

National Polymer is an important business in Geauga County given their operations and hiring practices, says Kimm Leininger, President of Geauga Growth Partnership.

“Most of our staff and resources came right from Geauga County”

National Polymer Laboratories (NPL)

develops custom formulations for manufacturers. Most this unit's work focuses on custom adhesives and coatings. For example, they recently developed environmentally friendly adhesives for acoustic guitar assembly.

National Polymer Development (NPD)

compounds and makes the adhesives and coatings that were created by the lab (NPL). As an example, they're producing high, moisture-vapor transmission adhesives for the construction industry to mitigate mold.

National Polymer Coating Technologies

(NPC) manufactures unique, coated products using client-proprietary materials developed by NPL and made by NPD. As an example, they're producing many materials that are used in semiconductor chip manufacturing.



Engineered Polymer Coatings provide protection against UV degradation, water damage, chemicals, condensation, heat, fire, electrical discharge, static, abrasion, and more. Added features may include color, gloss/satin/matte finish, slick or grip surface, self-healing properties, hydrophobic surface, hydrophilic surface, and the list goes on.

Dekrom founded the business in 2005, with just 2 employees, to develop custom formulations. In 2009 the company expanded to produce custom-compounding formulations for manufacturing customers. In 2019, National Polymer expanded again to provide services through process development and manufacturing of roll-to-roll, coated products for unique applications.

In 2019, Dekrom partnered with Jim Duvall, a former colleague, to form the newest company, National Polymer Coating, as principals. Duvall also serves as chief operating officer for National Polymer. Duvall has a strong polymer background. He was interested in science from an early age and started studying metallurgy at Case Western

Reserve University. It didn't take long before someone pulled aside – a la the 1967 classic movie *The Graduate* -- and told him to consider "plastics" or polymers as a career. Today, he has a master's degree of Polymer Science and Engineering from Case Western Reserve University.

According to Jim Duvall, "We were able to launch National Polymer Coating and obtain ISO certification rather quickly. This allowed us to sign manufacturing contracts with a few multi-billion-dollar global companies that use our development and coating services. We were able to hire and train a good manufacturing staff and, along with our engineering group, we have a very good team. Most of our staff and resources came right from Geauga County."

The duo and their team of chemical, mechanical, and electrical engineers are always creating new products and processes. The small polymer formulation lab has grown to three business units that create, produce, and apply polymer materials. "We're willing to try technically challenging things that

others might hesitate on," says Duvall. "That's important because if it was easy the client would find someone else or do it themselves. We're crazy enough to try it and most times smart enough to figure it out."

Dekrom sees growth as the addition of more manufacturing lines and developing joint ventures with customers as well as growing their local business. He says, "We don't have a lot of customers from Ohio and this area. We need to let them know about us. They're the easiest ones to reach."

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