

# MRC Global: The valve and actuation experts



*It is no secret that MRC Global is the largest pipe, valve and fitting (PVF) distributor in the world based on sales. With a rich history of excellent customer service that dates back to 1921, MRC Global is a forerunner in the PVF distribution industry and continues to support customers around the globe with a business model that is driven by delivering quality products and services. In the last decade, the company has been focusing on a very specific portion of this business model – valves and valve automation. In fact, MRC Global has quietly become the largest valve distributor in the world.*

*Valve World met with John Bowhay, Senior VP – Supply Chain Management & Valves, Stuart Spears, VP – Valves, Automation & Instrumentation, Lance Lorange, Executive Director Supply Chain Management Valves & Automation, Greg Peterson, Executive Director - Midstream/Upstream Valves & Actuation and Ralph Chaney, Senior Director – Downstream Valves & Automation, to discuss the company's focus on engineered products and solutions. Altogether, the gentlemen sitting around the conference room table represented 165 years of valve and valve actuation experience.*

*By Sarah Bradley*

## **Engineered solutions experts**

On February 15, 2016, MRC Global celebrated its 95<sup>th</sup> year in business. The company is well known as a reliable one stop shop for all things PVF. What has gone unnoticed by many is the company's steady focus on creating a world-class, global valve and valve automation offering.

"We are a valve company," says Mr. Bowhay. "We offer total valve management to our customers. We can supply manual and actuated valves and control systems, do the design, manage projects, turnarounds and store stocking – the whole thing. Valves and valve actuation are engineered products and

we specialize in engineering the right solutions for our customers." The company employs more than 200 engineers worldwide, and has a strong global network of valve automation centers. "One benefit of being the largest in the industry is that we work with more end users in more applications than anyone



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else," Mr. Peterson explains. "We are always looking for the latest industry trends when it comes to valves and valve automation, which puts us at the cutting edge of valve technology. Our technical engineers have the expertise and the resources to work with our customers to identify and resolve even the most complex challenges."

The group points to this technical expertise and depth and breadth of valve and valve automation products as keys to their ability to create total valve solutions for their customers. "We offer engineered solutions that solve our customers' issues," Mr. Bowhay tells us. "Our brand offering is multi-layered and not restricted to one type of valve or control solution; therefore, we can mix and match from a wide range of products to create the best package for the application."

### Depth and breadth of product offering

In 2014, the company stocked \$315 million in valve and valve automation products globally, including sizes from ¼" to 36" and pressure classes from 150# to 3,000-6,000# in carbon steel, stainless steel, chrome, bronze, ductile iron, cast iron and exotic materials like duplex, monel, hastalloy, etc. When you add to that a practically limitless offering through their world-class suppliers, the company's strength in valves and valve automation begins to shine through. Mr. Chaney goes into more detail. "We stock valves from as simple as a ½", carbon steel gate or globe valve to as complex as a C12 coker isolation or FCCU isolation valves, HF Alkylation, emergency shut-off situations, high cycle, high pressure—whatever the specific application calls for, we have the technical expertise and inventory to design the right solution."

Whilst the depth and breadth of available inventory is impressive, perhaps even more impressive is the company's ability to keep its product offering in line with the ever changing needs of the marketplace. "We tailor our inventory to match the market," explains Mr. Peterson. "So as the market moves from dry gas to oil then to liquids, our inventory evolves to meet the demands of our customers across all three streams."

A trusted manufacturing base is another key to MRC Global's success. The team repeatedly credited the company's ability to design the most cost-effective valve or automation package for an application to their long-standing relationships with world-class suppliers.

"Not all manufacturers are experts at producing every type, style, pressure class or material of valve," says Mr. Bowhay. "We utilize our understanding of the customers'



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## MRC Global offers services at our valve actuation centers including:

ISO certification	On-site engineering support
Full time field service technicians	Project management and quotation services
Repair and maintenance parts/kits in stock	MRO quotation services
Engineering services	Logistics
PMI capabilities	Training
Services offered thru on-site contractor	Broad vendor supply base
Dedicated valve and automation sales professionals	Automation packages
	Site surveys of equipment

## Valve Automation Centers

### AUSTRALIA

Adelaide  
70 Grand Junction Road  
Kilburn, SA 5084  
+61 8 8304 7510

### BELGIUM

Antwerp  
Vaartkaai 50  
Antwerp, Belgium 2170  
+32 2 482 01 50

### CANADA

Edmonton  
502 - 25<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Nisku, AB T9E 0K6  
+1 780 979 0233

### FRANCE

Oissel  
Boulevard Dambourney  
ZI de la Poudrierie  
BP 38 76350  
Oissel, France  
+33 2 32 9129 29

