

[AROUND and ABOUT]

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Online parts sourcing for distributors



Mitch Free, CEO,
MFG.com

IN THE SEVEN YEARS since Mitch Free founded MFG.com, a Web site originally dedicated to linking custom machine parts makers with buyers, the venture has become an increasingly popular resource for manufacturing engineers the world over.

The process is simple. Buyers seeking machine parts enter their requests on the site, and suppliers who can meet the specifications submit proposals. The buyer chooses the proposal that best suits his or

her needs, and the deal is done.

The site has become popular and successful—as of May 18, there was nearly \$160 million worth of requests posted on the site—and Free recently added a service tailored for distributors.

For a roughly \$5,000 annual subscription, distributors gain access to the site's 50,000 buyers seeking standard machine parts. The service, which Free says is available only to distributors, provides a real-time link between distributors and engineers across the globe who need the right part for the right price—right now.

"It's a really hot, timely lead," Free notes. "If the buyer or engineer says, 'This is what I need,' the dis-

tributor can go to work."

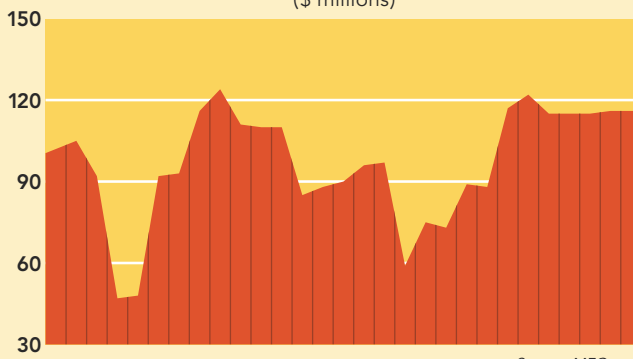
"We've made a policy that we're not selling directly [to OEMs]," he adds. "We're only selling to distributors."

The strategy seems to be paying off. Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com, recently bought a large stake in MFG.com through his personal investment company, Bezos Expeditions, Free says, and MFG.com has opened offices in Shanghai, Geneva, London and Paris.

"It's a bold claim, but we're quickly becoming the platform that the world's manufacturing economy is trading on," he says.

Open proposal requests on MFG.com April 5-May 3, 2007

(\$ millions)



Source: MFG.com

COMPANY NEWS

IBC added master distributor **ORS-Nasco** as a preferred service provider and **T & L Tooling Inc.** as a distributor member to its IndustrialSupplyPlus division...Wholesale business management software maker **Intuit Eclipse** joined the **Affiliated Distributors** alliance...**Rexel** renamed **GE Supply**, which it acquired from **General Electric** last year, as **Gexpro**...**SJF Material Handling** was named an authorized stocking distributor of **Interlake Material Handling** products...Master distributor **UASI** added e-commerce Web site development and Web site data tools services to its offerings. UASI also added products from **Allegro Industries**, **Guardian Manufacturing** and **GoJo** to its line of safety equipment...

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Private equity firm **Bertram Capital** of Palo Alto, Calif., bought **Power Distribution Inc.**, a power distribution products manufacturer based in Richmond, Va....Two senior executives of **Hubbard Supply Co.**, CEO Jeff Bigelow and COO Tim Brooks, bought the Flint, Mich.-based industrial supplies and electronics distributor from owner and president Bob Fuller...**DXP Enterprises Inc.** agreed to buy industrial and municipal pump equipment and services provider **Delta Process Equipment Inc.**...Private equity firm **Clayton, Dubilier & Rice** sold lab supply company **VWR International Inc.** to **Madison Dearborn Partners**...**Praxair Distribution Inc.** bought industrial, medical and specialty gases and welding equipment distributor **Rite Weld Supply Inc.**...

AWARDS & HONORS

The federal General Services Administration named **Applied Industrial Technologies** as its 2007 Large Business Contractor of the Year...**Motion Industries** was named 2006 Vendor of the Year by **Kroger Manufacturing**, 2006 MRO Supplier of the Year by **Owens Corning** and the 2006 Outstanding Supplier by **U.S. Steel**...**Affiliated Distributors** named its top Industrial Supply Division Affiliates, including **F&M Mafco Inc.** for Greatest Overall Growth in General Line, **R.W. Connection Inc.** for Greatest Overall Growth in Non-General Line, **Gregg Distributors Co. Ltd.** for Greatest Overall Growth in Canada, **N.H. Bragg & Sons** for Highest Overall Participation in General Line, and the **ORR Safety Corp.** for Highest Overall Participation in Non-General Line.