What does your company do?
We manufacture PET plastic containers for various companies in Hawaii, and we are a co-packer for such brands as Coca-Cola's Dasani, 7-Eleven and Foodland Markets. We also manufacture expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam products for the aquaculture, construction, roofing and surfing industries.

How did you get into manufacturing?
I started out as a maintenance manager in aviation in 1989 and moved into manufacturing aircraft parts in 1985. During my 30 years in aviation, I became president and CEO of the world’s largest piston engine manufacturing company.

As a small manufacturer, how does your company serve as an anchor of your community?
We are the largest manufacturer in Hawaii and the state’s only ISO 9001 and FSSC 22000 certified company.

How do you think small manufacturers power our economy?
Small manufacturers employ far more people than anyone realizes. They represent a large contingent of voters and makers across the United States. In Hawaii, manufacturing represents more than $2.5 billion per year in economic activity, second only to tourism.

What does it take for a small and medium-sized manufacturer to compete to win in the United States?
Reduce regulations to lower costs. Enact import restrictions and controls on cheaper products.

What is your proudest accomplishment as a small manufacturer?
Developing a manufacturing model for import substitution. Ninety-seven percent of all products are shipped into Hawaii. We developed a model for products to be made in Hawaii, for Hawaii. We also created a zero-waste program as well as a statewide foam recycling program, which earned a national award from the EPS Foam Alliance in 2016.

How would you describe what you do to a college student and explain why he or she should consider a manufacturing career? Are you reaching out to the next generation of manufacturers?
We offer tours of our state-of-the-art plant to show students that manufacturing can be exciting and challenging. We also designed courses on PET plastics with the University of Hawaii Community Colleges.

What is the future of your company—and the future of manufacturing in the United States?
Whereas oil was once the future, today it is water. Hawaii has the largest annual rainfall in the world. We have expanded our plant to meet the growing demand for clean, safe, good-tasting drinking water from Hawaii and are now exporting to many Asian countries.

To learn more about the Power of Small, the NAM’s campaign to promote small and medium-sized manufacturers and their contributions and challenges, visit www.nam.org/powerofsmall.