

Harry Arnon

Sanford, Florida



Hernon Manufacturing, Inc.

Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Harry Arnon:

The American Dream is a national ethos of the United States that embodies the ideals of democracy, rights, liberty, opportunity and equality. For generations, immigrants have taken advantage of opportunities, worked hard and succeed, despite language barriers, culturally barriers and other obstacles foreign to non-immigrants. For Harry Arnon, co-founder and co-owner of Hernon Manufacturing, his version of the American Dream began in 1974 when he left Israel for the United States.

"When I got to Queens, NY, I had \$40 in my pocket," he said. "My brother, Joseph, came six to eight months later. We were looking for the type of opportunity you could only find in the US. In other countries, if someone has an expertise in something, they're more protective of that expertise. For experts in the US, it's a pleasure for them to show you how they did

it, what they learned and allow you to improve upon it. Collaboration is a big factor in helping to push a company or country ahead. We saw that with the United States and wanted to be part of it."

From 1974 to 1978, Arnon worked in general contracting, while Joseph, who holds a Master's Degree in Aeronautical Engineering, worked in the

Applied Science Department at New York University. While living in Israel, Arnon spent four years in the Israeli Air Force, after completing training and education at the Israeli version of The Air Force Academy.

He worked on the mechanical and repair side of things and grew accustomed to making modifications to fighter jets purchased from other countries. When Arnon heard about some of the technologies his brother was working on, he immediately thought of several solutions they could offer to manufacturers.

"The idea was born and we went to work in our basement," Arnon said.

"In the early days, we pretty much only focused on adhesives and sealants. I still remember our first customer. It was Hewitt-Robins Conveying Belt Company. We sold them high strength and high gap filling sealants that were used to help prevent vibration and loosening of components on conveyor belts. They bought a lot of product from us. I remember delivering it in the back of my car."

From 1978 to 1990, Arnon and his brother grew Herson Manufacturing from two to eighteen employees and exported their products to three countries. They manufactured custom industrial adhesives, sealants and automated adhesive application equipment solutions for a variety of industries including: Energy and Power Generation, Medical, Electronics, Electrical, LED, Automotive, Appliances, Sporting Goods, Ammunition,

Communications, Aerospace, Aviation, High Tech Audio, Defense, Fire Suppression, Transportation, Marine Manufacturing and more, all with products proudly made in the United States. HERNON Manufacturing, Inc.® is an ISO9001:2008, ITAR registered company whose products meet or exceed Mil-Specs. In 1990, they relocated to Sanford to take advantage of the close proximity to Latin America and the burgeoning high tech, space and defense sectors. Today, they have close to 80 employees, export to more than 67 countries and now include dispensing machines as part of their product offerings. They've become the world leader in Ammunition Sealant Technology, Automotive Oil - Seal and Shaft-Seal Technology and Automated Fluid Dispensing Systems and hold a number of patents.

About two and a half years ago, HERNON expanded their manufacturing facility by 160%. Today, they're running out of space again and look forward to moving into a new 100,000 SF facility in the near future. Growth was at 47% last year. HERNON expects to exceed that this year.

With all the success, it's hard to imagine a time when HERNON Manufacturing faced any serious obstacles, but as HERNON explained, there were several early challenges.

"Our biggest challenge early on was lack of money," he said. "We didn't have the money to be able to purchase the chemicals, mixing equipment, binding containers and everything else needed to manufacture our products. We just started small, slowly sold some products and reinvested the profits back into the company. A major obstacle we faced was when a defense contractor we worked with went bankrupt. They owed us a lot of money. That one hurt. We didn't take salaries for a while, but continued to press on and didn't give up. What

helped us was the mentality of management in US Manufacturing. Even though we were a small company at the time, when they realized we were developing a solution to one of their problems, they gave us a fair opportunity to prove ourselves."

Over the years, Herson Manufacturing has proved itself in a number of ways. The list of awards include 2018 Orlando Sentinel Top 100 Companies, 2018 State of Florida FAST 100 by the Orlando Business Journal, 2018 CEO of the Year by the Orlando Business Journal, 2018 Women Who Mean Business By the Orlando Business Journal, 2018 SMART Awards Finalist by the Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) Orlando, 2017 Perfect Quality & On Time Delivery Score from General Dynamics, 2016 Small Manufacturer of the Year by the Manufacturing Association of Central Florida (MACF), 2016 Top 100 Companies (To Work For) by the Orlando Sentinel and so much more.

When it comes to managing day-to-day operations, Arnon loves coming up with solutions to solve problems. To Arnon, coming up with an idea and implementing that idea to solve a problem is extremely rewarding. He's also great at giving advice and offers up some insightful words of wisdom for aspiring entrepreneurs.

"You can always start a business on the side while working your day job," he said. "Start learning and doing it on a small scale. Once you see that customers are interested in what you're doing and that you're generating some demand, then you can consider pursuing your idea full time. Once you go all in, there is one major key to success. You must be persistent. Don't let anything or anyone stop you. Expect to work long hours, but never give up. Those that give up is nature's way of filtering

out the ones that aren't committed. Once you gain some traction, think in terms of mutual benefit. Think of how you, your customers and your employees all win. Be sincere about that. If you are, customers will take notice and so will your employees. Once they see you're sincere, they will trust you. Once they trust you, everything will move forward much more productively."

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