

Spotlight: AP Tech

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AP Tech is a manufacturer of gas-handling components built exclusively for the semiconductor industry. The product mix ranges from pressure regulators, to valves and to a variety of flow devices designed and manufactured for ultra high-purity service. The company has grown in its ten-year history to become a recognized leader in specialty and bulk gas delivery products worldwide.

Aside from regulators and valves, Air Liquide has used AP Tech's flow sensors, and is currently evaluating their check valve and vacuum generator.

Air Liquide and AP Tech have been working together since AP Tech's founding a decade ago. The relationship has grown over the years to become more than a typical supplier and customer arms-length scenario, to more of a partnership. Many years ago, the question was asked as to how we might work together better as a team. Management, engineering and purchasing from both companies met and open discussions ensued. The net result was better communication and understanding which lead to product design enhancements, lower cost and better product availability. AP Tech was able to achieve manufacturing efficiencies and response time improvements through planning. Air Liquide benefited by improved service levels and cost reduction.

“I've never seen a company that goes so far to give good customer service...”

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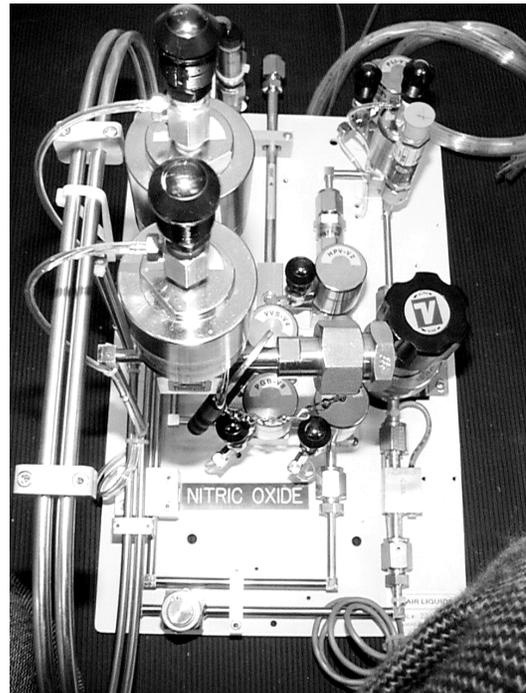
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Moving On Up

↑ Rene Zakhour started AP Tech at a small shop in Marin County ten years ago.

↑ Approximately five years ago, AP Tech occupied an attractive, larger building in Napa.

↑ On December 1st, 1997, the company moved into their beautiful, custom-built structure, also in Napa. Approximately twice the size of their previous location, the building has double the production capacity. The ten-acre site allows for future expansion that could again double production capacity. Among other things, the palace includes a wine cellar and Koi pond with a waterfall.



Air Liquide Panel, featuring AP 1510 regulator, AP Tech valve and block. AP Tech can port components to Air Liquide specifications.

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AP Tech, cont'd

"I've never seen a company that goes so far to give good customer service", says ETG Production Manager, Ron Bush. AP Tech provides:

- Speedy turn-around
- Competitive pricing
- Custom stocking
- Engineering Support

Turn-around: Compared to other major suppliers who typically deliver within eight-to-ten weeks, AP Tech tends to ship within *two* weeks, and sometimes even in 2-3 *days*. They have also been known to drive over parts from Napa.

Pricing: AP Tech has made several major cost reductions and with discounts, normally prices items 10-15% lower than competitors.

Stocking: When Ron Bush provides AP Tech with an annual production forecast, they will stock as much as \$500,000 in new parts, just for Air Liquide.

Engineering Support: ETG can call with pressure and flow specifications, and AP Tech will produce drawings and recommendations for potential new components. A new product, custom-designed for Air Liquide, normally becomes available every 12-18 months.

The process continues today with further strides forward, and a global approach to increasing our collective market share.

AP Tech recently developed their electronic product catalog, allowing the user to view each regulator, valve and flow device cut sheet. By clicking on any brochure icon, the literature opens to view all pages.

In addition, by opening the Regulator Selection Guide icon, the user can select a gas, then an application. Recommended regulators along with their flow ranges instantly appear.

There is a Flow Switch Selection Guide as well, under the Flow Device tab, enabling selection of gas, pressure and switch size to produce a Flow Trip Point (measured in Standard Liters-Per-Minute).

Finally, there are three animations under the Flow Device tab:

- Check Valve—effects of forward and back pressure on flow
- Vacuum Generator—effect of pneumatic pressure to create vacuum
- Flow Switch—high and low-flow animations to show opening and closing of reed switch.

AP Tech Product Catalog, 1998, available on CD ROM.