

## Executive Outlook 2012: Staying Closer To Where The Business Is

Written by William J. Stevens, President & CEO, Motion Industries  
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The return of manufacturing to our shores is something we at Motion Industries have been watching closely for several years. During the 1990s, we all saw domestic manufacturers, particularly OEMs, closing shop here in the U.S. and moving to locations outside of the country (frequently to China and India). While some of these moves certainly affected our business, most of our customers are in the “end market”— *and in industries that are a bit difficult to pick up and move.*

Since we sell primarily MRO (maintenance, repair and operation) products, our large customers are the producers of food & beverage, oil & gas, mining, pulp & paper, aggregate, automotive, chemical and allied products. These are typically products that are either difficult or too expensive to produce elsewhere, mainly because of available natural resources and the large investment in infrastructure that already exists locally. As our tag line notes, “*Keeping industry in Motion*” is what we do. And, fortunately for us, most of our business has remained local.

That said, however, we have recently seen several of our *suppliers* relocating to or building new plants in the United States. In fact, in just the last couple of months, two of our primary suppliers have announced that they’re planning to build brand new U.S. factories during the coming year. Why? They want to be closer to where their business is. This is a great advantage for Motion Industries— *one that allows us to better serve our own valued customers.*□

Strong, appropriate workforce preparation efforts and training of new employees will be critical in sustaining manufacturing growth in our country. As manufacturers relocate back to the U.S., we’re seeing production lines that are far more automated than in the past: To keep running, they rely on different components than the production lines of 10-15 years ago. Successfully

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operating increasing automated plant equipment means today's workers have to be more technically competent than ever before. In turn, we must have the product expertise to be able to recommend and provide the right replacement parts to these workers should their equipment fail. It's a challenge, but one we at Motion are happy to accept. Overcoming challenges is something at which we truly excel. **MT**