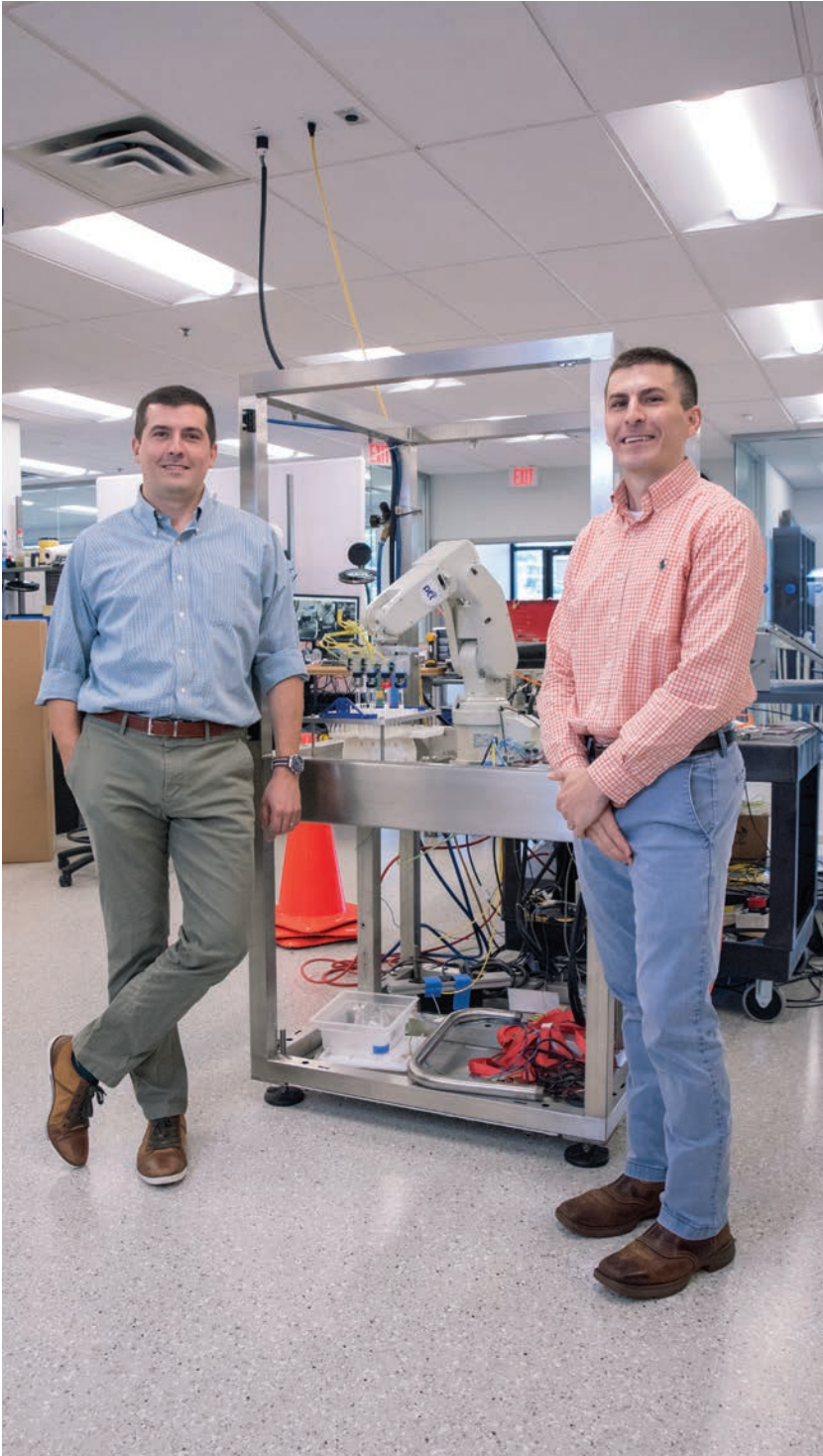


COMPANY PROFILE

PTI (PACKAGING TECHNOLOGIES & INSPECTION) | BY TAYLOR DOWD

PASSIONATE ABOUT QUALITY



Brothers Oliver and Julian Stauffer are senior executives at their family-owned business, PTI (Packaging Technologies & Inspection). As they have taken complete control of the company and grown in their respective professional journeys, Oliver and Julian have found some of their greatest success comes simply from following the company's values.

