



The **A-TEAM**



BARNUM
MECHANICAL INC





Written by William Young

Headquartered in California, Barnum Mechanical Inc. provides sanitary process and utility piping design-build services to a diverse clientele across the U.S. Now well into its fifth decade of business, Barnum is growing rapidly. Director of Business Development Andy Hooper says that the ongoing success of the business is directly correlated to the growth and success of the industries it serves, from food and beverage (F&B), to alternative proteins, water and wastewater treatment. ▶▶



Jordan Schiess
Project Manager

Andy Hooper
Director of Business Development

▶ Thankfully, in the 18 months since we last spoke, these sectors have seen both material growth and recovery, which is translating into growth for Barnum, with sales increasing 155 percent over the prior 12 months.

Hooper explains that sectors like the beverage space are generally growing but not in the same areas that they may have been before COVID; for example, beer and wine were growth areas prior to 2020 whereas now, there is growth in non-alcoholic drinks such as kombucha. There is also growth in areas such as cultivated meats and cheeses, as well as foods made from vegetable proteins. It is a booming time for Barnum Mechanical as it looks to meet the needs of these clients.

Although well-known for installing and designing sanitary systems, Barnum has much more to offer. “We offer sanitary process and utility piping installation, design-engineering services, project management, controls automation, and full design-build services for turnkey facilities, including greenfield and brownfield upgrades to existing facilities,” Project Manager Jordan Schiess says.

While the Barnum team has always specialized in the food and beverage process, they are also involved in cutting-edge technologies in specialized areas such as fruit extraction and cell-based products, and generally go wherever the market is headed. “There’s not a product in the food and beverage industry we say no to,” Schiess says, and through the processing of fruits, vegetables, snack foods, beer, and wine, Barnum has played a part in innumerable food products you see in your grocery store.

Specialty companies, such as Plantible Foods, come to Barnum with a laboratory-scale concept that they want support to scale up to commercial size. “We take these niche or novel ideas,” Hooper says, “and help scale them to commercial viability.” Barnum also ventures out of F&B and has successfully implemented projects in state-of-the-art solid waste utilization and the geothermal industry.

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Barnum’s sustainability practices have become important to its market identity. Sustainable contracting is part of what the company delivers to its clients, along with sustainable solutions to the facilities it designs and builds.

Barnum’s reputation for environmental efficiency and sustainability is a driving factor for many customers. “Customers also seek us out specifically because we are able to help their bottom line with our automated controls services,” says Hooper.

Barnum works hard to provide its customers a facility which will ultimately reduce operating and maintenance costs over time. Hooper believes it has always been common sense in business practice to do this, but has now evolved into an environmentally conscious practice, which customers are leveraging for a market benefit. Schiess adds that sustainability ties in with plant safety, and is always part of safety best practices.

Barnum is currently focused on building up its workforce, and is actively hiring project managers, engineers, and welders as quickly as possible to keep up with the F&B boom. Planning is continuing well into 2025, with new research and development coming out that needs to be scaled, such as alternative proteins and waste water management. Hooper affirms that the industry is very busy right now—"a good problem to have."

Hooper explains that Barnum has been spending decades putting down deep roots in very specific industries like wineries, breweries, distilleries, edible oils, and snack foods primarily around the West Coast, but has established its presence throughout the United States and into Puerto Rico. "We will continue to grow and support these industries," Hooper says, but he acknowledges that growth may also lie elsewhere as new opportunities present themselves.

Schiess sees a lot of potential in the newer segments of the market. Keeping up with industry changes may not always be easy, but the company is always ready for a challenge when it comes to what is next. "We like diving into new challenges and engineering new solutions for our customers," Schiess says.

"We've been like 'The A-Team,'" Hooper explains, alluding to the '80s television show. "We're really good at what we do."

Find out more at barnummechanical.com. ■

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