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## The Power of Small Businesses

By Guest Blogger on September 5th, 2014 | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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Patrick Marotta, president and chief operating officer of Marotta Controls, has diversified the company beyond Marotta's fluid control products, expanding their offerings to include electronics and power conversion technologies. Under his leadership, the company has been named the U.S. Small Business Administration's Regional Small Business of the Year, a big honor for a family-owned firm.

Marotta offers his insight into the challenges facing his company and the industry. This is the first part of a two-story series sponsored by **Marotta Controls**.

**Question: What is the biggest challenge your company is facing this year? The next 10 years?**

**Answer:** The uncertainty caused by sequestration is a major challenge for us as it is for all in the defense business. Not knowing the full impact of the automatic spending cuts from one year to the next creates instability throughout the industry.

The biggest challenge for us over the next 10 years is recruitment and retention of great talent. Many in our industry see a lack of students interested in STEM as a problem for our industry. My take on this is somewhat different in that I believe the students and new graduates are out there and our challenge is how to attract them to our industry. Fostering a new generation of creative thinkers while satisfying legacy requirements is a problem unique to our generation in aerospace.

**Q: How does the prospect of more aerospace consolidation affect your business?**

**A:** The ongoing consolidation in the aerospace sector continues to create many opportunities as competitors drop out and as large companies reshape their business portfolios creating acquisition opportunities. We are prepared to seize those opportunities and aggressively execute our growth strategy by investing and gaining access to those technologies that will improve our competitiveness.

**Q: What are some of the advantages of being a small business in the aerospace industry today?**

**A:** In short, speed. A small business is able to quickly communicate information throughout the organization, make decisions in minutes and readily adapt as much or little of the organization as necessary to support customer needs.

We continuously assess the things we are doing to ensure we maintain world-class center of excellence for pressure and flow controls.

**Q: Can you explain more about the changing role of small business in aerospace and defense? Are you finding it easier to work with larger companies?**

**A:** Small businesses present the aerospace industry with a fertile environment for developing new ideas and innovations, which is best illustrated by the explosive growth in the UAV industry over the past five years.

We are finding that larger organizations are seeking the entrepreneurial spirit of a small business – whether through teaming or acquisition – as the ability to rapidly adapt and respond to changes in the industry is essential for continued technological evolution.

**Q: What are the one or two most significant changes the aerospace and defense industry will undergo in the next 10 years?**



Patrick Marotta,  
President  
and Chief  
Operating  
Officer of  
Marotta  
Controls,  
Inc.

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**A:** Over the next 10 years acquisition reform will take place. The details can be debated but it is clear affordability will be the driver. We would like to see additional multi-year procurements to add industry stability and take advantage of economies of scale both of which would foster affordability.

Hopefully we will see real regulatory reforms in ITAR. For example the ITAR restrictions in the space sector present significant challenges in doing business with global satellite manufacturers. We'd like to see satellite components removed from the munitions list.

*Click [here](#) to read the second part of the series.*



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