



BY ASHLEIGH BALDWIN

You can't get hired at **Distek Inc.** without meeting **Pearl Brinker**.

"She still interviews every person that we hire," Distek President **Jeff Brinker** said of his mother. "She has very good people skills and hiring a lot of times is a gut feel."

That gut feel has fueled the family business from the beginning.

Gerald Brinker, Jeff's father, started Distek out of the family's garage in 1976. In 1980, Pearl Brinker came onboard to help with operations.

Jeff Brinker took over in 2001, but rather than pass the baton and enjoy retirement, the founders have stayed involved, lending a hand and advice whenever possible.

"I'm lucky in that regard," Jeff Brinker said. "I came in as a mechanical engineer and then ran the engineering department. It took time, but my father was good about letting me make my own decisions and my own mistakes but providing guidance."

Distek creates lab equipment that pharmaceutical companies use for research, development and quality control. The company specializes in dissolution, which means replicating and measuring how pill capsules actually break down in the body and release drugs.

For example, with an extended release medication, Distek instruments would have been used to replicate and measure how the pill is breaking down and releasing the active drug over a 12- or 24-hour period.

Distek moved out of the family garage long ago. The company now occupies a 23,000-square-foot facility in North Brunswick. Business is booming locally and globally.

"We obviously do quite well in the U.S., but a high, growing percentage of our sales are overseas," Brinker said. "We sell in over 50 to 60 countries around the world."

Its newest release, the Opt-Diss 410, is generating a lot of industry buzz. This next generation system is the only fully integrated UV fiber optic dissolution solution with a single software package controlling the entire system.

"Everything is packaged in one sleek-looking box, and we've also done quite a bit of software upgrades," Brinker said.

Plus, the new Opt-Diss 410 can analyze multiple active ingredients in one test.

Brinker said Distek is eyeing a few new markets and is particularly excited about biotech.

"We're also expanding into the biotech realm, which is a completely new industry for Distek," he said.

Almost every pharmaceutical company now has a biotech business, so Distek is making a point to invest in new product development.

"Although it is similar to business now, it's totally new set of customers and opportunities," Brinker said. "So the potential for that business line is really positive."

While Brinker acknowledges that the regulatory and tax climate in New Jersey aren't always ideal, they are not looking to move any time soon.

"If you were to move, you risk losing a lot of employees and that is the most important thing we have — our employees," he said.

In fact, location may be one of Distek's biggest assets. New Jersey is well-populated, well-educated and the local pharmaceutical industry is still thriving. That makes it a lot easier when you're hiring specialized engineers and chemists.

But hiring for other positions, such as sales, can be tricky, given the technical nature of the business, Brinker said.

"It is really important to find the right people," he said. "Most of our sales reps have some sort of science background because they are going into pharmaceutical and biotech companies and dealing directly with scientists."

Brinker has seen one or two of his competitors bought out, but he wants to keep it in the family. Distek celebrated 40 years in business in March and he's looking forward to many more.

"I like being independent. I like the family feel of the company and not having to answer to people and making our own decisions. I'm happy to stay independent right now."

Time-tested

Distek, an industry leader in dissolution, celebrates its 40th anniversary



Rajesh Shukla, top, assembles a model 2500 dissolution system at Distek. Jeff Brinker, above, president of Distek, is pictured with three of its dissolution systems.

-PHOTOS BY AARON HOUSTON

Biz in brief

NAME: Distek

HEADQUARTERS: North Brunswick

CEO: Jeff Brinker

FOUNDED: 1976

ONE MORE THING: The family-owned company, started in a garage by Gerald Brinker, celebrated its 40th anniversary this year.