

# Issaquah's Marketing Masters soar sky-high

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The feeling never grows old for Jacques Gauron.

Whenever the life-long Issaquah resident watches a jetliner hum through the Pacific Northwest skies, he can pridefully look up and say he had a part in it — thousands of parts.

“Thinking we’re here in Issaquah, Washington and shipping stuff all over the world, it’s pretty cool,” said Gauron, who along with Brother Andre runs Marketing Masters, Inc. — A designer and manufacturer of composite inserts and clip nuts found in every Boeing and Airbus plane on the planet.

The company, which father Richard founded in 1976 as an aerospace marketing agency, was recognized by the chamber of commerce Feb. 22, as the Innovation in Issaquah winner for a large business.

While recognition is appreciated, Jacques admits there is a certain anonymity Marketing Masters likes to maintain. Hidden at the far end of Gilman Boulevard behind wafts of Burger King’s charbroiled smoke, the 16-employee company doesn’t advertise. There’s no need.

“We’re not trying to rock the boat,” said Jacques, of awakening billion-dollar manufactures around the world.

Marketing Masters is one of roughly 12 companies worldwide to manufacture products with a unique composite material called Torlon. They are the only one to produce clip nuts and inserts, pumping out more than 15 million parts a year.

Richard first stumbled across the resin when he was promoting it for a chemical company. The salesman, who had also dabbled in manufacturing clips and fasteners, bought an injection molding machine in 1984 and started experimenting with Torlon. Seeing enormous potential, he pulled his sons in on the project.

“We bought a molding machine and literally he threw the book on the table and said figure out how to mold this stuff,” said Jacques, noting it took years of learning on the job to get the processing just right.

Persistence paid off.

In 1992, Marketing Masters struck its first big contract with McDonnell Douglas. After that, more and more companies became interested in the composite fasteners and inserts.

Created as a replacement for titanium, Torlon eliminates scratching and corrosion associated with metals. It can also withstand temperatures of 500 degrees, is lighter in weight and is generally cheaper than titanium. It takes two weeks for Marketing Masters to create a single fastener, melting the resin, shaping it, then baking it at 700 degrees.

The parts are now the standard within all jetliners and are used in securing the floorboards, walls and other portions of a plane's interior. A standard Boeing 737 has approximately 10,000 of Marketing Masters' parts in them. An Airbus A380 has 60,000 fasteners and inserts.

The parts aren't limited to jetliners. They can be found in satellites, trains, motorhomes and more. A firetruck company in Wisconsin is currently experimenting with using the parts.

With a 7-year backlog of work with Boeing and several other strong contracts, business continues to boom domestically for Marketing Masters. The Issaquah-based business is even ready to take their product international — something they take great pride in.

“The Chinese are building a new aircraft ... they're buying our stuff now,” Jacques said. “Finally, they can read ‘Made in the USA’ for a while.”

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