On the walls of PTI's Westchester headquarters hangs a board with these five core values, which have become a symbol of what the company strives to be, a reminder for its workforce and leaders: communicate, do what you say you will do, sound engineering through good science, be passionate about quality, care for others. Those values drive every decision we make," says Oliver,

The company manufactures test equipment for high risk package testing. Its equipment goes to a production facility or laboratory where non-destructive testing is performed on container closure systems to determine the integrity of the product. PTI is also the North American agent for Waldner, the packaging systems distribution division. A separate entity, Waldner manufactures equipment in Germany and distributes it in the U.S.

PTI services clients in the food and pharmaceutical industries. Benchtop test equipment goes into a laboratory where production line operators test the products to ensure they meet the acceptable standards. PTI has five core technologies: pressure decay, vacuum decay, airborne ultrasound, force decay and high voltage leak detection. In packaging laboratories, this method of testing also aids in advancing the development and design process.

Since its inception PTI has worked to create patented sensory technologies, which have evolved from benchtop systems to inline automated inspection solutions that companies can install into production lines for product inspection.

Today, daily operations at PTI are primarily focused on R&D, marketing, sales and test equipment assembly. Mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, programmers and sensory development scientists work in the 14,500 sq. ft. facility on both the manufacturing and assembly sides of the business. There are three CNC machines and other precision manufacturing equipment on site.

How It All Started

Tony is the founder of PTI and Oliver and Julian's father. An engineer at heart, Tony began the company in Tuckahoe, NY in 1985 with Heinz Wolf, who has been with the company ever since, and Lisa Wray, a bookkeeper. Initially, the business focused on importing Swiss-made inspection equipment and manufacturing high precision equipment. Packaging eventually became the core focus, as the company solely distributed equipment from Europe.

In the early '90s, Tony moved the business to a larger facility and began manufacturing inline container testing systems, which it manufactured and distributed directly. They continued distributing leak testing systems through the late '90s, when they began designing their own leak testing technology. The company manufactured and sold leak detection systems. Waldner filling and sealing equipment



PTI's Think Tank where engineers can quietly work on all types of challenges.

began to take off, as its product line became the primary product being distributed.

In 2000, the Waldner packaging division became an integral partner with PTI, as the inspection processes continued to grow. It became the focal point of the business and generated a majority of company profits. The inspection side was still largely undeveloped until Tony began developing new technologies. Today, the inspection team at PTI has 55 employees. Inspection technologies are what Julian calls the "heart and soul of our company."

The CEO

Oliver studied environmental science as an undergrad and completed a summer internship with PTI. His background in science allowed him to implement more scientific-based principles in an otherwise engineering-focused business. He is not an engineer by trade; he learned everything from his dad. After taking a sabbatical following graduation, he returned home and joined the company in 2005, beginning in R&D.

Failure has played a massive role in Oliver's professional growth. In 2008, he developed a patented sensory technology; however, the project ultimately failed. Oliver explains the failure was a challenge, but more importantly a learning experience. He learned the importance of developing fail-safe technologies, providing superior client support, and what it takes to create a successful business. "Never lose a good opportunity to learn from your mistakes and be resilient in your response", says Oliver. He attended business school afterwards before continuing his work at PTI.



The COO

Prior to Julian's employment at PTI, he worked as an industrial engineer for a Stanley Black & Decker manufacturing plant in Texas. He took a sabbatical in Central America with plans to stay for at least a year. When he received a call from his dad encouraging him to consider the future of PTI, Julian made the decision to return home after six months to try out the family business. Satisfied with his experience in the corporate world, Julian joined PTI in 2010.

He began as a service engineer, then advanced to working on and selling products to major food companies across the U.S. Julian took leadership and development courses and became involved with the packaging technology side of the business. His contributions to several major projects from start to finish kick started fast rising success at the company.

Working with Family

Working for a family company means being entrusted with responsibilities in a safe environment. Reaching success becomes more possible with the help of accessible coaching and learning directly on the job. Julian and Oliver were able to learn firsthand about business from real industry exposure.

