



AL O | TECH

MANUFACTURING *Mastered*



TOMMY KIRK

COO, ALOTECH, INC.

At a young age right before going off to college, Tommy Kirk's father, a General Contractor, gave him the advice to learn a trade saying, "No one can take it from you, and if you don't like what you're doing, you'll always have something to fall back on." And so Tommy decided to become a Machinist. His reasons were entirely practical: it allowed him to solve problems which he enjoyed, there were good careers available, and his starting salary was enough to raise a family on. And so he began. But once he started, he fell in love with it.

He soon set a goal to run his own business. Over the years, he pursued several different opportunities. While his ventures into entrepreneurship proved exciting, he always ran into a dead end until he met his mentor and eventual business partner, Bill Murphy.

Murphy hired Tommy as General Manager of Alotech and taught him the ins and outs of business ownership. Bill's philosophy was to develop people, not just products. Together, they helped the company grow from 5 full-time employees generating \$500k in sales into a multi-million dollar business with over 50 employees today. And Tommy has whole-heartedly adopted Bill's business philosophy, seeking to always find ways to help employees succeed.

Alotech is not a typical contract manufacturer since they don't just manufacture products. They work with client-entrepreneurs in creating the best possible products while reducing overall manufacturing costs. The service Alotech provides is bigger than production - it is about improving manufacturability of products through value engineering and robust processes. Helping the small manufacturing guys work smarter not harder, Alotech's team helps them focus on what they do best by getting their products to market more efficiently. This allows their clients to work on the business rather than in the business. The unique and people-focused structure of Alotech has created an innovative company that constantly surpasses customer expectations.

For more information call (919) 774-1297 or visit alotechinc.com

WHEN PASSION MEETS KNOW-HOW

Servant Leadership

Tommy is dedicated to servant leadership, and he believes this is the most important part of running a business with employees. If you want people to follow you, his advice is to humble yourself and give more than you receive. Tommy believes that life is not any fun at the top if you don't surround yourself with those who helped you succeed. True happiness is in the quality of your relationships. To Tommy, caring for your employees and putting yourself in their shoes is part of being a great leader and a productive citizen.

Made in the USA Matters

Tommy speaks on the marketing advantages of "Made in the USA." Most inventors go to China because that's what they think they have to do to compete and make money, but what that really does is devalue their product from the start. Everyone wants to buy cheap and sell cheap, but there are some major benefits to buying higher and selling higher.

Pursuing Your Passion

One of Tommy's biggest passions is helping people pursue their own passions. Often, when people start a business, they are forced into the role of CEO—a role not everyone is cutout for. The key to enjoying your work is doing what you do best. If that's inventing and designing, you have to find the most qualified person you can to do the rest. Of course, when you're a small business owner, you may have no choice. However, to enjoy work, you must find the right people to do what you can't or would rather not spend your valuable time on.

Market Research Is A Must

Tommy talks about the primary importance of market research to any product inventor. He helps explain key reasons for doing market research before starting a business and identifying if a market exists, as well as the size of the market potential. Tommy helps early entrepreneurs learn the importance of establishing a peer group, business coach, or mentor early on. The lesson here is to gather plenty of people who will give you advice along the way. His message is to spend money on a third party market analysis first.

Entrepreneurial Pitfalls To Avoid

Tommy speaks about common mistakes made by Entrepreneurs—something he knows too much about. He explains that you are going to make mistakes. It's an education that can be costly at times, but you learn over time how to avoid pitfalls and recover. His advice is to seek counsel from people who will give informed and honest feedback based on his own success, which he believes is the result of his business partner, Bill Murphy, who always tells it like it is.

