

# Wire Forming & Fabricating

*How a Synergistic Marketing Strategy Helped a Custom Wire Forming Company Educate its OEM Market on the Benefits of Designing and Manufacturing with Wire*

**Background:**

*Design-2-Part Magazine*, a publication of The Job Shop Company, Inc., is exclusively targeted to OEMs and product manufacturing companies that buy from contract manufacturers, job shops, contract design companies, and makers of electronic components. In the Eastern region alone, the magazine is circulated quarterly to more than 37,500 readers, including design and manufacturing engineers, product development engineers, manufacturing and purchasing managers, and executive decision makers. The magazine's readers play key roles in their company's decisions to source a variety of design, engineering, and manufacturing services.

*Design-2-Part Magazine* is partnered with the regional Design-2-Part Shows, making the magazine more powerful and giving it a superior presence. Not only is the magazine available on site to all attendees of the trade-shows; all attendees automatically become subscribers who receive the magazine for free.

**Challenge:**

One of the most important marketing challenges facing Merrill Manufacturing Corporation has always been the need to educate potential customers about the cost and design benefits of using wire forms for their manufacturing projects. Based in Merrill, Wisconsin, the ISO 9001:2000-certified

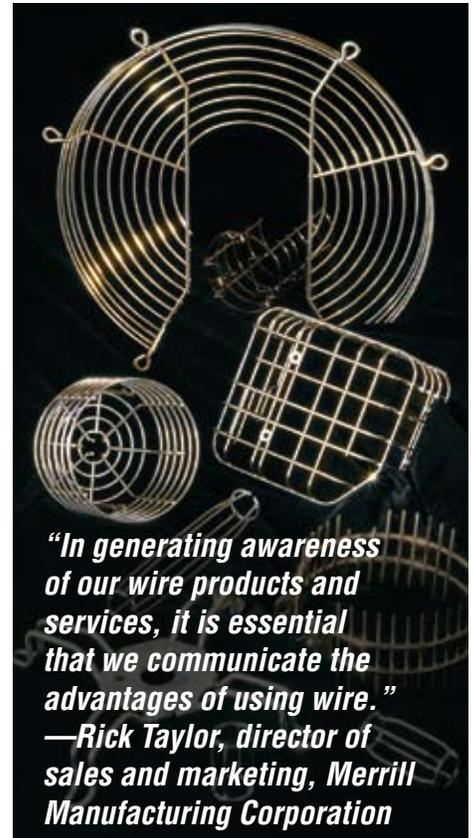
company provides custom wire forming and fabricating services to OEMs and product manufacturers who use their wire forms for applications such as motor mounts, water intake screens, grills, hose brackets, racks, and finger guards. According to Rick Taylor, director of sales and marketing for Merrill Manufacturing, many product designers and engineers who are unaccustomed to using wire forms are unaware of the advantages—such as lighter weight, lower tooling costs, and a wide choice of materials—that they provide.

“Many engineers, purchasers, and designers aren't taught to use wire, and they aren't informed of its advantages,” says Taylor. “Wire is a relatively new concept for their projects. The challenge is to get the engineers in the ‘wire’ frame of mind—to educate them about the benefits of wire and get engineers to ‘think wire.’”

Although Merrill Manufacturing had always advertised in magazines and exhibited at tradeshow, the company couldn't achieve the results it desired until it began utilizing The Job Shop Company's magazine advertising and tradeshow marketing tools. Before Taylor took on the sales and marketing responsibilities for Merrill, the company had poured nearly \$50,000 into a marketing campaign with another firm that produced lackluster results.

**Solution:**

Merrill Manufacturing, through a combination of advertising in *Design-2-Part Magazine*, exhibiting in Design-2-Part Shows, and maintaining listings in the *Design-2-Part Buyer's Guide* and on [www.Jobshop.com](http://www.Jobshop.com), has successfully met its challenge of communicating to OEMs the advantages of using its unique, custom wire forming and fabricating services. When Rick Taylor took over the sales and marketing responsibilities for Merrill, he made it a priority to constantly promote



*“In generating awareness of our wire products and services, it is essential that we communicate the advantages of using wire.”*  
—Rick Taylor, director of sales and marketing, Merrill Manufacturing Corporation

Merrill's services through The Job Shop Company's integrated marketing tools, which became Merrill's core marketing strategy.