### FINLAND

Helsinki (Vantaa)  
Viinikankaari 7  
01530 Vantaa, Finland  
+358 10 8307500

### NETHERLANDS

Rotterdam  
Spectrumlaan 7-9  
2665 NM Bleiswijk  
+31 365 387387

### NEW ZEALAND

Auckland  
Unit 4A & 4B George  
Bourke Dr,  
Mt Wellington  
Auckland, New Zealand  
1060  
+64 9 276 4149

### Christchurch

40 Byron St, Sydenham  
Christchurch, New Zealand  
8023  
+64 3 379 5461

### NORWAY

Nyborg  
Langarinden 16  
5132 Nyborg, Norway  
+47 815 52 894

### Stavanger

Kanalarmen 12  
P.O. Box 146  
4065 Stavanger, Norway  
+47 51 95 94 00

### Tananger

Energiveien 20  
4056 Tananger, Norway  
+47 55 39 15 00

### SINGAPORE

Singapore  
16 Sungei Kadut Ave  
Singapore 729652  
+65 6865 1020

### UNITED KINGDOM

Bradford  
Riverside Dr,  
Hunsworth Ln  
Bradford, England (UK)  
BD19 4DH  
+44 1274 700 000

### Seaham

Unit 7-10 Spectrum  
Business Park  
Blair Way, Seaham  
Sunderland, England (UK)  
SR7 7PP  
+44 1915 022 700

### UNITED STATES

Augusta  
519 Laney Walker Blvd  
Augusta, GA 30901  
+1 706 724 7666

### Bakersfield

3000 Pegasus Dr  
Bakersfield, CA 93308  
+1 661 393 3033

### Baton Rouge

1050 Commercial Dr  
Port Allen, LA 70767  
+1 225 388 9542

### Benicia

3110 Bayshore Rd  
Benicia, CA 94510  
+1 707 746 6960

### Carson

1555 East Del Amo Blvd  
Carson, CA 90746  
+1 310 605 5392

### Cheyenne

2852 Christensen Rd  
Cheyenne, WY 82007  
+1 307 996 4100

### Cincinnati

7275 Edington Dr  
Cincinnati, OH 45249  
+1 513 489 6922

### Houston

2333 Clinton Dr  
Galena Park, TX 77547  
+1 713 577 3000

### Munster

101 45<sup>th</sup> Ave Unit 1  
Munster, IN 46321  
+1 708 225 3120

### Nitro

4 McJunkin Rd  
Nitro, WV 25143  
+1 304 759 3000

### North Salt Lake

485 North 400 West  
North Salt Lake,  
UT 84054  
+1 801 298 4605

### Odessa

2501 East IH 20  
Odessa, TX 79766  
+1 432 333 6304

### Pittsburgh

1100 Maronda Way  
Monessen, PA 15062  
+1 724 684 4013

### Tulsa

11605 East 27<sup>th</sup> St North,  
Suite D  
Tulsa, OK 74116  
+1 918 234 2200



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unique needs along with the knowledge of each manufacturer to maximize their strengths on specific products. This provides the customer with the product they require, provided by the best available manufacturer for that product."

"We take a lot of pride in the quality of the products we offer," adds Mr. Lorance.

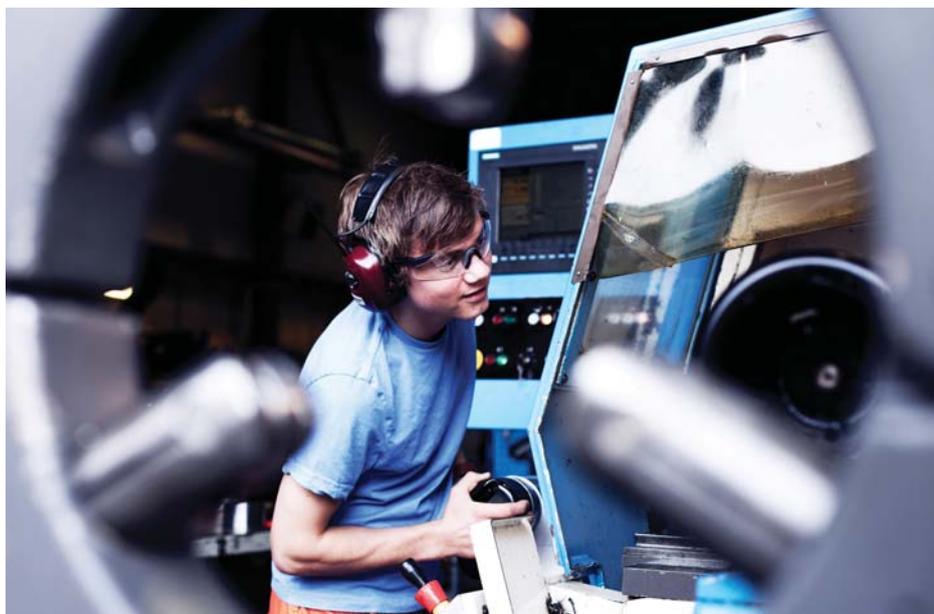
"We are committed to selling products that will work for the long haul. A lot of our end users are the owners and the operators, so we want to sell them equipment that is going to last."

