

Titan Flow Control's philosophy on why



Along with offering valves and strainers, Titan Flow Control's expert engineers can design and manufacture a wide variety of fabricated, specialty

For a small-town valve and strainer manufacturer, Titan Flow Control Inc. has been making a big name for themselves across the industry. Read on to learn how Vice President of Sales, Nancy Gibbons, along with several industry veterans came together to form the now worldwide successful company.

By Sarah Schroer, Editor, Pump Engineer

Titan Flow Control, Inc. (Titan FCI), is well known across the world as an industrial and commercial piping product manufacturer. What perhaps is less well known is how Titan FCI got their start. Nancy Gibbons, Vice President of Sales at Titan FCI, has been in the valve and strainer business for over 40 years. She started at Mueller Steam Specialty, located in the southeastern part of North Carolina, under such roles as the VP of purchasing and as a General Manager. When over 45 long-time employees were laid off after a company downsize, Gibbons, along with a bunch of industry veterans got together and they built Titan FCI from the ground up. "We decided, well, we are going to stick to what we know. We know strainers, we know valves, so me and Martin Gibbons – that's my

husband – contacted a few people we knew were also laid off and they invested their retirement money," explains Gibbons. Everyone came together to help make Titan FCI possible.

“The thing that really, really differentiates us from the rest of troupe is customer service. Our mantra is “the customer is King” and every employee knows it in this company. We are very easy to do business with.”

Along with the layoffs, all the foundries and the trucking companies were also out of work. Since Gibbons and her veterans knew, and had been working with these companies for years, it was only natural to continue the relationships. Gibbons expresses how thankful she is for all the help

they've had along the way. "Everybody came to me and said, What do you need from me? We were given terms of six months from foundries and manufacturing plants. The truckers said they'll hold, pay us when you can afford it. I mean, we've had a

the customer is King



products.

lot of help along the way.” On April 15th, 2000, Titan FCI was formed, bringing together an accumulation of over 300 years’ worth of industry expertise. “This was 14 years ago now and we never looked back,” says Gibbons.

Today, the company has a large staff of talented and capable employees dedicated to helping their customers. There are five working owners. Titan FCI also employs five engineers, including manufacturing engineers and mechanical engineers. They have grown by 30 to 35 percent every year. Part of their growth includes the properties the business occupies in Lumberton, North Carolina. Within the town, Titan FCI has three different facilities, including their fabrication shop, the corporate office, and their manufacturing facility. While the company started in a 5000 square foot manufacturing facility, they then went into a 10,000 square foot manufacturing facility. Most recently, Titan FCI has added 8000 more square feet, for a total of about 85,000 square feet on 10 acres of land. The fabrication shop is 40,000 square feet on seven acres. While Lumberton is not an area not known for its industry action, Gibbons’ explanation of why they would set up shop there is a perfect encompassment of the spirit and values of Titan FCI. Gibbons says it was simple. It came down to family. Their families all lived in the area and it was important to stay there too.



Around 35% of Titan FCI’s office staff have engineering degrees – from manufacturing engineers to mechanical engineers.

Committed to the customer

In 2000, Titan made the following promises and stays true to them today:

- We will never install a computer system that eliminates the flexibility needed to provide you with the service you demand.
- We will never install one of those automatic phone systems that answers your call with a bunch of numbers from which you must select, just to get another bunch of numbers from which you must select. When you call Titan, you will talk to real live human beings – every call – every time – always.
- We will honestly tell you what we can do for you and what we cannot do.
- If we do not have what you need we will help you find it. We will do this even if doing so means Titan is eliminated from the sale.
- We have committed to maintain an extensive selection of products on hand because ours is a specialty business. We started our business carrying a substantial stock in inventory and we will continue to maintain it.



Titan FCI stays on top of market trends by making sure they attend four major shows a year, including both the POWER-GEN show and also the Valve World Expo.



State-of-the-art fabrication shop for speciality orders

Titan FCI's Fabrication Shop is 40,000 square feet across seven acres. Along with speciality designs, made-to-order products such as basket strainers, tee strainers, temporary strainers, orifice plates, spectacle flanges, single blinds, ring spacers, and other pipeline accessories are also available to order.



Their state-of-the-art fabrication shop is able to design specialty items, which helps speed up production and allows Titan FCI to have great lead times.

Titan FCI's products

- Y Strainers
- Duplex Strainers
- Check Valves
- Suction Diffusers
- Basket Strainers
- Butterfly Valves
- Tri-Flow Control Check
- Foot Valves

Trendsetters: Blue strainers

When Gibbons first started with the company, she decided that Titan FCI's strainers would be painted blue. The concept has now caught on as a trend across the industry. "When we first started out," explains Gibbons, "most people painted their strainers black and I said no, I am so tired of this black. I said, I want them painted blue. Now, if you go to China or India, or Taiwan, and you ask for a blue strainer, they are going to say, do you want Titan Blue?"