As he increased Merrill's exposure to OEM target markets through a consistent tradeshow and advertising presence with The Job Shop Company, he helped turn the company around and boost sales up to significantly higher levels. Taylor says that by combining its tradeshow presence with magazine advertising, Merrill has been able to do more business with existing customers, while more potential customers—who ultimately became customers—have been able to find them.

“The magazine has been extremely helpful in keeping our name, products, services, and capabilities in front of OEM customers and potential customers,” says Taylor. “The *Design-2-Part Buyer's Guide* and magazine provide us with good leads. The combination of advertising in the *Design-2-Part Buyer's Guide* and *Design-2-Part Magazine*, as well as exhibiting in Design-2-Part Shows, has helped us to reach the right industrial markets

and it has helped us increase business.”

Merrill Manufacturing sees the magazine as an essential complement to the trade-shows because it keeps the company in front of tradeshow attendees even after they've left the show. And with a readership base consisting primarily of OEM engineers and buyers, *Design-2-Part* turned out to be a perfect match for Merrill, whose customers and prospects are predominantly OEMs.

“*Design-2-Part* Magazine is the best medium and offers us the best way to reach our target market of OEM engineers,” says Taylor. “What mattered most to me in determining where to advertise was that I wanted an effective and proven way to get to our market. With their name recognition and experience in the job shop marketing arena, they [*Design-2-Part*] were a proven avenue to promote my company. I also wanted an opportunity to sell my services and capabilities, not just parts, and I knew they were successful at it, since they have helped thousands like me.”

**Result:**

By providing visual images of Merrill's parts, the ads in *Design-2-Part* Magazine have been particularly effective in highlight-

ing one of the biggest advantages of using custom wire forms—the ability to produce complex shapes and designs from materials ranging from basic bright low carbon steel to aluminum. “We're constantly educating our potential customers by showing them visual pictures of our parts,” says Taylor.

The Job Shop Company's marketing tools (tradeshows, magazine, and Internet) help Merrill promote its complete services, from design and engineering assistance to tooling, custom wire forming and fabricating, stamping, and welding. Merrill has found that its ads in *Design-2-Part* Magazine have sparked interest among OEMs in the services and capabilities that they offer—not just the parts that they produce. And the engineering responses that Merrill receives regarding its parts provide the company with feedback on what to offer from a service standpoint.

“Through *Design-2-Part* Magazine and *Design-2-Part* Shows, Merrill is getting the right leads to the sales rep to follow up on,” says Taylor. “We get the right people (engineering and purchasing titles) to the sales rep to work with. Through the magazine and shows, Merrill is able to get in with some engineers in certain industries that we wouldn't get with a cold call.

“By being in the magazine all the time, quarter after quarter, it helps me get a continuous flow of leads and assures me that I will be seen at all times,” Taylor explains. “Someone may not have a need at a particular point in time. When they do have a need, they will refer to the magazine, the Internet, et cetera, when they do need you.”

As a result of advertising in *Design-2-Part*, Merrill has received orders from OEMs in the automotive, lighting, transportation equipment, and heating and cooling industries. Dollar amounts of the orders have ranged from \$1,000 to \$250,000.

“Advertising in *Design-2-Part* Magazine has helped create and build awareness of our wire products and services,” says Taylor. “It has helped me educate the OEM market on what the benefits of wire are, and it has created interest in the value of our unique services. Advertising in the right regions for our company has constantly kept our name out there so that when an OEM is ready to purchase wire products and services, they think of Merrill.”

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To request info on a marketing program from *Design-2-Part*, visit [www.D2Pcompany.com](http://www.D2Pcompany.com) or contact Dennis Insogna at [dennis@d2p.com](mailto:dennis@d2p.com)