



A&C Plastics, Inc.

Houston, Texas, USA

Continued commitment to exceptional customer service

Entering its 37th year of business, A&C Plastics has emerged from the challenging economic environment of 2009 as a stronger, more efficient and more focused company. Aside from adding new products and increasing inventory in each of its three locations, A&C made a number of strategic investments in its shipping, operations and inventory management systems, and mitigated the effects of the economic downturn by focusing on core competency — providing exceptional customer service.

Still the company's primary focus, customer service played an enormous role in A&C's success in 2009. While many companies were reeling from the effects of an unprecedented slowdown, A&C's management team encouraged employees to find ways to go above and beyond for their customers, ensuring that when they needed to order again, A&C would be their top choice. "We were seeing that a lot of customers weren't stocking inventory, and rather purchasing it on an as-needed basis," says Office Manager Jessica Calderon. "So we focused on getting it to them faster, and as a result we made adjustments that greatly increased our order fulfillment time."

This intense focus on improving customer service had other benefits as well, says A&C President Carolyn Faulk: "By providing direct solutions to the specific needs that our customers were expressing at the time, we have been able to fill gaps and improve operations that will position us very well as the environment improves."

A&C Plastics operates fully stocked satellite warehouses in Colorado Springs and Chicago, in addition to its Houston headquarters. The Chicago warehouse, A&C's newest extension, is now stocking new materials such as multiwall and polycarbonate roll stock. And each warehouse has implemented a new packaging procedure, lessening the possibility of plastic sheets becoming broken or scratched in transit.

2009 also saw the launch of A&C's new web site, an interactive product information resource where customers can obtain detailed information about every piece of inventory the company stocks. Over the

coming months, A&C plans to update the site with even more helpful tools, such as a color chart, additional tech sheets, frequently asked questions and links to external information. Customers who wish to stay informed of A&C's products and services can visit the web site and sign up for monthly e-mails that will contain product information and periodic sales incentives and discounts.

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The staff of A&C Plastics show their spirit for the company's annual Halloween costume contest!

A key factor in A&C's success has always been the unique culture that the company's leadership has established. From everyday conveniences like a workout room in the Houston office, to periodic contests and performance-based incentives, A&C has fostered a culture where employees' contributions are encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded. "We just know that to get serious results, you can't take yourself too seriously," says Vice President and Purchasing Manager Katie Clapp of A&C's "work hard, play hard" culture. Employees have many opportunities throughout the year to earn extra money by exhibiting outstanding service, having perfect attendance or even participating in companywide activities such as the annual Halloween costume contest. This year, over 25 people came to work in full costume, and the one

voted "best costume" took home a \$540 cash prize. Even those who didn't win the grand prize were rewarded, as each participant was paid \$20. Carolyn Faulk feels that the awards and prizes are money well spent: "It makes people want to participate, and when they do, they have fun and enjoy coming to work. And that's when they do their best and give our customers the above average service that they deserve."

The theory is obviously working. Over the past decade A&C has garnered numerous awards for its impressive growth, including a 3-time ranking on the Inc. 5000 "Fastest Growing Companies in America" roster, and the Houston Business Journal's "Fastest Growing Woman-Owned Business of 2009." Carolyn Faulk was also featured in Forbes "Texas Women in Business" article in September of 2008.

Amidst the success that A&C has experienced over the years, its founder and president has found a unique way to give back to the community. In 2007, Carolyn established the Faulk Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to support children who suffer from terminal illnesses, and their families, by providing financial aid and assistance with everyday needs. The Foundation takes a "hands-on" approach to helping families by analyzing real needs, and providing assistance in the way that each family needs most, whether it be groceries, cash, rides to the doctor's office, or just help around the house. Over the past year, the Faulk Foundation distributed over 1,000 toys to terminally ill children and provided aid to over 50 families. Anyone wishing to make a tax-deductible financial donation to the Faulk Foundation may visit www.faulkfoundation.org for more information.

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