

Montreal Metallurgy

This 55-year-old fabricator of metal stampings stocks more than 1,000 dies to offer the most economical tooling.

For Quebec-based Tripar, metal fabricating is a way to help solve customers' problems. This maker of metal stampings (primarily for recessed lighting as well as traditional lighting fixtures and lamp parts) is able to tailor products to meet manufacturers' exacting needs through a vast in-house repertoire of metal-forming equipment, tooling, and engineering expertise.

According to plant manager Lloyd Sevack (shown in photo with Ben), the company regularly works with lighting makers on new product development, no matter how fundamental a component may be.

"One of our recessed lighting clients was looking not only for a lower-cost trim, trim holder, and housing assembly, but one that would solve several dilemmas," Sevack relates. "Specifically, they were searching for a way that would ensure that the trims remained tight to the ceiling even if the housing-to-ceiling relationship was not perfect [due to poor installation], one that would not gradually drop from vibration, and of course, all at a lower cost."

With an in-house team of experienced designers and toolmakers, Tripar is able to modify dies to suit many unique parameters. (Fourteen of Tripar's 75 employees have more than 25 years of service and 22 have been with the company for more than 20 years.)

"After several prototypes, we came up with a model that did away with the trim holder as well as the three riveted springs in the housing," Sevack explains.

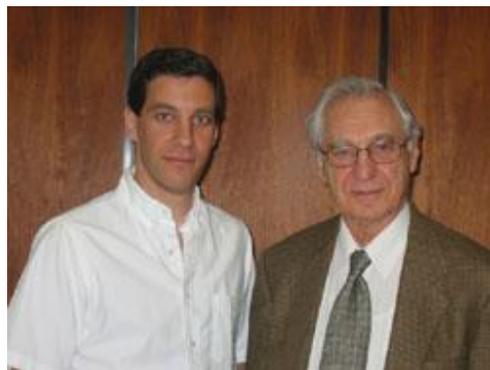
"Instead of conventional springs, we developed curved springs and a combination piece to replace both the trim holder and trim. Being curved, the springs can be mounted in different orientations and accommodate a greater variation in housing diameters," Sevack relates.

Tripar's solution also resulted in the manufacturer saving on inventory by only having to stock a single-spring design. Assembly is simplified since the springs are attached to the trim using the same two rivets that secure the gimbal. The client was able to utilize the remodeled components in a variety of trims and housings – from MR16s to PAR30s – thus relieving him from stocking several other springs for different housings. Tripar's new patented springs system has been released to its general list.

Responding to some customers' requests for more rigid bar hangers (used for suspending plaster frames and insulated ceiling boxes), Tripar recently upgraded even this most common lighting component. Although the original model was competitively priced, the performance was not as desirable as some recessed lighting manufacturers wanted. After listening to several specific suggestions for hanger improvements, designers at Tripar explored a few additional benefits they might incorporate into the new configuration. The result is a patent-pending device that is not only rigid, thanks to formed cross-sections, but also one that is easier to install.

The new design combines the best features found among existing bar hangers and adds a few innovations. These include compatibility with T-bar for suspended ceilings with a locking feature, as well as a proprietary process that offers the sharpest, integral nails, which are retracted and surrounded for safety.

These new Model #1287 premium bars are competitively priced, but for those on tight budgets, the original bar (Model #1240) is still available.



Rapidly meeting custom orders is possible because of the equipment and tooling Tripar retains. The family-run components supplier occupies a 65,000-sq.-ft. plant that accommodates more than 100 presses for metal stamping, shears, and brakes, plus modular tooling, roll trimming equipment, spot welders, clinch joiners, Pemserters, and riveters.

In addition, the company produces tubular products such as candelabra arms and swing arms up to 5/8-inch O.D. plus half-inch square varieties. Tripar also represents a tube mill that specializes in small-diameter resistance welded tubing, stocking ¼- to 5/8- inch O.D. To meet crucial shipment dates, the components maker inventories more than one million pounds of raw material. All tooling – from simple piercing dies to deep drawing or progressive dies – is created in-house in its own tool room.

While Tripar's customer base is diverse – covering home décor, woodworking, and gardening tools, air purifiers, and fitness equipment – lighting and lamp components remain its primary market. Founded by brothers Ben and David Sevak in 1949, the company is now seeing its second generation take the reins. While David has retired, Ben, now 80, has been joined by his son, Lloyd, a mechanical engineer. Lloyd brings with him 15+ years of applied experience in product research and development, design, manufacturing, and marketing. The company's downlighting is represented in the U.S. by Bill Brown Sales.

Acknowledging that the competition from overseas has made the most impact on the company, Ben points to Tripar's many services as keeping it a major supplier in a variety of industries. "All of the volume items have gone to China as they are producing finished consumer goods, but our ability to change product lines to satisfy the OEM market continues," he says. "Our service and ability to produce less-than-container-load orders plus our flexibility have kept manufacturers coming back."

"We serve many industries, from producing parts for barbecues to brackets for equipment that transports invalid patients. Many times items created for one industry can be modified for another," Lloyd explains. Since Tripar can adapt dies to suit different customers' needs, tooling costs, in many cases, may be reduced. "While we have a broad customer base, our niche remains lighting, particularly commercial and architectural recessed lighting."

Imagination, creativity, and responsiveness combine with Tripar's vast resources of tools, dies, and talent to give customers a unique opportunity to profit from North American manufacturing.

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