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**The Most Powerful Name in Corporate News**

## Metal Manufacturing Services for Medical, Clean Energy, Aerospace and Industrial Applications



**Anthony (Tony) Fagnant**  
 CEO  
 Qualtek Manufacturing, Inc.

**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Fagnant, what is the idea, both in what you do and in philosophy, at Qualtek Manufacturing?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** We believe our success is highly due to being vertically integrated. We are a Contract Manufacturer producing high volume metal stampings; we also provide premier specialty metal finishing, and premier heat-treating. We strive for the most challenging opportunities and have found success in doing so.

**CEOCFO:** *Are there specific industries that you tend to work with Qualtek?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** We aggressively work on diversification of industries. We service the Medical Device, Aerospace, Industrial, and Firearm Industries. Therefore, four different major categories, very diverse from each other and that helps fend off some of the economic cycles.

**CEOCFO:** *Did you realize that early on or come to understand it over time?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** My wife and I equally own and operate the business; our past experience taught us the importance of diversification. .

**CEOCFO:** *What is it that you recognize at Qualtek that allows you to provide service better, faster, cheaper and more efficiently?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** Better and faster are not necessarily the cheapest. The net cost to our customer is usually the lowest. We achieve this by maintaining efficient processes delivering high quality products and services that aggressively meet the needs, demand and time scales of our customers

**CEOCFO:** *What is something that you might be able to do that others find challenging?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** As I mentioned earlier we are vertically integrated, which is not always the case for our Competitors. Therefore, we can provide shorter lead-times, better pricing, and higher quality because we control the process from beginning to end.

**CEOCFO:** *Are there many changes in technology, new equipment or new systems you need to consider?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** There is always new equipment and new systems and new processes arriving in all three facets of our businesses. For example, in the stamping industry servo presses have been out for about a decade now. We were fairly early on in purchasing servo press technology and that allows us to stay current and competitive and do things that a standard press cannot do. In the Metal Finishing and Heat Treat departments it is mostly related to precise controls; we invest in those modern controllers in order to meet tight processes and specifications.



**CEOCFO:** *When a customer is coming to you do they know what they want or are they looking to you for help in making sure that they are getting the right process for what they want?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** Our best customers are ones who come to us knowing what they want, but look to us to provide manufacturability input. In other words, we can help change or tweak certain dimensions that they can work with. It makes the part more manufacturable. Therefore, yes we really assist customers to help that happen and then the net result is that in the long run they end up with a lower cost.

**CEOCFO:** *What is the geographic range of your customers?*

**Mr. Fagnant:** In terms of metal finishing and heat-treat it is the State of Colorado. With the stamping department we ship across the continental US & Mexico.

**CEOCFO: How do you train and cultivate your people? Is it difficult to find people interested in manufacturing?**

**Mr. Fagnant:** Yes it is difficult. There are two (2) areas we address this:

1. We participate with fellow manufacturers for outreach with the message that Manufacturing is no longer unskilled low paying dirty jobs. We educate the community through that association, conferences, and student site visits.
2. We train our staff almost entirely in-house. We provide on the job training, in house classes, internships, apprenticeships, and financial education assistance.

**CEOCFO: How do you know someone is right for the company or that someone would be the right person to train?**

**Mr. Fagnant:** Our HR Director works diligently with our Management Team to field candidates that seem to fit our culture. We hire first on culture, second on the skills they bring for the position. Once people have been with us three years we have almost one hundred percent retention. It takes a while to learn who we are and what we do and for people to completely understand our culture. The three year mark tends to be very pure in terms of our retention.

**“We have all heard of the phrase: People, Profit, and Planet. It seems that if you do People and Planet well, the profit will follow.” - Anthony (Tony) Fagnant**



**CEOCFO: Qualtek was recently honored as one of the Colorado Companies to Watch. Would you tell us about the recognition?**

**Mr. Fagnant:** It is interesting. In the past we at Qualtek have avoided those kinds of recognition programs. The thought being, we liked laying low off the radar; we just simply performed well. In recent years, due to marketing and branding needs, we have chosen to participate in those recognition type programs. Colorado Companies to Watch is definitely a good one in the sense that we are seeing two benefits: Brand / Name recognition, and Employee pride. Turns out our employees like to tell their circle of people they work for an award winning company. They like to know that they are employed by a company that has higher performance and standards. We are honored and are benefiting from the recognition.

**CEOCFO: Would you tell us about Qualtek's E-Team?**

**Mr. Fagnant:** Four years ago we created a position that we call "Director of E". The reason we chose that is there was a certain point in time amongst manufacturing that sustainability was not necessarily a good word. Organizations would be going after sustainability and not everybody was fully on board that sustainability is a smart way to do business. Therefore, subsequently we wanted to say, "Okay, we are going to do sustainability, but if it is a matter of semantics let's not use the word sustainability. Let us aggressively put a team together that is constantly watching our energy efficiency, our energy performance and the environmental aspects." Therefore, we spent four years aggressively working towards our ISO-14001 certification and we are now in the final audit stages. That is what our E-Team does.

**CEOCFO: What surprised you as Qualtek has grown and developed under your leadership?**

**Mr. Fagnant:** I grew up as a pure capitalist in my working career. As pure capitalist, companies work towards profit; profit, profit. When I got my MBA every class referenced the Harvard Business Review statement of "maximize profit to the shareholders". I mean every class! My surprise is because that is not the best way to run a business. Besides profit, we focus on our community needs and our obligations to those needs. For example, we started Blue Star Recyclers. Blue Star Recyclers is a nonprofit that employs developmentally disabled people whose task is to ethically recycle electronics. The jobs we provide for those developmentally disabled adults are phenomenal. We significantly support other great organizations in our community as well. It is important to communities that businesses support a nonprofit. We have all heard of the phrase: People, Profit, and Planet. It seems that if you do People and Planet well, the profit will follow.

**CEOCFO: Why does Qualtek Manufacturing standout?**

**Mr. Fagnant:** It is a local manufacturing company and most of our people really enjoy working for the company. Our employees like knowing the contributions they are making are impactful in both the business and in their community.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

**For more information visit: [www.qualtekmfg.com](http://www.qualtekmfg.com)**

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