



# Agility and Skill Set Mean Faster, Cheaper New Product Intros

Globally dispersed operations, a deep knowledge base, and a flat organizational structure make this design and manufacturing firm a standout performer



CEO Mark Dohnalek

Pivot International credits its explosive growth in recent years to a unique single-source business model that provides turnkey solutions for companies introducing new products. Outsourcing the entire process of development, design, engineering, and manufacturing to Pivot lets them sidestep staffing and infrastructure investments and get new products to market faster and cheaper.

President and CEO Mark Dohnalek acquired the company in 2012, when it had about 100 employees and \$10 million in sales. Today it has a global workforce of approximately 450 in 12 offices around the world and does nearly \$200 million in sales. “We target embedded electronic technology markets, where our technical expertise can help firms deliver innovative new solutions to the marketplace,” he says.

The secret to Pivot’s success is a broad technical skill set combined with a deep knowledge base. It’s active in a dozen industry sectors, ranging from IoT and optics to medical devices and industrial design.

Despite its growth and international reach, Pivot has avoided the big-company mindset that bedevils many firms of comparable size. “Our success is largely due to our entrepreneurial culture and creative skill set in our design and manufacturing capabilities,” Dohnalek says. “We consistently take on challenges that appear to stretch our capabilities on paper, but our fundamental strength is our technical

knowledge, and that has allowed us to continue growing at a rapid pace.”

## ADAPTIVE CULTURE ENABLES IMPROVISATION

Pivot uses its entrepreneurial team culture as an advantage in an industry where many competing firms tend to be class-oriented and have rigid cultures. “We have a flat organizational structure and an open-door engagement policy that is highly conducive to maximum performance by all teams,” he says. “Our adaptive culture makes it possible for Pivot to improvise more effectively than our competitors.”

Pivot brought its nimbleness and adaptability to bear recently in leveraging some cutting-edge technology already in its portfolio to develop a solution addressing an important COVID-19 issue. The product uses advanced AI analytics to identify the highest-risk COVID-19 patients versus those at lower risk, helping health care providers make smarter decisions about which patients to put on ventilators.

“About half of COVID-19 patients who are intubated end up with some post-ventilation health issues, so predictive analytics can play an important role here,” Dohnalek says. “The product is nearing the end of its test trials in both the U.S. and the U.K., and there’s a lot of excitement among health care professionals about what it can do.”

Dohnalek has an economics and finance degree and an MBA, and he cut his teeth in corporate America. He spent 20 years in senior financial and management roles at large public companies, including a decade at a medical device firm. Pivot International, which was established in 1994, got hammered in the Great Recession, and when the opportunity to acquire it came up, he jumped at it.

“It was right in my sweet spot,” Dohnalek says. “I’ve been a business owner for nearly 20 years, and I have fun. My theory is that most people would be good at what they do if they found something they loved. Unfortunately, some people never find what really inspires them.”

#105

TOP MIDWEST COMPANY

185%

PERCENT

2-YEAR GROWTH RATE (2016-2018)

CLIENTS IN

12 STATES



450

EMPLOYEES

8

COMPANIES

ACQUIRED/ADDED SINCE 2016



PIVOT INTERNATIONAL