



BOULEVARD™
MACHINING THE FUTURE



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Written by Pauline Müller

When one of the world's leading aviation giants remarks that your new facility is so modern it's reminiscent of **Star Trek's** USS Enterprise, you know you're doing something right.

While some modern-looking facilities are all for show, Boulevard Machine's ability to fabricate all-terrain,

high-tolerance parts of tremendous complexity does its image justice. Following a complete overhaul and 12-month rebranding mission, this solid team of 25 is indeed machining the future.

Serving customers as far afield as the UK and continental Europe, some of the company's North American



customers include respected names like L3Harris, General Dynamics Mission Systems, Raytheon/Collins Aerospace, and Huntington Ingalls.

As a specialist machining expert serving the defense, aerospace, and other sophisticated niche markets that demand next-generation technology for parts development, Boulevard Machine is committed to being more than an industry leader. That's because, at its core, the company is also a thought leader. And, when it comes to the specialized machining of complex parts, custom low-volume work is where the company most excels.

As such, Boulevard puts significant effort into the quality of its employees and their retention. In this regard—and as with its impressive list of longstanding, repeat customers—the proof is in the pudding. Treating its people right goes without saying.

Consequently, word of mouth is the company's most successful recruitment tool. "Boulevard Machine is about our people," says President Susan Kasa. "Every single person who touches a part is just as important as the process engineer who gets it started or the machinist who's creating it," she says.

"It's the diligence and the loyalty of our employees that speak to who Boulevard is," she adds, explaining how much it means to her that the company's employees are so satisfied with their work that they are prepared to bring people dear to them on board to join its ranks—especially with this being a demanding industry at the best of times, let alone during employment shortages.

This reciprocal internal loyalty paid off in a big way when the company was awarded a gold medal by the Economic Development Council at its 2023 Impact Awards in April this year, amidst over 10 other winners, some of whom are international giants.

Quality is the name of the game, and based at its 20,000-square-foot facility in Westfield, Massachusetts, Boulevard protects its clients through its top-standard NIST 800-171 compliance, keeping unclassified controlled information safe. In addition, it is certified under the International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR) and holds ISO9001/AS9100 certification governing aerospace fabrication. Yet, no business prospers by upholding relevant standards and certifications alone.

"Many of our machinists move between departments. They're very adept at what they do, and they all have enormous passion."

It also takes stalwart leadership and visionary guidance for a company of this kind to make its mark in the world. And that's precisely what this dedicated company president brings to the table.

Like her team, Kasa is a dedicated, hard worker who leads by example. "I'm truly immersed in this business. When I see my team being the same way and us working through projects, I'm so proud of what we have become. I am so proud of our craftsmen," she says with a smile.

The dedication is reaping generous rewards. With three new customers signing up in the first term of 2023, the company is on a vigorous growth trajectory, a trend that will no doubt continue—not least because the company ensures that its people have everything they need to excel at their performance without growing stale in their tasks.

"It is important to me that everybody is in a place where they can do their job well, to make this company continue to grow. We want to stay manageable; but it's about feeling successful and accomplished at the end of the day," Kasa says.

Turning the job shop of former years into a leading-edge fabrication outfit was a gargantuan task, and one that staff did not shy away from. "That is what makes our team so great, considering what we've accomplished and been successful at," says Kasa. ►►

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► But it is not all work and no play; the team also dines together, with Friday night summer barbecues and a kitchen chockfull of breakfast options, giving employees time to innovate and explore ideas both on- and off-duty.

After all, leading with innovation means remaining current. At Boulevard Machine, that means being as forward-thinking in equipment investments as it is in doing business.

"We make complex parts; a person never stays at the same machine or place for long. That way, our craftsmen are continually challenged in everything they do," says Kasa. "Many of our machinists move between departments. They're very adept at what they do, and they all have enormous passion," she says.

Certifying the company as woman-owned in 2006, Kasa's pride is well-founded. Hers is a team that pulls together at crunch times to get the job done to the exacting standards the company's customers expect. "Our team will bend and flex to do what needs to happen to get those parts out the door," she says, underscoring a sought-after superpower that this commitment provides to the business—lightning-fast turnarounds.

To ensure that this level of service continues into the future, the company makes a concerted effort to promote the industry to male and female students and young adults alike

looking to establish a place for themselves in the world. That includes sharing the benefits of working in this industry with the parents of such youngsters to help them see the benefits and security these jobs provide.

Some of the company's contributions in this arena include hosting open days, serving on several boards, including Aerospace Components Manufacturers (ACM) and MassHire, and showing people that manufacturing is not the dangerous, sweaty industry of bygone years but a modern, comfortable, clean, and safe way of earning a living.

"Boulevard Machine is at the heart of East Coast manufacturing action."

"We're really growing the younger, passionate machinists. Because if you don't have a passion for what you do, you're not going to be successful," says Kasa, a woman whose feeling for the business is evident from the moment one engages with her.

Taking the company from an old-fashioned gear-cutting outfit to the epitome of modern custom machining excellence, Kasa is a hands-on president who learned every aspect of the industry and her business in detail, down to the finest minutiae. As a woman in a still-predominantly male space,



she recommends that others joining the trade prepare themselves by obtaining as much training and education in the field as possible to guarantee success in an industry that she forecasts will continue growing.

At home in what is affectionately known as AEROSPACE ALLEY!®, stretching from near Greenfield, Massachusetts in the north to Stratford, Connecticut in the south, Boulevard Machine is at the heart of East Coast manufacturing action.

Not surprisingly, COVID-19 was no match for this team's output. By keeping its customers' needs at the forefront of everything it did, its smooth and effective collaboration process allowed the company to expand its market share amidst the global crisis.

While its aircraft manufacturing slowed down due to the flight restrictions of the time, the company signed contracts in the satellite field. Unafraid of new challenges, the team

stepped into serving the celestial space market with gusto. The move was well-rewarded with an entirely new string in the company's bow. Its existing diversity also contributed generously to the healthy growth of the time.

Now, as its existing markets grow and well-paid positions beckon the next generation of experts, the company continues to expand its fleet of turning, milling, and mill/turn computer numerical control (CNC) machines to further build on its capacities. And with a new Business Development Manager bringing a quarter of a century's expertise in defense and aerospace to its ranks, access to new doors makes expansion a given.

"With the continuing development of directed energy weapons, hypersonics, autonomous sea, land, and air vehicles, and satellite constellations, Boulevard Machine is well positioned to become a key supplier to these aerospace and defense providers," Kasa says. ■

Content Developed by Jamal Francis-Anderson





326 Lockhouse Road, Westfield, MA 01085 | **P:** 413-788-6466 | **F:** 413-734-6814 | **E:** info@BoulevardMachine.com

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