

Metals firm earns top brass

Metallurgical Products receives honor from World Trade Center of Greater Phila.

By BRIAN McCULLOUGH
Staff Writer

WEST GOSHEN — Michael Goodman remembers the trip to South Korea, when a customer was complaining that his company's copper-based specialty products were not meeting quality standards.

Goodman was confused, since the Metallurgical Products Co. he owns had developed a reputation for high quality, even in countries known to be sticklers like Japan.

After the customer took Goodman into his conference room and told him he may have to stop doing business with Metallurgical, Goodman asked if they could visit the plant to see how the products were being used.

"It wasn't even our product" that was causing the South Korean company problems, Goodman recalled recently after Metallurgical had been named Business Member of the Year by the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia.

"We found our shipment and I was able to show him that our material was perfectly



Staff photo by Kathleen Lange

Michael Goodman, president of Metallurgical Products Co., received the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia Business Member of the Year award presented by Jean Marie Marchetto, director of business and trade development.

manufactured," he said.

Goodman relays the story not to boast, but rather to illustrate the experiences he's

had in taking his products international, and the importance of staying committed to the effort.

"You need to go look at the market," Goodman said of

doing business overseas. "Part of the goal is to take the time to learn their culture. And that is one thing I really enjoy about the process."

Founded in Philadelphia in 1909 by Goodman's grandfather, Metallurgical Products Co. moved to its current location in the 800 block of Lincoln Avenue in 1970.

Its primary product is 15 percent phosphor copper, an alloy of copper and phosphorus. Customers include manufacturers of copper tubing, copper and brass mill products, brazing rods and electroplaters. The end products are often used in water and refrigeration piping.

Goodman joined the company in 1972 and purchased it in 1990, taking over for his father as its president.

The company began to look for international opportunities

in the late 1980s and expanded its efforts in the mid-1990s.

It started conservatively with Canada and Mexico.

"It's a classic example of sticking your toe in the water," said Jean Marie Marchetto, an international trade specialist for Chester County with the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia, who has worked with about 150 companies in the county over the last few years. "Once you're in those markets you get excited."

Metallurgical now does business in Asia, Australia, South America and Europe, in addition to Canada and Mexico.

International business now comprises a quarter of Metallurgical Products' business, Goodman said, and has enabled it to increase the number of employees at its West Goshen plant from 17 to 25.

Goodman said he feels Pennsylvania is very supportive in helping companies in the state export. The state has more than 16 trade representatives, many of whom helped Metallurgical make contacts over-

seas, he said.

The state has contracted with the World Trade Center of Greater Philadelphia to help companies with exporting.

Since its inception in October 2002, the organization has provided about 500 companies in the Greater Philadelphia region with international trade assistance. More than \$115 million in documented export sales can be directly attributed to the assistance — including \$40 million in the five-county Philadelphia region — translating into the creation of the equivalent of 1,300 new jobs for the region, according to Marchetto.

The organization helps companies select markets, make foreign contacts, overcome language differences, and network, Marchetto said.

Goodman was recognized as Business Member of the Year by the group because of his commitment to the process, the trade representative said.

"It's a long-term commitment in terms of personnel and financially, because

there's no profits for a year or two. You have to be there long-term," Marchetto said.

Goodman agrees.

"My greatest recommendation to any company wanting to export would be to make sure you're willing to spend the time, manpower and resources to be successful," he said.

Goodman is doing just that. In 2002, the company entered new markets in France, Sweden and Germany. In 2003, Metallurgical entered Turkey and Poland.

Goodman sees his role as an exporter as more than that of just a businessman.

"Many foreign countries don't like American politics," he noted. "Businesspeople can be goodwill ambassadors, because, from where I've been, they share the same values — education, family and hard work, those things. They really develop a different attitude toward Americans."

"We'd send Mike out anytime as our ambassador," Marchetto said.