

HONING THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

For nearly three quarters of a century, *Sutton Industrial Hardware* has been recognized as Cleveland's premier commercial/residential hardware supplier and tool rental center

by Robyn M. Feller

Pete Burke and Todd Votaw, long-time employees and now co-owners of *Sutton Industrial Hardware*, have spent decades sharpening their skills in the hardware supply and tool rental business. But the history of Sutton Industrial Hardware goes back even further.

In 1946, Harry Sutton and Vern Lieser opened Sutton Industrial Hardware in a small storefront on St. Clair Avenue and E. 21st Street. Vern bought Harry out in 1964 and continued to expand the business over the next decade.

Pete, who was hired in 1973 and Todd, who came onboard in 1978, eventually formed a partnership and bought the business in 1990. Quickly recognizing the endless opportunities for continued expansion, in 1993, Sutton Hardware leased additional space on St. Clair Avenue to house several growing departments: power tools and accessories, fasteners, tool rental, and builders' hardware.

Even the recession couldn't stop Sutton Industrial Hardware. In 2008,



Todd Votaw (left) and Pete Burke (right), co-owners of Sutton Industrial Hardware.

the company moved to a more centrally located, 20,000-square-foot space on Prospect Avenue in Midtown. Literally and figuratively, the new space gave the business the room it needed to grow and add products to meet the needs of an ever-increasing customer list.

Serving the Commercial/Industrial Sector

Inventory, service and experience—these are the critical factors that continue to give Sutton Industrial Hardware an edge. Todd explains that the company was established

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUTTON INDUSTRIAL HARDWARE

to serve the commercial/industrial customer. He says, "This customer base is so satisfying to deal with. In most cases, they are experts in their fields, know what they want, and buy in quantity. If you are willing and able to stock the products they need, they will be loyal customers."

He adds, "Given the length of service of our staff and the knowledge we have gained in dealing with the commercial and industrial customer base, we are uniquely prepared to anticipate and satisfy the needs of our customers by maintaining an extensive inventory."

According to Todd and Pete, the Sutton Industrial Hardware team, in fact, is the company's greatest asset, with many employees having over thirty and even forty years of experience in hardware. Pete says proudly, "We have watched second and even third generations of business customers become friends and advisors, and we like to think we have helped them grow their businesses as well."

Constant Quality in a Changing Market

The hardware business has changed significantly over the years and even more so recently. Todd shares how Sutton Industrial Hardware has evolved with the times, noting, "Products we did not sell five years ago have become best-sellers. Safety has certainly become a more important factor, which is beneficial for workers in the field. From how contractors deal with dust and noise, to battery-powered tools that eliminate extension cords as a trip hazard, safety has become a priority in the industry."



Bob Becka, Sutton Industrial Hardware's general manager and paint expert, seen here with Benjamin Moore's new products.



With over 200 years of combined hardware and supply experience, the Sutton Industrial Hardware team, shown here at the company's service desk, takes great pride in serving its commercial and industrial customers.



1-877-814-6496 | 216-696-8340 | suttonhardware.com