

# HM Profile

Rob Gherman

## Excel Hobby Blades Corporation

**Rob Gherman visits with Mike Hammam and shares his American success story.**

The creation of the Excel Hobby Blades Corporation began when Mike Hammam first set foot on U.S. soil in 1973. Coming to America certainly wasn't an easy task for him, but after visiting with Mike and touring his facilities last December, I am very proud to tell America's retailers about the personal integrity and accomplishments of Mr. Mike Hammam.

Mike's family was very poor. He was born in Lebanon, the seventh child of nine. He came to America with a dream, but no money to see it through. Mike went to work at a screw factory in New York, learning the trade for no pay beyond meals and a roof over his head. His employer saw that Mike possessed an extraordinary work ethic. In fact, he worked so hard that his employer sent him to Brown & Sharpe in Rhode Island for a professional machining education. Mike was later made foreman and eventually a partner in the firm.



Today, Excel is more than just hobby blades. The company produces more than 500 quality SKU's.



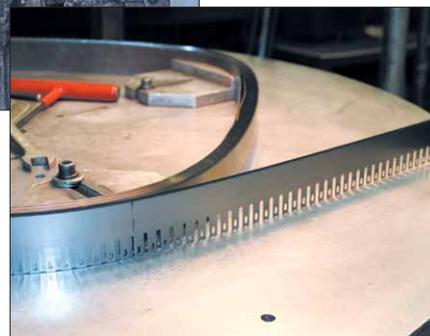
Excel Hobby Blades' Mike Hammam (seated), with Henry Hammad, Hany Hammam and Alan Iwig.

From 1975 to 1978, Mike Hammam manufactured hand tools for the company known as Expo. The Expo name was eventually changed to PO Instrument Company. Later, the company changed its name and location to Proedge of Paterson, New Jersey. Mike was a partner, designer, engineer and foreman to Proedge, and the company's growth to 80 workers necessitated



another relocation, this time to Vernon, New Jersey. Time passed, and in 1989, Mike Hammam left Proedge and established Excel Hobby

Tools cover every inch of floor space in the Excel Hobby Blades 20,000-square-foot manufacturing facility. Here, you see a strip of #11 hobby blades in the midst of production — American tools, made in America.



Blade Corporation in Little Ferry, New Jersey. Excel's first tools — and still their most popular items — were the #1 Hobby Knife (#16001) and #11 Hobby Blade (#20011). Mike recalls that his first business investment was the purchase of a simple table and chair for \$25. They are always nearby, and keep him "grounded."

Mike's first opportunity for business growth came when he exhibited at a trade show at the Javits Center in New York City and came away with \$27,000 in sales. This success certainly helped to establish Excel Hobby Blades as a viable company in the face of stiff competition. With a longstanding industry giant and a former partner as obstacles, it's a remarkable accomplishment that Excel Hobby Blades has grown to be one of the largest hobby tool manufacturers in the world.



Alan Iwig and Hany Hammam lend a hand in the production area. At right, this newspaper scrap makes it easy to see that this run of Excel #11 Blades now has its razor edges. Next steps are separation and packaging.

I asked Mike where the Excel name came from. He smiled and replied, “*Excellent!* That’s what I’ve always strived for in life — excellence. I’m grateful to be an American and grateful to America for the opportunity.”

Although Mike is the sole owner of Excel Hobby Blades, he views his customers as partners for life. His work ethic, commitment to quality and his relentless dedication have elevated Mike’s company and his “partners” to the status of a 500-item operation with 40 employees. Excel now ships to 75 countries and occupies an all-new 20,000 square foot plant in Paterson, New Jersey.

One of Mike Hammam’s crowning achievements came in June of 2004, when he purchased Proedge, the business, owned by his former partner, that Mike had walked away from 15 years earlier. Following the acquisition, Mike incorporated the Proedge customer base and product line into the Excel fold. Since then, Excel has acquired another 16,000 square feet of space to accommodate the demand for their product lines.

the people he has had the good fortune to employ. When I first entered the facility, I saw Mike working at his own machinery, side-by-side with his factory workers. Mike knows how to operate every machine in the plant, and he is proud to say that each of his products is made here in America by American workers.



Lucy and Tamara (top). Toshana and Ann (seated).



The Excel logo looks good, but Mike Hammam and Excel

Hobby Blades can create private label packaging for any size hobby business. Excel packs five extra #11 hobby blades in their current 100-piece bulk packs.

Excel is an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to more than 100 private companies. Whether yours is a large or small business, Excel can “private label” for you — stamp your name on their products with just a \$1000 minimum order.

Excel’s solid success has not changed the genuine kindness and integrity of Mike Hammam. Mike states that most of the company’s recent growth has been due to

Mike states, “I owe a lot to Alan Iwig, our national sales manager. Alan joined Excel from California Hobby Distributors in 1995. Alan’s dedication, honesty and integrity are well known throughout the industries Excel serves.” Henry Hammad, general manager of Proedge, also adds his good nature and product knowledge to the team. Recently, Mike’s son Hany, a graduate of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, joined the company. Hany brings the newest production technologies to Excel, as well as his personal creative talents.

The story of Excel Hobby Blades is a true American success story, a story of hard work, dedication, customer loyalty, genuine quality service, superior and reasonably priced products, that will continue for generations. **HM**

**Excel Hobby Blades Corporation and Pro-Edge**  
**481 Getty Ave., Paterson NJ 07503. V: 800-228-4344**  
**F: 973-278-4343 West Coast: 800-845-2770**  
**W: www.exceltools.net E: excelhobbyblades@aol.com**  
**W: www.proedgetools.com E: proedge@proedgetools.com**  
**V: 800-251-6114**