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The Full-Service Manufacturer & Supplier You Can Rely On

When Steve Cipolla was once asked by *MJSA Journal* to recommend a favorite business book, he chose *Sam Walton: Made in America*, categorizing it as “an excellent story about one man’s dream to build the largest, most successful company in the world.” He also offered a favorite Walton quote: “High expectations are the key to everything.”

It seems that Cipolla and his team have taken that lesson to heart, given the trajectory of their own company, National Chain Group.

When it was founded in 1986, National Chain had five employees who manufactured 30 types of fashion and pendant chain, primarily in gold-filled and sterling silver. It occupied the same building it does today, on 55 Access Road in Warwick, Rhode Island, but took up only a portion—more than 85 percent of the building’s 60,000 square feet was divided among 11 other tenants.

Over the next decade, the company expanded through the acquisition of several local competitors, becoming the industry’s largest supplier of precious-metal chain. But the changes—and expectations—didn’t stop there. National Chain invested in its own mill to make homegrown wire and sheet, helping it to avoid supply-chain slowdowns as well as meet its customers’ needs. It established an assembly

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for its customers.*



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facility in the Dominican Republic to compete against foreign companies. And it diversified into other industries—its Apogee division still creates precision parts for military, automotive, and electronics applications.

In 2009, the company experienced what Cipolla calls a “tipping point.” That year, it acquired James A. Murphy & Son, a specialist in premium tubing, findings, and beads in a variety of metals: 10k and 14k (yellow, white, and rose), sterling silver, gold-filled, and, by special request, aluminum.

By then, National Chain had taken over as sole occupant of the 55 Access Road building, but the Murphy sale “forced us to acquire different buildings and add manufacturing space, which allowed us to enter new areas of opportunity.”

Those areas—contract casting, CAD/CAM, metal mold production, tooling and jewelry design—enabled the company to become a full-service contract manufacturer, and “one-stop shop” for its customers.

“Our goal was always to become vertically integrated, from grain to finished product, so we could better control quality, offer the most competitive pricing, and ensure that outside vendors didn’t hold up delivery times,” says Vincent Ferrante, National Chain’s vice president of marketing. “But by doing so, we were also able to strengthen the supply chain for our customers and, through our services, expand their capabilities.”

Today, National Chain Group still produces chain—up to 1.5 million feet per week, enough to keep 600 machines running daily at maximum capacity. In fact, the company makes chain so well that it was chosen as the focus of two documentaries: One that was part of the Discovery Channel’s “How It’s Made” series, and the other a “Modern Marvels” manufacturing profile presented by the History Channel.

*National Chain has **strengthened the supply chain for their customers**, by becoming vertically integrated, from grain to finished product.*



*National Chain's **responsiveness** to its customers' needs has enabled their exponential growth.*

But those original 30 chain styles have multiplied into thousands of SKUs that include not just chain, but also beads, findings, tubing, and mill products. The workforce has grown from five employees to nearly 1,200. And the company and its various brand divisions now occupy a combined total of 230,000 square feet of manufacturing space, spread out over six locations. In addition to National Chain and James A. Murphy & Son, its divisions now include:

Standard Chain: The leader in finished product with uniquely crafted knit, interwoven, and flexible metal patterns, achieved through proprietary methods.

National Fabricated Metals: A prime source for everything from casting grain to sheet, wire, and solder, created to the most exacting specifications.

The Village Goldsmith & Colorado Casting: The Village Goldsmith has a 30-year reputation for superior production services. Both Village Goldsmith and the Colorado Casting division can take a design from model to finished casting, on time and on budget.

C&W Steel Stamp Co.: C&W offers high-end coining and striking. It produces everything from charms to components with precise detail and accuracy.

National Design Studio: From custom metal molds to requests for personalized chain, findings, and jewelry, the National Design Studio can handle it all.

So what does the future hold? "Only our customers know our future," Cipolla says, and when you think about it, that makes perfect sense. National Chain has grown over its nearly three decades by responding to its customers' needs, he adds, whether for precious chain, mill products, or contract services. That responsiveness has enabled National Chain's exponential growth, it will no doubt drive the company's next moves. Whatever they are, one thing will be certain: Expectations will remain high.

The Many Capabilities of National Chain

At heart, National Chain Group is a "one-stop shop" of supplies and contract services for manufacturers seeking a reliable, flexible partner. Among its offerings:

- 3D Printing
- Bead & Ball Fabrication
- CAD Design: Engineering, Tool Development, Prototypes
- CAM/CNC/EDM Tooling
- Casting (All Metals)
- CNC Milling & High Speed Milling
- Coining
- Complex Metal Mold-Making
- Deep Drawing (0.004" – 0.50" thick)
- Diamond Cutting of Chain (Machine & Hand)
- Dock-to-Stock Programs
- Electroplating
- Epoxy (Color, Clear, Ground, Buffed)
- Exotic Powder Metal Injection Molding
- Flat Stock Manufacturing
- Inspection and Retail Packaging
- Jewelry Chain
- Jig & Fixture Design and Building
- Laser Cutting and Marking
- Lost-Wax Casting
- Mesh Products
- Metal & Rubber Mold Design/Fabrication
- Metal Stamping
- One-Offs
- Plastic Injection Molding
- Product Costing & Estimating
- Product Development & Engineering
- Production of Intricate Functional Components
- Progressive/Combination Tooling Design & Building
- Refractory Metal Drawing Specialists
- Residue-Free Parts Cleaning (Proprietary)
- Reverse Engineering
- Solid & Solder-Filled Wire Manufacturing
- Stamped Findings
- Stampings
- Stone Setting
- Toolroom Functions
- Tube Manufacturing
- UV Printing
- Wire & Ram EDM Capability
- Wire Coiling & Forming



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Meet the National Chain Group

With nearly 300,000 square feet of manufacturing space and a workforce of 1,150 experienced professionals, the National Chain Group comprises seven divisions encompassing all aspects of jewelry manufacturing and design:

National Chain

Produces up to 1.5 million feet of chain per week—enough to keep 600 machines running daily at maximum capacity—in a wide range of weights, finishes, and styles (including exclusive Byzantine designs). Its superior capabilities were featured in two documentary series, the Discovery Channel's "How It's Made" and the History Channel's "Modern Marvels."

Standard Chain

Creates finished product with uniquely crafted knit, interwoven, and flexible metal patterns, through proprietary methods that ensure maximum quality and comfort.

James A. Murphy & Son

Specializes in both plain and fancy beads, findings, and tubing, with the industry's best selection of patterns and textures. The staff takes pride in their creative flexibility and the ability to create special items.

National Fabricated Metals

Offers everything from casting grain to sheet, wire, and solder, all created to the most exacting specifications.

National Design Studio

From custom metal molds to requests for personalized chain, findings, and jewelry, the National Design Studio can handle it all.

The Village Goldsmith & Colorado Casting

The Village Goldsmith has a 30-year reputation for superior production services, from CAD/CAM to casting, stamping, and sintering. Both Village Goldsmith and the Colorado Casting division can take a design from model to finished casting, on time and on budget.

Apogee Precision Parts

A "dock to stock" supplier that specializes in stamping and deep-drawing metal parts for a range of industries. It manufactures everything from charms to capacitor components, medical implants, and diamond drill bits, with zero discharge.

C&W Steel Stamp Co.

C&W offers high-end coining and striking services—producing charms, ID tags, coins, and components.

*See How National Chain Group's Capabilities
Can Be Your Competitive Advantage*



National Chain Group

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