They are humored by their father's repetitive advice, and they acknowledge that the habit has instilled important information from him. "We went into meetings where he's drilled the same points again and again. It engrained certain values, certain principles, certain mentalities into us," Julian says.

At 38 and 34 years old, Oliver and Julian still receive advice from their dad frequently. Even as leaders of the business, they respect their dad's wisdom and welcome his guidance. "I have to



Longtime employee and manufacturing team leader Bobby Sigauke programs an HMI for a PTI system.

recognize that one day my dad will not be there. I will not have the benefit of hearing his voice say those things. That has me appreciate and take the time to listen to him on those 7:00am phone calls," Oliver says.

They recognize the dynamic of working for family and the opportunities that come along with it. "You're handed the keys to the vehicle far earlier than you should be handed those keys. And, you learn pretty quickly how to drive that car. We've been given a high level of trust but given the coaching along the way," Oliver says. Still, they wanted to maximize their own potential for growth and success. "We didn't want to be the children who were handed

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the keys to the car. We wanted to earn them.”

Both Oliver and Julian recognize how impactful their father’s relationship has been on their lives – not just professionally, but personally. Today, Tony is removed from daily operations at the business but fulfills his position as chairman of the board. He owns an affiliate operation in Europe and has since become a customer of PTI by distributing its equipment.

Part of PTI’s success comes from striking a balance between old and new leadership. While Tony is in a different role than when he started the business, he remains a special part of the company, not just for his insight as a businessman, but as a mentor and father. Oliver hopes to “capture his voice and always have it there.” He explains part of the leadership transition is to “honor the past, be really clear about the present, and map out the future.”

The Workforce

PTI hires people from all over the world. Its workforce is composed of employees from China, India, Russia, Africa and Europe, to name just a few places. Some employees are not U.S. citizens, so the company sponsors their visas. Because Tony and Heinz both came to America on visas, Oliver and Julian recognize the importance of supporting those on that same journey. “We want to take care of people. We want to give people the opportunity to succeed,” Julian says.

The company has employees over the age of 70. A significant portion of its workforce is under age 30 or over 50. The diversity in experience within the organization makes mentorship between the generations a key driver of success. Diverse backgrounds and various perspectives help build the company and allow different ideas and mindsets to join together to help reach decisions. Providing

a collaborative work environment is part of their leadership responsibility, Oliver explains. “Julian and I have worked very hard to develop the culture we feel will create success for this company.” PTI looks for dedicated team members with strong work ethic and commitment to quality. “We have a strong appreciation for intelligence and attitude,” Julian says.



Navigating COVID-19

PTI has not seen a shift in its standard growth path since the pandemic began, and has managed to maintain its success. The company has retained its workforce and even brought on several new employees since. Oliver explains the team has been agile and remained dedicated during COVID-19. “We never stopped. We never skipped a beat. We continued to put faith in the workforce. The goal here is not profit. It’s to get to the end of the year as one team.” Management phone calls, webinars, and an online presence have helped normalize company operations. Some employees were able to take equipment home to assemble pieces in their garages, workshops, and basements. PTI assembled part kits that allowed employees to assemble leak testers for client deliveries from the comfort of their homes.

Looking Ahead

PTI does not look to expand into a wide breadth of markets; however, the company intends to improve by developing new systems and automating its technologies. It is focused on the field of robotics and is currently building a large automated system for syringe leak detection. PTI hopes to optimize its physical space by expanding the R&D area and assembly floor. As the organization grows, making more space for the manufacturing and assembly areas will ensure there is room for all operations. Moving towards automation means the need for more warehouse space and potentially relocating.

Julian will be stepping down as COO. He acknowledges the success of the company and the leadership of its employees play a major role in his decision. “[Oliver] can handle the company just as our dad did. We’re growing so much as a company and having other people step up. It says a lot about what we’ve done,” he says.

In 2020, both executives have achieved success with the state of their family business and are content with its progression. Ultimately, they agree that sticking to their core values is essential for leading their company. “If you deviate from those values, you’re no longer playing the game you set out to play,” Oliver says. When it comes to making the most difficult decisions, adhering to them ensures all choices are in the company’s best interest. As PTI expands, the values will remain fundamental to growing and changing the future of the business.

Taylor Dowd is journalism graduate of SUNY New Paltz. She is now a freelance writer living in Fishkill, NY.

