

# A Passion for Excellence

## The Ameri-Ken Story



***“Excellent firms don’t believe in excellence— only in constant improvement and constant change.”***  
- Tom Peters

*In an era of tumultuous change and economic uncertainty, the majority of companies shrivel, become introspective, and play it safe, while a few gain confidence, leap forward, and make an aggressive commitment to a more productive future.*

The company founded by Donald and Ray Kengott built a tradition around leadership, around progressive change, and has never lacked the courage or the imagination to move ahead, to be there for their customers as market conditions improved. Although both have been retired for a number of years, they watch with amazement, with admiration, and with pride, how the company they built from humble beginnings has grown to become an industry leader.

It is no coincidence the leaders who formed this economic powerhouse by combining Ken Specialties, Ken Die Cutting Supplies, and Ken Technology with American Die Supplies, into the Ameri-Ken Companies, are their five sons, Dale, Bryan, DJ, Richie and Randy. Although amazed at the speed of the transformation, they are not surprised.

In fact by allowing their sons to participate in the business from an early age, and to earn their right to be there based upon merit only, they ensured both a healthy company and a seamless transition from one generation to the next. It was typical in interviewing for this article how each of these five unique individuals expressed gratitude to the founders of the company, their fathers, for the opportunity to build this impressive organization.

And build it they did! Donald Kengott, “These guys have been running this company for a long time now, and they deserve all of the credit for where they are today. We certainly got the ball rolling, but it is their ideas, their initiative, and their entrepreneurial flair which made this merger possible.”

But this family built business understands the past does not necessarily equal the future, and they are all

working hard to integrate, to energize, and to drive the new organization forward

### Leadership in Action

***“The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.”***

- Vince Lombardi

To get an inside view of where the company is going I interviewed the five Kengotts to get their collective and individual assessment of this momentous transformation,

Dale Kengott, “We are excited by the synergy possible with the amalgamation of these two companies, their impressive teams, their comprehensive product portfolio, their broad, national customer base, and their commitment to customer service excellence, but we are by no means complacent. We are making significant changes in the management of the company, and in the way we communicate internally and with each customer. We are introducing exciting new products to the market, we are continuing to automate and improve our manufacturing technology, and we are working as hard as we can to deliver the best service possible to every customer.”



Rich Kengott; “The success of Ken and of American Die Supplies was based upon knowing the customer, understanding the application, being



competent in the use of the product, and in working with the customer for mutual success. Both organizations had developed professional teams, from management to

customer service, to manufacturing, to dispatch, and this is the resource which has the greatest potential for continued growth. In reality we have combined two markets, and we have the ability to bring every customer in those markets a more comprehensive range of products, better technology, more efficient delivery, and the combined talents of two very experienced teams. It was the logical step for each company, and the fit between the two organizations, their respective markets, and their customer base is absolutely perfect.”

Bryan Kengott, “The acquisition of American Die Supplies was an essential strategic move for an organization which was expanding in terms of product

development, technical innovation, and customer partnerships. The experience I gained from building Ken Die Cutting Supplies into a



successful competitive entity is organizations thrive when they are challenged, put under pressure, and given the chance to set the bar at a higher benchmark. Although tempting to be content with the status quo, to remain healthy, and to ensure the long-term vitality of the Ken Group of companies, it was essential to expand and to grow. We are fortunate in having a very strong organization in every phase of our business, and the integration of the two companies will provide the challenge we need and the competitive benefit our customer depends on.”

Randy Kengott, “This is a wonderful opportunity

which opens new fields, new markets, new customers and new challenges. Our commitment to the American Die Supplies organization, to their people and to their customer base was the reason I determined it was essential I move to Atlanta, to be in the heart of the market. We are committing a significant investment in commercial systems, in computerized inventory management, in an expanded product portfolio, and in a better overall service



to each customer. We are building upon a great foundation and given the enthusiastic reception and positive response, I am convinced we can integrate the very best of both organizations, and work energetically with each customer for a more productive future.”

DJ Kengott, “The heart of any effective business is a seamless system of communication. To accomplish this goal we are actively bringing each American company online with Ken’s wide area network, forming a connection between each key individual in all companies. This is designed to ensure technical and commercial data can be collected, stored, manipulated, backed-up, retrieved and made available to every location, in a way which enhances our ability to respond quickly and precisely to customer needs. In addition, Dale and I are completely revamping and reorganizing our marketing, marketing tools, and the way we keep customers informed about our products and services.



We are striving to create a unified campaign for all of the Ameri-Ken Companies, that will help educate the customer on all of the new

services and products now available from each location, making us a true one-source provider.”

Each key player understands the size and the scope of the challenge, but their experience in

building an outstanding organization, combined with their confidence in themselves, their family, and their colleagues, makes them determined to continue a tradition of excellence which made Ken an industry leader.

## A Comprehensive Product & Service Portfolio

*“Forget about the sales you hope to make and concentrate on the service you want to render.”*  
- Aristotle

This remarkable integration of two fine companies will enable the Ameri-Ken Companies to offer their customers a complete line of diemaking and diecutting tools and supplies. From dieboards to jigsaw blades, from creasing matrix to counter cutters, from steel rule to laser diecutters, and from arbors to turnkey state of the art diemaking automation.

