

Building on Three Generations of Experience, Manufacturer Celebrates 25 Years in the Blanking and Stamping Industry

Katrina Rouen - Thomasnet Industry Insights
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This article is sponsored by Ohio Valley Manufacturing Inc., a Tier 2 supplier offering heavy-gauge stamping and precision blanking services.

Mike Fanello founded Ohio Valley Manufacturing Inc. (OVM) in 1999. Located on 30 acres in Mansfield, Ohio, the company has been built on the tool and die, stamping, and blanking experience Mike gained working with his father, Mick Fanello, at his own company.

OVM got its start in the automotive, heavy truck, lawn and garden, agricultural, and appliance industries, but the business has always been a family matter. Mike's three sons, John, Jeff, and Steven Fanello, now own OVM and serve as company president, vice president of supply chain and purchasing, and vice president of sales.

"We're third-generation business owners," John Fanello explains. "We're in the position we're in because of our grandparents Mick and Rose and our parents, Mike and Sherry. We wouldn't be here without them. The road they paved for us is essential."

Today, the Tier 2 supplier serves many of the same industries as it did 25 years ago, allowing the company to build strong customer relationships over the years. OVM's primary industries today include automotive, heavy trucks/trailers, agriculture, and lawn and garden.

Thomas Insights (TI): What can you tell us about Ohio Valley's beginnings?

Steven Fanello: Our grandfather and great-uncle started their business in 1952 from a two-car garage. Over the next 40 years, that grew into a large blanking, stamping, and tool and die business with 12 divisions across North America. Our father, Mike, was heavily involved throughout the years helping build the business with our grandfather. In the early '90s, the company transitioned to a publicly traded company, and by the late '90s, many of our family members began exiting.

In 1999, Dad started Ohio Valley using the same principles our grandfather used decades prior: tool and die, heavy-ton blanking, and heavy-ton stamping with large tonnage presses. We started with four presses and no customer contracts. Dad bought the building we're in now, which was a spec building at that time, and he immediately added onto the building to run production presses. Over the next 12 months, Dad was able to secure customer contracts and begin developing relationships. Those relationships have continued to grow and are still in place 25 years later.

TI: How has your company grown over the past 25 years?

Steven Fanello: In 2002, we added on to house an 1800-ton press, continuing in our niche of heavy press applications. This press is a twin to a previous 1800-ton press we had purchased, backing each other up when needed, along with adding additional capacity. The press beds are 312 inches, which are large press beds capable of running any type of tooling such as large progressive form tools, progressive blanking tools, and compound blanking tools.

In 2005, we added 13,000 square feet for our tool and die center, expanding our operation to design and build more tools that we then run in-house. Currently, we have design engineers on staff and about 20 tool makers, and we can bring in a program from scratch.

Our next addition was in 2007 when we added a 4000-ton press, which is the largest press we have. We can run our heaviest material thickness on this press, at thicknesses up to 5/8 of an inch. In 2014, we added our 28,000-square-foot warehouse for a finished goods warehouse and a 3000-ton press, which gave us the ability to secure more heavy-gauge business while providing a contingency plan for our 4000-ton press.

Since then, we've added another 25,000 square feet of manufacturing space. In that expansion, we house our 1500-ton press. With all the presses we've added over the years,

we've been able to diversify and acquire additional business. Today, in 2024, we have a total of 150,000 square feet. Our average program volumes are 200,000 to 400,000 parts a year, with last year's sales at approximately \$86 million.

Jeff Fanello: In addition to the blanking, stamping, and tool and die, in 2015, we bought a building across the street, planning to do R&D work on building robots, stacking units, etc. Soon after purchasing it, we had opportunities for robotic welding, and that's currently what that business has grown into. Our robotic weld shop is called DM Co. We've added onto that building four times, and we have 30 robotic welders.

John Fanello: It fits with our business as it's a value-add to the stamping for our customers. We can build a tool, program-manage the tool build, and run production off that tool. Then, if the process allows for any welding of the components, we can also weld components together as a value-added process. That cuts out freight for our customers between two locations.

Tl: In addition to your end-to-end approach, how is your company different from other manufacturers?

Jeff Fanello: For a business to own and operate heavy-ton presses such as ours is rare for a Tier 2 or Tier 3 level of supply. Having similar presses provides a contingency plan should one experience downtime, which is a big market advantage.

Also, most blanking and stamping businesses top out at 800- to 1200-ton presses. We start at 800-ton presses and go up from that. Not that one's better than the other; there are just fewer businesses like us in the marketplace. We can produce more parts per stroke, dealing with wider coils and using multi-cavity blank dies up to 10 pieces per press stroke, saving customers material and money while producing parts at a quicker pace to meet customer demands.

Touching on the employee side, we still have a lot of the key people working at Ohio Valley, with decades of experience in our industry and working with our family. We have a tremendous core group that has believed in us and has been the key part in the growth of Ohio Valley Manufacturing.

John Fanello: In 1999, we had 12 employees, and now we have approximately 160 employees. We have decades of experience in our tool room, press room, and management staff. Many of our key employees have knowledge of the stamping and blanking world that spans over 40 years. We have an experienced staff of tool makers, many with 25-plus years of experience.

Also, our customers are very important to us. We don't take those relationships lightly. One of our longest-lasting customer relationships has been with us for 22 years. We want to be on a first-name basis with everyone at our customer locations because a key to being a good

supplier is having a positive relationship with each of the customers' locations. Our number one goal is to take care of our customers' needs and deliver a quality product on time.

T1: Ultimately, what do you feel is the basis of your company's success?

John Fanello: As a company, we know what our strengths are. We excel at our core competencies as a Tier 2 to Tier 4 supplier. We don't need to work at the Tier 1 level. There's a lot of growth potential in our market.

Steven Fanello: Going back to the beginning, Dad wouldn't have gotten started without his mom and dad, and the same goes for us today. We wouldn't be here if it weren't for them. We appreciate the early years and what everyone did before us, and we're just trying to continue on the same path of growth and being good to our employees and customers. We still carry on the traditions with the employees that our parents and grandparents started many years ago.

To learn more about the company's current service offerings, contact [Ohio Valley](#) today.