Titan FCI is very proud of their speciality welders. Gibbons explains, "you need speciality welders, you need people that really know what they are doing in the fabrication shop, and we have four guys that are very qualified."



"We try to turn every order, even specialty orders, in our factory within a day,"

Sticking to strong customer-oriented values

The strong spirit of old-fashioned values is something that is surely evident in Titan FCI's strong company motto. "The thing that really, really differentiates us from the rest of troupe is customer service. Our mantra is 'The Customer is King!' and every employee knows it in this company. We are very easy to do business with. What we do here is we give great customer service. Actually, we have spoiled our customers over the years. Nothing comes before our customers. Our phones here ring twice, that's it. You will always get a person. We will never, ever, as long as I am here, have an automated system. You will always get a human when you call Titan."

Titan FCI's personal touch shows through in the way they run their fabrication shop. "When people come to us with a problem, we help them solve it," expresses Gibbons. "We don't just give them a standard off the shelves. If they tell us their problem, even if we don't make it, our engineer will actually design for them. He loves that. He loves a challenge." Titan FCI's engineers are always willing and able to travel where needed. "Our chief engineer, VP of engineering, was just in Iowa because one of our products had a problem, a big 24-inch duplex and they called us on Friday. He flew out Sunday and he was there on Monday morning. Even they said, nobody would give them service like that." Gibbons describes another example involving a customer who needed to separate feathers from chicken fat because if the tanker truck had even one feather in the fat, the whole tank would be rejected. So, the engineering department got together and came up with a new strainer as a solution for the challenge.

Products designed with pump protection in mind

Titan FCI manufactures a wide range of pump protection products, such as suction diffusers and foot valves, which both help to prevent debris from harming a pump. "We have a lot of pump protection. We have a tri-flow valve, which is the triple duty



says Vice President of Sales, Nancy Gibbons. "I mean, come in the morning and we will ship it out later in the day. Orders fly out of this company."

valve. We have suction diffusers, we have butterfly valves that are all part of a hydronics package which protects the pumps, and we also have strainers. It's very expensive, a pump. I mean, you spend 500 dollars per strainer, but it will protect a 5000 dollar pump. It's like buying an insurance policy." They design and make strainers, something they have been doing for over 30 years. Titan FCI also manufactures valves, fabricated products, and additional pipeline accessories. They can provide special screens in both perforated and mesh

materials, in a wide range of sizes. Their custom-designed units are available in several different types of alloys, including stainless steel, monel, alloy 20, and nickel. All fabricated components come from certified vendors. Their castings have a foundry heat number for identification and traceability. Titan FCI's products meet all international standards, such as ANSI, ASME, API,

NACE, AND ISO. Their products have been used in applications such as sewer lines, chemical plants, oil refineries, offshore rigs, and food production.

Emphasis on quality and traceability

"Well, we have four people in the QA. Everything comes in, the sample is inspected upon arrival. Everything is tested, hydrostatically tested, or helium tested for gas companies. We have a PMI gun which is Positive Material Identification. So, anything other than iron or carbon steel, we test each piece. Even if the component is inside like a disc, it will be PMI'ed to make sure that, when we ship it out that it is 316 Stainless, or Alloy 20, or Monel, or Inconel. Actually, we have two of the guns and they give you an automatic read out. They will tell you exactly if the material is not to the standard. And that automatically goes to a computer. So at any

given time we can trace any material, because all of our products have a heat number – the stainless steels and the special alloys."

Worldwide reach through shipments and distribution

Titan FCI has become one of the industry leaders for valve and strainers. They ship all over the world, including Dubai, Ireland, France, Thailand, China, and have major distributors in Ecuador, Chile, and Abu Dhabi. "The best part," Gibbons

explains, "is they are seeking us now. I mean, they find us and ask to become a distributor." Gibbons also explains how their worldwide manufacturer reps are consider part of the Titan family. "We call them our feet on the street." She shares a recent milestone, in which Titan FCI was awarded a 1.9

million dollar valve order for Saudi Arabia. They have certainly come a long way from their humble beginnings, in which, Gibbons recalls, "For the first year, nobody took a salary. Every penny was plowed back into the company. We've gone from the little guy that nobody was worried about, to a market leader in 14 years."

“When people come to us with a problem, we help them solve it, you know, we just don't give them a standard off the shelves. If they tell us their problem, even if we don't make it, our engineer will actually will design for them. He loves that. He loves a challenge.”

QUICK FACTS: Titan Flow Control, Inc.

Name: Titan Flow Control, Inc. (Titan FCI)

Locations: 3 facilities in Lumberton, North Carolina

- Manufacturing Facility
- Fabrication Shop
- Corporate Office

Telephone: 910.735.0000

Fax: 910.738.3848

Email: titan@titanfci.com

Website: <http://www.titanfci.com/>

