

BUSINESS PROBLEM

A young engineer, obsessed with a brilliant new idea and armed with several patents, quits his “day job” and embarks on a ten-year odyssey to develop, prototype, test, and eventually produce a new generation of bicycles and motorcycles with all-wheel-drive technology. Perpetually short of cash, Christini Technologies must find a way to source parts affordably.

SOLUTION

While mountain biking one day during his college years, Steve Christini had one of those mythical moments when you say to yourself “Why hasn’t somebody...?” In this case, the need was for two-wheel drive to prevent mountain bike wheels from slipping on steep, wet terrain. It turned out that it had been attempted before, unsuccessfully, using clunky and unreliable chain mechanisms. That same year, Christini had a summer job repairing model helicopters and that’s when inspiration struck; why not put a drive shaft through the bike frame similar to how the tail rotor is driven in a helicopter?

Christini developed a working model two-wheel-drive bike as a senior project and continued to work on the idea after graduation. During three years as an employee, he secured patents and then took the plunge – Christini Technologies was born. After several years focusing on bicycles, Christini moved to motorbikes and has since garnered critical praise and a number of trophies from cycle racing events around the world, and is currently

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*-Steve Christini
Christini Technolgies*

transitioning from pure R&D to production.

Christini has been using the MFG.com online marketplace as its prime source of parts since the early days. “It’s kind of funny,” Christini says. “My partner and I had been thinking that we would have to initiate some kind of online marketplace like this to be able to source parts affordably when MFGQuote (as it was called then) did it for us.” Christini, with characteristic understatement, describes MFG.com as ‘very helpful.’ “We, as a small company, have to speed things up and move forward quickly,” he says. “We don’t have the time or the resources to dig through directories and search the market looking for suppliers. We use MFG.com for virtually all our parts.”

Typically, Christini will award a contract for a small quantity of a part to a supplier that has some machine time to fill. Often, this initial order will lead to additional business, evolving into a lasting relationship with the supplier. Most of the parts Christini needs are made from aluminum and are

relatively small. Only procuring a few hundred at a time, they can afford to air freight the parts so supplier location is not a critical concern.

“MFG.com does a really good job of linking everybody to everybody,” Christini says. “The rating system and feedback on the site make it easy to find good suppliers. And MFG.com has an army of people that are proactive in making sure the information on the site is good.”

Christini is looking forward to entering yet another phase of business – he hopes to transition the company from being a small supplier directly to the consumer market to an OEM supplier to larger motorbike manufacturers. This would change the volume of parts procurement to another level, but he is confident that MFG.com will be able to help him get there smoothly. “It’s a lot more than just the cost of the parts,” he says. “We would have to hire an internal sourcing agent and accounting people to manage that side of the business if we



didn’t have MFG.com. That would be a lot of additional expense.”

Another potential change that could benefit from online procurement is accessories and soft goods. “We are thinking of additional products beyond the drive system,” Christini says. “We could build on our name recognition with motorbikes accessories and other related products for the community. We can get those items through MFG.com as well.”

ABOUT CHRISTINI TECHNOLOGIES

Christini Technologies developed a revolutionary two-wheel-drive system for mountain bicycles and motorbikes that provides unequalled traction and control on challenging biking surfaces. Christini all-wheel-drive motorbikes have captured critical acclaim and a number of trophies at national and international motorbike competitions and is the talk of the industry. The company is currently in negotiations to provide all-wheel-drive systems to leading motorbike OEMs.

BENEFITS

- Ready suppliers for small quantities of unique parts
- Supplier screening tools insure good supplier selection
- Online procurement greatly reduces the need for internal resources (buyers, accounting)
- Very competitive parts pricing
- Reliable suppliers, good quality, on-time delivery