MRC Global's commitment to quality products is no surprise. Their supplier registration process is well respected throughout the industry. Product testing, supplier registration and multiple on-site manufacturer inspections are some of the requirements a supplier must meet in order to be included on MRC Global's Approved Manufacturers List. By taking the time to identify a manufacturer's sweet spot and understand their production process from beginning to end, MRC Global is able to supply products that provide the "best value" and consistently meet their customers' specifications.

## Turnaround and project management expertise

MRC Global is especially well suited to support capital project or turnaround activity. With approximately 300 service locations globally, including 28 valve automation centers, the company's geographic footprint is strategically aligned with their customers' operations. This close proximity allows for quicker delivery times and continuous project support.

"What makes us unique is our ability to support the global nature of projects," Mr. Spears tells us. "A project may be located in the US, but the engineering is being done in Europe, the modules are being built in Asia and the construction is onsite. We are a valve and valve automation distribution company with the global capabilities to support a



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project through Pre FEED, FEED, execution and start up. That, when combined with our technical expertise, really sets us apart from our competition.”

Support throughout the life cycle of a project is an important benefit the MRC Global valve team can offer. Getting involved from the beginning, however, is just as critical.

“If we can get involved early in the planning process for turnarounds specifically, we can create some real value for our customers,” downstream expert, Mr. Chaney, says.

“Not only can we help them choose the right valve or automation package for their application, but we can also help them avoid misapplication of a product, which can be equally as important.”

In the midstream sector, Mr. Peterson says that using the right product in the right application is especially critical. “Our customers are bringing the newfound production in North America to market, which requires pipeline infrastructure that still doesn’t exist in many of the shale plays, so they continue to build the pipelines to bring the gas, oil and liquids to market. Our inventory position and our relationship with quality, traditional manufacturers make us the ideal valve supplier for them. We have relationships with those manufacturers and inventory their products in locations near our customers’ operations.”

A strong focus on the correct product application is particularly important in the busy North American gas utilities sector. According to Mr. Peterson, these customers often have an even higher expectation for the products they use in the many

pipelines that connect communities and neighborhoods. These customers regularly rely on MRC Global’s expertise and quality process to find the right valve and valve automation solution for their needs. This year, MRC Global was invited by a customer to go to the engineering firm of a floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) project and help select the specifications for the valve and valve automation products that would be used on the project. Getting MRC Global experts involved early in the process helped the project move ahead on schedule, with the right products in the right applications for the best value.

The team proved their worth yet again when they stepped in on behalf of their customer to select and source all of the cryogenic valves, large diameter stainless steel trunnion ball valves and cryogenic trunnion ball valves for a cryogenic gas plant in the US. By assuming that role, the design process of the project moved along much quicker than if the end user had engaged a traditional engineering firm.



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## PVF & A

Whilst well known for their service levels, geographic footprint and supplier qualification process, MRC Global is already a key player on the global valve and valve automation stage. Valves and valve automation are the largest product commodities for the company, representing 38% of their revenue as of June 30, 2016.

“We have the expertise to design valve and automation packages for our customers’ most complex needs,” says Mr. Bowhay. “Valves, actuation and controls are a specialty, no doubt about it, and we have the people who are experts at it. We have such a strong heritage for pipe and other products with our company that some people don’t often see us as that specialty valve and valve actuation company, but we are more than they think we are.”

In this economic cycle, when creating value is more important than ever, it is that specialized expertise that will continue to serve the company, and its customers, well.

## MRC Global at a glance

<b>Company Name:</b>	MRC Global Inc.
<b>President &amp; CEO:</b>	Andrew Lane
<b>Year Established:</b>	1921
<b>Number of Employees:</b>	~ 3,600
<b>Number of Engineers on Staff:</b>	200+
<b>Locations:</b>	~ 300 service locations
<b>Products &amp; Services:</b>	Pipe, Valve, Fittings & Automation
<b>Industry Markets:</b>	Energy and Industrial markets
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.mrcglobal.com">www.mrcglobal.com</a>