

OPTO 22

OptoBlog

Opto 22 celebrates 50 years!

Posted by **Mark Engman** on Apr 3, 2024 7:42:01 AM

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You can count on high-quality Opto products and continued support for all your automation and IIoT applications.

I have a hard time believing it's been **50 years** since my dad and mom started Opto 22. My dad, Bob Engman, was an engineer who helped develop a better way to manufacture solid state relays.

SSRs had just been invented in the early 1970s, and the improvement was to pot SSRs with epoxy to protect the electronics from shock, vibration, and environmental contaminants. When Opto 22 began in 1974, our first products were, you guessed it, twenty-two SSR models manufactured by the new method.



It's all about quality

Dad was always **focused on quality**. He made sure every single SSR we built was tested—twice—to make sure it would function to specs once you installed it in the field. That dedication to quality is still a hallmark of the company. That's why we don't do batch testing. We still double-test every single SSR and I/O module in manufacture.

That's also one of the reasons our factory is not overseas, but attached to our **company headquarters** in California. It's easy for our engineers and factory team to work closely together to design and build products that are high quality. That's why we can afford to **guarantee our SSRs and I/O modules for life**. And you've told us how much you appreciate that.

50 years' worth of change

Industrial automation is a complex field that's changed over and over again during the last five decades. Just think: when we started, the personal computer had barely been invented and factories were just beginning to automate production lines. As a manufacturer of automation equipment, we've had to look forward and adjust again and again to new technologies, new bus standards, new protocols, new communication methods—and new competitors in our field.

So it's pretty exciting to say we're still here, 50 years later, **still supporting your legacy products** and building new products that meet your needs today—needs no one could have imagined when we began.

It's our people who got us here

I believe the main reason the company has been successful for so long is our people. My dad worked in a corporate environment and didn't like the results of all those layers: delays, lost ideas, employees who felt powerless and unappreciated.

So when he started Opto 22, he cut the layers and created a flat organizational style. **We hire good people, get them started, and then let them do their jobs**. And unlike most tech companies, we don't lay people off the minute there's a downturn in the industry. We don't overhire, and we keep our people because we know their value.

The result is a loyal, experienced staff who produce higher quality products and give better service to our customers in design, manufacturing, and support. They work together to build success for all of us, with very little of the internal politics you typically find in a corporation. The average tenure of our factory workers is 26 years, and of our engineering and support staff, 24 years. People are happy to work here, and it shows.

Engineers in charge

In addition to our focus on quality and our people, I think it's the business approach of the company that makes Opto 22 a long-term player in the industrial automation field.

- Opto 22 has always been **run by engineers** who get excited about new tech. We want to play with it, see where it takes us, build products that use it.
- Because we're engineers ourselves, **we know what you deal with**, day by day. We know budget restraints as well as technical ones, and everything from wiring to the frustration of systems that don't talk with each other.
- Our company's **flat structure** encourages new ideas instead of squashing them in corporate layers. We can engineer new products quickly and bring them to you.
- **Open standards** make the most sense when you're trying to build systems and interconnect devices and software. So we've always helped establish open standards for the industry, like OPC and Ethernet.

- We **design new products for the long term** and continue to **support the legacy products** you've had for years, offering upgrade paths to newer solutions.

So what does that mean in practice? It means you can count on Opto 22 to introduce new ideas that expand your options and make your job easier—ideas like **programmable automation controllers (PACs)**, which are a hybrid of the earlier PLCs and PC-based control. We introduced the PAC concept way back in 1990 and then expanded on it in the mid-2000s with our SNAP PAC System, still sold, supported, and used worldwide.

And today the edge technologies in our **groov products** expand your options again. With **groov EPIC** (2018) for edge control and **groov RIO** (2020) for edge I/O, you can meet the new demands you're seeing for data and connectivity. **groov** industrial construction, CPU power and memory, easier networking and cybersecurity, OT and IT protocols, built-in software, and web-based management are leading the way to effective new industrial automation architectures and digital transformation for better business decisions.

