

Rubber News

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Best Places to Work: Little staff or customer turnover at The Rubber Group

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The Rubber Group photo

The Rubber Group team is close-knit. That is key for company success as the employees support each other and their customers to the best of their abilities.

The Rubber Group shows strong commitment its customers, but more importantly, its employees—one of many reasons the manufacturer is one of Rubber News' Best Places to Work for 2023.

ROCHESTER, N.H.—Management at The Rubber Group in Rochester has a hard time saying no—to both its customers and its employees.

The manufacturer shows a strong commitment to customer service, but an even stronger commitment to providing employees with an environment of flexibility, professionalism and advancement opportunities. These are among the many reasons that [The Rubber Group](#) earned a spot on [Rubber News Best Places to Work](#) for 2023.

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BEST PLACES TO WORK



For the [2023 Best Places to Work](#), *Rubber News* is publishing features—in no particular order—on each of the nine companies honored until we reveal this year's No. 1 Best Place to Work on Friday, March 3.

The Rubber Group specializes in manufacturing custom-molded rubber products using transfer, compression and injection molding to make such parts as grommets, bellows, seals and hoses. It services a variety of industries like medical devices, aerospace, defense, natural gas and more.

The firm, though, was formed started as a distributor of extruded and fabricated rubber parts back in 1986, said CEO and President Rob Pruyn.

"We evolved into a molder in the mid-1990s because we had no other way to meet customer needs for some custom products," Pruyn said. "There were no other options. Since then, our growth has come in the manufacturing part of our business."

Today, The Rubber Group generates 80 percent of its revenues from manufacturing custom parts, and 20 percent from distribution activities, he said. The custom parts it produces are concentrated in areas where there are significant financial and operational consequences to customers if there is potential for failure. Virtually none of the parts the company makes are the same, whether rollers, drive wheels, rubber profile, tubing or cord.

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The Rochester-based firm also molds standard mechanical products like isolation mounts, bumpers, appliance feet and O-rings in many different shapes, sizes and styles. It offers sophisticated monitoring and measuring services. Nearly half of its manufacturing business in 2022 came from new parts required from existing customers.

"We are a solutions provider for our customers," Pruyn said. "Basically, we have a hard time saying no."

While there is little turnover with customers, the same can be said for employees. 2020 was a difficult year financially for The Rubber Group—as it was for many rubber manufacturers—and a few employees had to be let go because of shutdowns and a lack of short-term work.

The Rubber Group photo

The Rubber Group specializes in manufacturing custom-molded rubber products using transfer, compression and injection molding.

But the company returned to pre-COVID levels by spring 2021, re-hiring many of the employees it had laid off. Today, the rubber product firm employs more than 60 and is hiring for several positions at the manager and entry levels in customer service, machining, materials, maintenance, quality and others.

Many team members started as machinists and have grown into leadership and management roles in other departments, Pruyn said, with all of its current supervisors and 75 percent of its quality inspectors having started out as machinists. "We really try to create a culture of rewarding employees with opportunities to advance," Pruyn said.

The high staff retention rate, he added, is thanks to an open culture focused on respect and dignity for all team members. The Rubber Group also offers flexibility for time off and openly communicates financials and strategies with its team members.

Monthly performance bonuses, annual performance and team bonuses are offered, with quality and on-time deliveries being two key metrics. Pruyn feels the firm provides employees with a generous benefits and paid time off package. Tuition reimbursement is available and employees are allowed to enroll in programs unrelated to their current jobs or the rubber manufacturing industry as a whole.

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SUBMIT

Pruyn hopes to bring back frequent employee gatherings like pizza parties and holiday gatherings after the last three years of the pandemic as well.

"We try to put ourselves in the shoes of our co-workers and want to listen and be empathetic to them," he said. "It sounds simple, but we treat our team like any of us (in management) would want to be treated. And we talk with our team members on their role and how they are contributing to the success of the company."

Inline Play

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