The Ken companies bring their extensive line of punches, custom punches, and custom engineered tooling to the American companies (boasting over 3 million punches in stock); while the American companies brings a complete line of flat and rotary dieboards to the Ken companies. Together the companies offer a full line of steel rule including Bohler, Helmold, National, Notting, Sandvik, Seaboard, Simonds, Tsukatani, Viking and Zimmer. Creasing matrix, ejection materials, jigsaw blades, (which are manufactured in-house), highlight the extensive line of products available.

This represents one of the most comprehensive materials, tools, and technology inventories available anywhere in the world. However, the key is to respond quickly and precisely to each customer request.

This is why the company has put such a commitment and major investment into an Interactive Network Communication System which will enable each representative in each location respond promptly to a customer inquiry.

## Integrating the Five Ameri-Ken Business Centers

*“Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success”*  
Henry Ford

From East to West, North to South, and across the entire United States, the Ameri-Ken Companies have ensured service from 8:00am Eastern Time to 4:30pm Pacific Time. Local and ground service delivery in each key area is but one of the many important advantages of the five locations.

The strategic element that will really set this group of companies apart is their custom designed integrated computer system. Not only does it provide seamless integration of the internal operations of the five locations but many of the key applications were designed with the customer's need and responsiveness as the primary priority.

One phone call to any location will provide you with instant access to every inventory item in all Ameri-Ken locations. If an item is not in stock, the customer service representative, with a click of a button, can find the product at any of the other locations. Order status and tracking is just as easy, and with the integrated system, if your local office is not open and you still need to check on your order, any of the other locations will be

able to provide the same level of customer service instantly.

**Ameri-Ken**  
COMPANIES  
Nevada ★ Texas ★ Illinois ★ Georgia ★ Florida

**5 Convenient Locations**

**American Die Supplies**  
1635 Falcon Drive  
DeSoto, TX 75115  
1.800.858.1699

**American Die Supplies**  
119 Pounds Drive  
Tucker, GA 30084  
1.888.941.5097

**American Die Supplies**  
14476-102 Duval Place West  
Jacksonville, FL 32218  
1.800.969.9521

**Ken Die Cutting Supplies**  
2280 Conestoga Drive  
Carson City, NV 89706  
1.800.553.6666

**Ken Specialties**  
618 N. Edgewood Ave  
Wood Dale, IL 60191  
1.800.553.7777

An interesting quotation from Eddie Rickenbacker seems to apply to this aptly named Ameri-Ken organization,

***“The four cornerstones of character on which the structure of this nation was built are: Initiative, Imagination, Individuality and Independence.”***

## Summary

***“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.”***

- Harry Bullis

One fascinating factor which resonates throughout this company is the singular focus of the five owners, but contrasted by their incredible diversity. In evaluating the impact the family connection brings to a very successful business philosophy, it is obviously based upon providing every customer with the best tools, resources, options, and personal service.

Each owner brings different skills, different ideas, and a different approach, yet it is somehow forged into a unified determination to build a world class customer focused organization. Perhaps, as Warren Rodgers observed. “To be successful as an entrepreneur, you have to build a company around your whole life, not just the business aspect.”

This is an extraordinary organization, built around an incredible team of professionals, led by five impressive individuals, who have set themselves ambitious goals. But having the good fortune to work alongside the organization for more than twenty years, I am very confident they will set new standards of innovation, of excellence, and of outstanding customer service in our industry.

To be a successful convertor, diecutter, or diemaker, we perhaps take it for granted the tools, materials, and technology are a phone call away. The professional supply companies must both respond to our current requirements, and anticipate our future needs. This critically important partnership is one of the key underpinnings of our mutual success.

In the Ameri-Ken Companies we have a new partner, who is investing every possible resource to ensure we can pick up the phone and get what we want, where we want, and when we need it.

***DIEINFO***


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**Complete Die Shop Automation from**

# Ken Technology

*An Ameri-Ken Company*



**When you think Automation . . .**  
**think Ken Technology**

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CAD Software • Samplermakers & Plotters • Lasers • Counter Cutters • Steel Rule Processors

<p><b>Ameri-Ken</b> COMPANIES</p> <p><small>Made in Texas • Illinois • Michigan • Florida</small></p> 	<p><b>American Die Supplies</b></p> <p>1635 Falcon Dr. DeSoto, TX 75115 800.858.1699</p>	<p><b>American Die Supplies</b></p> <p>119 Pounds Drive Tucker, GA 30084 888.941.5097</p>	<p><b>American Die Supplies</b></p> <p>14476-102 Duval Place West Jacksonville, FL 32218 800.969.9521</p>
<p><b>Ken Die Cutting Supplies</b></p> <p>2280 Conestoga Drive Carson City, NV 89706 800.553.6666</p>	<p><b>Ken Specialties</b></p> <p>618 N. Edgewood Ave Wood Dale, IL 60191 800.553.7777</p>	<p><b>Ken Technology</b></p> <p>618 N. Edgewood Ave Wood Dale, IL 60191 800.553.7777</p>	