Helpful (real) people

One of the things new customers are surprised about is that when you call or chat with Opto 22, you talk to a real person. We think your projects and applications are fun to work on, so **personal customer service** from free Pre-Sales Engineering to free Product Support is a big part of what we do. All support comes from knowledgeable engineers here in California.

That extends **worldwide**, too. Our partners in the U.S. and other countries are capable distributors and integrators you can count on to handle sales, service, and training for all our products.

Thank you

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, **I want to thank all of you**, our customers, integrators, and distributors, for everything you do: using our products, telling us what works—and what doesn't—and sharing your ideas for features you need. With your help we've taken this **50-year journey** from highly reliable SSRs to state-of-the-art Edge Programmable Industrial Controllers.

What will the next five decades bring?

Happy Anniversary!

-Mark Engman
CEO & President, Opto 22

Topics: [Opto 22](#), [Anniversary](#)

Written by **Mark Engman**



Ian Ross 4/16/2024, 1:11:20 PM

Opto22 SSR devices have been my go to for a very long time.

Whether I am switching large voltages AC/DC or just interfacing with something, they isolate and protect the connection perfectly with very high speed.

I often "piggyback" onto a relay or device to pick up a signal and because of the very low pick up current and huge range of control voltage allowed, Opto22 does this invisibly.

They are nearly "bullet-proof"

Reply to *Ian Ross*

Abelardo Pérez 4/16/2024, 3:18:38 PM

thanks for the cooperation with us

Reply to *Abelardo Pérez*

Daniel Black 4/16/2024, 10:57:32 PM

I started using Optomux components for PC based control systems back in 1988. Our applications are primarily large industrial refrigeration systems for fruit, fish, beef, chicken, and vegetables. Opto 22 has been a reliable partner and contributed to our becoming a major player in the industry. I enjoyed meeting Bob Engman while in Temecula for training on the Mystic product line in the early 1990s. I absolutely LOVE Opto's flat structure business model! That's the philosophy that I founded my company upon. It truly is the best way to develop a cohesive, innovative team!

Reply to *Daniel Black*

kevin cardon 4/17/2024, 7:19:07 PM

Great to be able to benefit. from your dedication. Hope to keep going with you for many more years
Congradulations!

Reply to *kevin cardon*

Rufus Clary 4/18/2024, 12:30:37 PM

My First Experience Was With The P31 Project With Intellution. I Had Opto 22 And PLC-5. I Found At Time I Could Not Connect With But 1 Rack. I Contacted Opto 22 And The Fix The Problem Immediately. The Next Project I Used Opto 22 Processor To Connect With Existing Allen Bradley PLC-5 And SLC-500. I Found A Problem With The Allen-Bradley DF1 Integration Kit. I Found It In A Subroutine, I Contacted Opto 22 And The Fix The Problem Immediately. Now PLC Systems Constantly Advancing There Will Be Bugs, But The Way Opto 22 Supports The Installer Is OUTSTANDING.
I Have Program Strutters-Dunn, Square-D, Honeywell, Micromax, Siemens, Allen Bradley And More. After Seeing All These Program Methods I Feel Opto 22 Methods Is The Best And Down To Earth. I Proved The Opto 22 Will Give You All You Need At The Best Cost Available. I Wish That More People In Alabama Knew More About Opto 22 And Less About The People The Charge You For Help With They Sold You.
Thanks: Rudy Clary

Reply to *Rufus Clary*

David Hurt 4/18/2024, 1:36:09 PM

Significant Achievement...Congratulations!

Reply to *David Hurt*

Ronald Austria 4/21/2024, 8:52:47 PM

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Reply to *Ronald Austria*

EMAIL *

FIRST NAME *

LAST NAME

COMMENT *

WHAT'S YOUR APPLICATION?

- Real-time control
- Web & mobile HMI
- Data acquisition
- Remote monitoring
- SCADA
- Secure industrial systems
- Connect to legacy PLCs
- Run custom code
- Other

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