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finishing is shipped to Mexico, China and India these days.

Hoffman figures 2,500 to 3,000 metal finishers remain in the U.S. To survive, many have turned to niche specialties such as chroming Harley-Davidson (NYSE:HDI - News) motorcycles, faucets and aerospace parts.

Guglielmo attributes the growing success of Metal Man Restoration to its diversification, not its niche specialty. "We do metal fabrication, electroplating, metal polishing and specialized repair work," he said.

His business is organized into three areas: commercial (which includes historical restoration), manufacturing and residential. "If we only did manufacturing, I wouldn't be talking with you," he said.

Guglielmo says about 50% of his business involves commercial and historic renovation, 30% residential and 20% manufacturing.

As Metal Man's revenue started increasing, Guglielmo moved from the cramped Pelham store in April 2004 to an industrial park in Mount Vernon. He quit his job at the Federal Reserve Bank and focused on Metal Man. He bought a larger sand blaster and established separate rooms for welding, polishing and metal fabrication.

Guglielmo has been enterprising about finding ways to add to his business. For example, he attends local Westchester County home improvement and antique shows. Most of the work derived is residential.

Guglielmo started bidding on contract jobs involving historic restorations. He earned a $25,000 contract to restore the lighting fixtures at Newark City Hall and secured restoration jobs at the New York City Police Department's One Police Plaza headquarters and at Columbia University's Butler Library.

Guglielmo keeps his prices competitive, which has let him win about 75% of all the competitive bids solicited. "If I know another company is charging $1 to polish a lighting fixture, we'll charge 85 cents. If there are 5,000 pieces, we'll still turn a good profit," he said.

Metal Man also is working as a subcontractor for Bridge Metal, one of the largest metal fabricators on the East Coast. Bridge Metal, Guglielmo said, "does everything including widgets, Coca-Cola signs and picture frames."

Despite working for larger commercial and manufacturing companies, Metal Man continues to