

www.valin.com / Annual revenue: \$210 million / Headquarters: San Jose, Calif. / Employees: 290 / Specialty: Technical solutions / Joe Nettemeyer, President and CEO: "Our focus is on building a product portfolio that enhances our ability to automate processes."

# Expert Offerings

Valin established a vast presence with its array of solutions. **BY ERIC SLACK**

**F**ounded in San Jose, Calif., in 1974, Valin Corp. has become a leading technical solutions provider for the technology, energy, life sciences, natural resources and transportation industries. The company offers personalized order management, on-site field support, comprehensive training and applied expert engineering services utilizing automation, fluid management, precision measurement, process heating, filtration and fluid power products.

In its earliest days, Valin focused on fluid handling and developing products used in the manufacturing of semiconductor equipment and microchips. Over time, the company expanded its capabilities based on market and economic conditions.

"We started making acquisitions to build a portfolio that would allow us to become a process management company and transition to selling solutions and not just parts," President and CEO Joe Nettemeyer says. "We've been doing that for almost 14 years and now focus on being a process management provider offering many more value-added services."

Today, Valin is a privately held, employee-owned company that has grown into a top distributor of automation, filtration, fluid handling, fluid power,



Valin's largest markets are energy, oil and gas, semiconductor manufacturing and technology.

heating and process control products and systems for a diverse spectrum of high-purity and industrial applications. It represents brand-leading manufacturers and offers comprehensive solutions to the process markets.

"Technology will continue to bring strong growth as we become a more information-driven nation," Nettemeyer says. "Energy, oil and gas, semiconductor manufacturing and fabrication, and technology are our biggest markets. We are also in biotech, pharmaceutical and

power generation to some extent. We see water management as an emerging play, but still have to determine our role in that market."

To support growth, Valin listens closely to customers so it can build products that solve problems. This has helped it evolve from a product-focused company to a solutions- and outcomes-based business.

"We have maintained our position in the technology market and have built stronger ties to the OEMs," Nettemeyer

er says. “We do a lot of design/build projects, moving away from product peddling and providing service that maintains our relevance.”

In recent times, the company has been putting a great deal of emphasis on expanding its product and solution offerings. “We design and build a lot of our own products,” Nettemeyer says. “We’re developing solutions to improve separation at the wellhead and selling solutions such as turning separators into smart devices that increase measurement accuracy. We are moving from hard wire to wireless sensing on semiconductor tools. We’re integrating safety systems and robotics, and we’ve done networking on wind power fields to better monitor performance of wind turbines.”

In addition, Valin is designing a plant that manufactures silicon material used in solar cells. It is engaged in many engineering initiatives, and it is also providing more after-sale service agreements. This helps the company escape the trap of being simply a product-based commodity supplier.

## CONTINUED INVESTMENT

Acquisitions and internal investments remain important considerations for Valin. “Our focus is on building a product portfolio that enhances our ability to automate processes,” Nettemeyer says. “We can still acquire traditional product distributors to help increase our presence in strategic markets, but we are also bringing in service businesses and adding education services, as well as adding field testing and engineering services. We need to be thought leaders and problem solvers to stay top of mind with customers.”

Valin’s more recent acquisitions have been the addition of E&M Sales and The Valve Shop. In July 2014, Valin announced that it had acquired Heat Tracing Specialties West (dba E&M Sales) in Littleton, Colo. Founded in 1952, E&M Sales specialized in custom-designed and built heat-control panels, turnkey heat trace and snow melt systems, custom and value-added electrical enclosures, and heat process and control application assistance. The acquisition expanded Valin’s process heating portfolio and extended its reach into Colorado.

The acquisition of the Valve Shop came about in October 2013. The Valve Shop specialized in on-off and flow-control valve solutions. The acquisition added a factory-authorized valve automation center to Valin’s offerings.

In addition, Valin is making major investments in upgrading its e-business platform, as it is becoming the company’s primary communication tool. “We need to provide thought leadership on our website and sponsor education initiatives for the wholesale and distribution industry,” Nettemeyer says.

Valin’s efforts have certainly not gone unnoticed. In the last year, it has been ranked 44th on *Industrial Distribution’s* Big 50 List and named to the *Inc. 500|5000* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies. It also made *Modern Distribution Management’s* 2014 Top 40 List, and *Silicon Valley Business Journal’s* Fastest Growing Private Companies list. Valin was also featured on an episode of Innovations, hosted by Ed Begley Jr. on the Discovery Channel.

“We continue to invest in businesses and technologies that we believe in,” Nettemeyer says. “We’re proud to continue to supply our customers with the very best solutions across many industries.”

As Valin looks toward the future, it will continue to look for ways to change along with its customer base. “We push ourselves to disrupt ourselves, embracing change,” Nettemeyer says. “We’re investing heavily in technology and employee training, and we’re using big data to make better decisions about how to invest and deploy our resources.

“We put six percent of income into our ESOP so we can support the long-term well-being of employees,” he adds. “We have embraced innovation, and our people are making a difference for us.” □



## We've got you covered

You're not just building highways or factories. You're building the future. Metso understands the importance of that kind of confidence, so whether you need machinery, technology or premium processes, we'll be there for you. You can be confident in Metso.

[www.metso.com](http://www.metso.com)

