



Avalex Technologies

Successful Surveillance Equipment Manufacturer
Shares Work with Other Local Manufacturers

Company Profile

Avalex Technologies is a lead innovator in the design and manufacture of rugged surveillance equipment. Avalex incorporates the latest technologies to customize products that meet customer requirements, with 25 years of experience in the following: displays and smart displays, tablets, mapping systems, digital video recorders, cockpit management units, and mission computers (including hardware and software integration). Since its inception in 1992, Avalex has grown from a single product line to seven distinct products that offer numerous options to special mission operators. Originally based in Atlanta, Avalex moved to Pensacola in 2001 and then to nearby Gulf Breeze in 2011. For four years, Avalex was featured in the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing private companies. "We've had this organic growth," said Avalex president and founder, Tad Ihns, who was raised in Pensacola and is a UWF alumnus (System Science, 1982). "When we came here in '01, I came here with four other employees. Today we have 80."

Situation

Avalex is a player in the high-growth surveillance sector, and while most of its work is for US customers, international sales are expected to take off. Avalex is involved in one of today's hottest technology fields: intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. It develops, designs, and produces airborne, marine, and ground-based surveillance equipment for military, commercial, and law enforcement customers. Avalex is housed in a 53,000-square-foot facility once belonging to a Ford dealership and has equipment that allows it to make virtually everything it needs from a range of materials, including aluminum, copper, steel, stainless steel, and engineering plastics. It also has a 3D printer that it uses for modeling. Avalex has seven product lines: displays, smart multi-function displays, mission computers, cockpit management systems, digital video recorders, digital mapping systems, and video routing systems. "We probably make more than 250 various products," said Ihns. Avalex has sold internationally for 15 years, and today, foreign sales account for 15 percent of its business. This number is going up now that Avalex has a sales office in Swindon, an hour west of London's Heathrow Airport. This sales team can convince customers that Avalex will be able to provide support in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Ihns said that makes a difference, and he thinks it will have a dramatic impact on foreign sales. "I see it increasing significantly."

Solution

Business advisors from the University of West Florida visited Avalex Technologies for a pre-scheduled manufacturing site visit with Larry Gordon, Avalex's Supply Chain Manager. Part of UWF, the advisors serve to connect the dots for manufacturers with production support. In this instance, Avalex Technologies asked the local business advisors for multiple connections to other local manufacturers in the 10-county Florida Panhandle area. This would help increase Avalex Technologies' production, allowing them to keep up with the high demand for their products in a rapidly-growing environment.

Testimonial

"Our association and partnership with the University of West Florida and FloridaMakes is vital to our continued success and growth initiatives," said Tad Ihns.