

Impact by MasterCraft Safety

by Impact by MasterCraft Safety staff

Passion is what drives Impact by MasterCraft Safety to do better, work harder, and not give up. It is this passion that pushes the company to spend hours trying to shave off the next tenth of a second and cut faster 60-foot times. For Robbie Pierce, the passion that consumes 25 hours in his 24-hour day is his quest for safety. Pierce is the owner of MasterCraft Safety, and as of last year, his business took a huge leap forward with the acquisition of Impact in December 2010.

"If you want to be the best at what you do, my advice is to pick something you love," Pierce said. "It takes hard work to be successful regardless of what you do, but following your passion makes that hard work all worthwhile."

Safety is something that most people don't necessarily give much thought to. You probably have a helmet and firesuit and perhaps even an NHRA-approved cage if your car is turning single-digit quarter-mile times.

"Safety is the type of thing that some people don't think about until it is too late," said Pierce relates, who experienced a horrific crash last year that saw him carted away to the hospital with two broken collarbones, multiple cracked ribs, a bruised lung, and a busted-up knee. As he sat in the hospital bed, Pierce spent his time contemplating what could have been done to further minimize his injuries.

MasterCraft Safety is best known for its off-road suspension seats, restraints, race suits, and window nets. Quite literally battered and bruised, Pierce realized that there was room to improve

the products on the market and expand his current product line. Soon, fate intervened, and the opportunity to purchase Impact from fellow safety pioneer Bill Simpson presented itself just a few weeks thereafter. "Our goal has always been to be a one-stop shop that can outfit a driver from head to toe and their vehicle, too," said Pierce.

In 2008, MasterCraft Safety acquired Ryan Safety and added race suits to its product offerings, but it did not go far enough. "I knew that there was controversy associated with Impact, but that did not scare me off," added Pierce. "I saw an opportunity to revive a struggling company that offered a great product line and also the chance to jumpstart my own goal to offer head-to-toe safety solutions."

So how does a small, privately owned business that makes off-road products come up with the capital to purchase Impact? That takes us back to Pierce's passion for safety. See, Pierce doesn't just want to keep racers safer, his passion includes an even bigger cause. The military recognized the benefits of MasterCraft Safety's seats years ago, and since 2004, the company has been supplying our armed forces with blast-attenuating seating.

"We have a number of combat and tactical vehicles in Iraq and

Afghanistan with our safety equipment, including our seats," said Pierce. "IEDs [improvised explosive devices] result in very similar G-load situations that we see during off-road races but with a much higher energy into the vehicle. Our seating has some unique properties in mitigating that energy. Our blast-attenuating seat realized a measureable 84 percent reduction of energy to a Hybrid III's pelvis (test dummy) during a live fire blast event equivalent to that of an IED. We also recently performed a sled test in the +Z axis and hit the seat with 350 Gs. The results we realized from this test were within what is considered a survivable range."

So where is that passion for safety taking Pierce next? The question has everything to do with Impact. "MasterCraft Safety's goal is to not mess with Impact's success but instead refine the products and cater to each individual racer and their type of racing," Pierce explained. "Because I race, I understand the importance of having relevant products to my style of racing. A drag-style helmet won't work for off-road racing and vice versa. I understand the importance of custom-tailored products."

In addition to understanding the significance of having the right products, MasterCraft Safety has a quality management system and team in place with the processes to quickly react to any changes the market demands, whether it is an updated safety rule change from sanctioning bodies like NHRA or consumer tastes.

"For a small business, we have incredibly sophisticated systems and processes in place. We have a very savvy staff of designers and engineers who perform solid modeling for all of the MasterCraft products and have begun to do the same on the Impact line," said Pierce. "I look forward to blending these two companies and truly combining the real-world experience of Impact with the technology of MasterCraft Safety." **ND**

