



“We bring craftsmanship and the diehard work ethic of rural America to the table.”  
~ Beemer Yokley

## OZARK BIOMEDICAL INC.

“YOUR CENTRIFUGE SPECIALTY STORE”

### DRIVEN BY CUSTOMER DEMAND

**W**hen it comes to the centrifuge business, there’s no company more authoritative on the subject than Ozark Biomedical. In fact, the Beebe, Ark.-based organization is so knowledgeable about the industry that it’s widely regarded as an international expert in centrifuge parts and sales. Offering both new and refurbished centrifuges as well as new and used circuit boards and parts, Ozark Biomedical serves as a repair depot for motors, latches, circuit boards and centrifuges and offers free technical support to customers.

Although Ozark Biomedical has admittedly come a long way since its humble beginnings – when Bruce Pursell and Bruce “Beemer” Yokley purchased the previously struggling, 20-year-old company in 1998 and turned it into an industry giant – it still has plans for innovation. Sitting down with *Medical Dealer*, Pursell and Yokley discuss why their company has achieved such notable success and how Ozark Biomedical will continue to stay on the pulse of changing technology. After all, as world leaders in centrifuge solutions, Pursell and Yokley clearly have insights into the subject.

**Medical Dealer: What makes Ozark Biomedical so unique? How does your company stand out from its competition?**

Beemer Yokley: Well, for one thing, we’re an international business established in rural Arkansas. We bring craftsmanship and the diehard work ethic of rural America to the table. We can take the pressure the onsite biomedical equipment technicians (BMETs) are facing and help them to a quick resolution. Labs don’t like it when they can’t spin specimens, and the BMETs make great targets for lab managers’ frustrations. With our help, they can affect a quick and positive resolution and ease the

tensions. They can also know that when centrifuge problems pop up, they have a reliable, dedicated resource to turn to.

We also have a huge inventory of parts. Most people wouldn’t expect that, but there are a tremendous number of brands in the centrifuge marketplace and we have the resources to service the great majority of them. Although there are a number of brands that are on the fringe, for the most part we will have what you need in-house. If not, there’s a good chance we will be able to get it on short notice. We pride ourselves on not saying “no” to our customers.

**MD: What are some challenges that your company has faced in 2009? How have you overcome them?**

Bruce Pursell: I would say that our number one problem this year has been the changing economy and its impact on our customers. Hospital censuses are down and budgets are cut, due to revenue shortfalls. The whole picture has been very gloomy. Naturally, it has had an impact on the way we do business. Fortunately, we’re still growing. We aren’t growing quite as fast as in previous years, but the current respite has enabled us to pursue a renewed model for expansion of our campus. For



## COMPANY AT A GLANCE

THERE ARE MANY ASPECTS THAT DISTINGUISH OZARK BIOMEDICAL IN THE FIELD OF CENTRIFUGATION, INCLUDING:

- >> A six-month warranty on replacement motors, widely regarded as the best in the business.
- >> International Organization for Standardization 9001:2008
- >> Documented failure rates of less than 2 percent
- >> A computerized inventory system
- >> A fully integrated web site with stocking updated every eight minutes
- >> Access to outdated, obsolete or hard-to-find parts
- >> The regular acquisition of new equipment
- >> New, as well as refurbished, replacement parts and centrifuges
- >> Replacement centrifuges shipped to your location overnight
- >> An OEM-recognized service center and refurbishment program

instance, we're currently involved in the construction of a 20,000-square-foot facility to expand production and inventory. That project will be complete sometime in the late second quarter of 2010.

Another big challenge we faced was our certification to International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001:2008 standards. Over the years, we have worked very hard to provide our customers with the best products available. We have implemented countless checks and balances to make sure we get things right the first time. ISO was a natural fit. Although the challenges were great, we had a system in place that meshed perfectly with the ISO Quality Standard. What we really did was gain recognition for years of hard work. We didn't pursue ISO 9001:2008 because of pressure from our customers. We did it because it's recognizable proof of our efforts to guarantee our customers the best product we can provide.

Finally, the toughest battle we fought this year was the release of our new web site, [www.ozarkbiomedical.com](http://www.ozarkbiomedical.com). We spent months and months integrating our inventory, part numbers and product quantities to a point where their status on the web site is as close to "real time" as we can get. Now, when you order from the OBM web site, you're assured that your order is in stock and available. Our software checks product levels every eight minutes and updates the quantities on hand. If the web site recommends that you call for confirmation, it means that we have a supply issue that may require a back order or a

drop-ship from the OEM. Regardless, our goal is to keep the customer as informed as possible about their particular order.

**MD: What are some trends in the centrifuge industry? How is your company staying on the pulse of changing technology?**

Yokley: We're no different than anyone else in this industry. Technology is constantly evolving, and centrifuges are no exception. In the past few years, there has been a huge consolidation of centrifuge manufacturers. Obviously, that has led to a "rebranding" of a number of familiar makes and models, not always for the better. This, of course, leads to a great deal of confusion when it comes to providing parts – or even service – to some familiar names. For example, some units are labeled "discontinued" by the OEM – and, to an extent, that's true. However, the complete truth is that the OEM has renamed a product, given it a new identity, and "obsoleted" the old brand name. The fact is that the new product is exactly the same, just with a new face. Unfortunately, that makes for some rough days for technical support personnel. That's a lot of information to keep straight.


Then there's the technology itself. Centrifuges are becoming increasingly more complex. The electronics are more powerful than ever before. Gone are the days of dropping your specimens in the unit, turning the timer knob, and walking away. Units now have a wide array of programmability. They have rotor ID systems that won't allow you to run outside of the design intent of that particular rotor, and the list goes on. Plus, the industry is moving away from brush-style motors and moving toward induction drive units. The rationale

is to reduce maintenance and mean time between failures. For the most part, they perform well. However, maintenance is still required and if your maintenance program is lacking, you risk cascade failures of PCBs, motors, and other critical components that wouldn't have happened in the past.

Because we are who we are and our singular focus is centrifuges, we are able to keep up with the current industry trends. We continuously acquire new technology. That enables us to get acquainted with common failures, product weak spots, and general knowledge to pass on to our customers. Although the new technology can be challenging, it's also amazing and exciting.

**MD: What's on the horizon for your company? How will Ozark Biomedical evolve in the coming years?**

Pursell: Our immediate future plans are to push forward with our facility expansion, taking advantage of lower construction costs. With all of our other business plans, we will slow down and take a wait-and-see approach. After all, with the economy coming out of a recession and healthcare reform on the table, it's a good time to be patient.

As always, customer demand will dictate product development. Our quality is at an all-time high, but it's no time to get complacent. Instead, we will use the current economic climate to sharpen our focus on quality customer service and technical support. Focusing on serving our customers is the best way to improve. We will celebrate our successes and study any failures one customer at a time. 

*For more information regarding Ozark Biomedical, please visit [www.ozarkbiomedical.com](http://www.ozarkbiomedical.com) or call 800-457-7576.*