



VMAC'S STORY

In 1986, Jim Hogan had the opportunity to build jet engines for the Canadian Department of National Defense, but he didn't have the project off the ground. So, he reached out to his university friend, Tony Menard, who had the natural enthusiasm and instincts of an entrepreneur.

Tony had just been laid off, and the company he was working for closed its door. Soon after Jim's invitation to work together, Tony and his family packed their bags and moved across the country to Kitchener, Ontario, ready to pursue Jim's exciting new opportunity. Just as they began to make significant progress, the same recession that claimed Tony's former employer affected their military contract.

Jim and Tony had a tenacious work ethic and a complete machine shop in the heartland of Canadian manufacturing, so they didn't give up. Instead, they began to machine tooling and other small parts for local businesses, quickly earning a reputation for their high-quality craftsmanship.

In 1988, Parker Sturdy Manufacturing—a service truck builder and loyal customer—needed new air compressor mounting brackets. The brackets PSM was using kept breaking, and air compressors were falling off their trucks on the highway. Tony was instantly excited by the opportunity, but Jim wasn't convinced. Tony met with PSM and came back with a contract and was ready to design brackets.

Tony and Jim renamed their company VMAC, an acronym for Vehicle Mounted Air Compressors, and business was good to them for a while.

In 1990, Tony bought Jim out and moved the company to his hometown, Nanaimo, BC. But Nanaimo didn't have the same manufacturing spirit as Kitchener, and VMAC faced some hardships.

The business was failing, Tony was struggling, and he had to provide for his two sons and daughter. Tony decided to shut VMAC down, but Mike Gauthier, a friend of Tony's, brow-beat him into not giving up. He was later nicknamed the "VMAC Angel" because IMT, an American manufacturer of service trucks, called and asked Tony to design and manufacture engine-mounted air compressors for their company a few days later. This single deal gave VMAC the consistent revenue needed to pay the bills and ignite the company's growth.

Tony made it his mission to find hard-working people with good character for the new VMAC. Jim also returned, helping VMAC with engineering research and development—his true passion.

VMAC invented the first vehicle-mounted rotary screw air compressor, developed several new product lines, endured the global recession, and gained a reputation for world-class mobile air compressors.



JIM HOGAN AND TONY MENARD