

Fifty Years of Service: The MSC Story



In 1976, a young US Navy veteran and service technician named Harry Hartigan left his job at Edwards Engineering to start his own company. Operating out of northern New Jersey under the name Hartigan Refrigeration, Harry set his sights on a narrow but demanding niche: servicing the gasoline vapor recovery refrigeration systems used in bulk fuel terminals. It was specialized, technically complex work, and it suited him perfectly.

The company grew quickly. Within a few years, Harry had expanded into process cooling and HVAC, and in 1978, reflecting a broader vision for what the company would become, he renamed it Mechanical Service Corporation. The name said it plainly: this was a service company, built from the ground up around diagnostics, problem-solving, and service. That distinction would prove to be the foundation of everything MSC stands for today.

While many HVAC contractors begin as plan-and-spec installers and later branch into service, MSC has been service and diagnostics-focused from day one. Over the decades, that commitment to solving complex problems others couldn't resolve has built MSC a reputation as the tri-state region's go-to specialist for advanced mechanical systems. That reputation was built not just on technical expertise, but on the people who dedicated their careers to it.

In 1997, Harry's son Tim joined the company as a service shop helper. He worked his way through every level of the organization, from apprentice to



Continued on page 2

salesperson to VP and Partner, and played a pivotal role in solidifying MSC's standing in our industry. Tim's untimely passing in 2019 was a profound loss, one that the company still feels deeply.



Andrew Heilmann has always been drawn to working with his hands and understanding how things work, and his journey with MSC began long before he ever set foot in the office. Growing up next door to Harry, Andy spent time alongside his neighbor helping him with projects and developing a passion for the trade that would shape his career. In 2009, as an engineering student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), he joined MSC during summer and winter breaks. He came on full-time after graduating in 2013 and earned his PE license in 2019.

Andy was named president of MSC in 2024, and in 2025, Harry passed ownership of the company to him. He continues to lead the company with the same commitment to technical excellence and collaborative culture that has defined the company from the start. Harry remains an active presence as a senior advisor, lending his expertise to the service, engineering, and management teams.

Fifty years in, MSC carries forward the same diagnostic DNA Harry instilled from the start, now with the resources, depth, and reputation of a proven industry leader. The industry has changed dramatically since 1976, and MSC has changed with it, but the core of what we do and why we do it has never wavered.



The People Behind the 50-Year Milestone



A company doesn't reach fifty years without a deeply committed team behind it. At MSC, that kind of commitment isn't the exception; it's the norm.

Of the employees currently on our roster, ten have been with the company for twenty years or more, and eleven more have been here for more than ten years. Just in the past five years, five employees have retired with thirty or more years of service at MSC. In an industry where turnover is common, those numbers tell a story of their own.

At the start of our timeline, and still very much a part of it, is Harry Hartigan, MSC's founder, who, after five decades, remains a dedicated part of the team. Sales engineer Pete McGrath, who technically retired in 2024 but continues to contribute on a part-time basis, first joined MSC in 1979. Field engineer Al Gilbert, who came on board in the mid-1980s, brings forty years of hands-on expertise to every job.

Continued on page 3



Scott Allison, a service technician since 1989, has been a steady and trusted presence on the team for 37 years, while field engineer Dan Peterson has been with MSC for 32 years. Senior service technicians Jerry Padula, Bob Benson, Phil Lemieux, and John Pricken, along with recently promoted project manager Glenn Daniel, each bring more than twenty years of MSC experience to the team, a combined total that exceeds a century.

This depth of institutional knowledge is not incidental. It is the direct result of a culture established from the beginning. For MSC's customers, it means that the person responding to a service call or reviewing a maintenance agreement isn't just doing a job; they're drawing on years, often decades, of hard-won experience with complex systems. After fifty years, that is perhaps MSC's greatest asset.

Above, left to right: A. Gilbert, S. Allison, D. Peterson, J. Padula, B. Benson, P. Lemieux, J. Pricken, G. Daniel

From Field to Front Office: Jason Wright Steps Into a New Role as Service Sales Specialist

Jason Wright spent the last decade as a service technician at MSC. Now he's bringing that hands-on experience into a new role as our Service Sales Specialist, giving customers a point of contact who has spent years doing the very work he'll now be helping to plan, scope, and support. His focus will be on preventive maintenance agreement sales, with some service sales in the mix as well.

Jason's path to an HVAC career at MSC began while he was attending Fortis Institute, a technical school. Family friend Bob Benson, a longtime MSC technician, connected him with VP Tim Hartigan to talk about joining the union and coming aboard at MSC. In September 2014, he signed on as an apprentice. He went on to complete his five-year apprenticeship at the union school in Hazlet, NJ, the same program that has put many of MSC's technicians through their paces, while attending trade school at night.

Jason describes MSC as his first "real" job. "Before MSC, I only delivered pizza and worked installing septic systems during the summer as a teenager," he says, which makes his years in the field at MSC the whole of his professional career.

Some of the most meaningful influences on that career came early. Jason is candid about the fact that he grew up lacking the kind of steady guidance that shapes a young man's character and judgment. Working alongside Scott Allison in his first years at MSC helped to fill that gap. Scott, a fixture at the company since 1989, provided Jason with a simple, consistent standard.

"Scott would drill into my head to always ask questions about what I was learning, and to always show up for myself," Jason recalls.



Continued on page 4

That same deliberate approach was reinforced when Jason had the opportunity to work alongside company founder Harry Hartigan on a complex, multi-year remediation project in Maryland. Working that closely with Harry gave Jason a front-row seat to how he approached a problem, and it stayed with him.

"Harry had a way of slowing everything down to analyze the situation. What's the problem or issue reported? Let's compile all the information and take a look before making any decisions." In a field where there's never a shortage of noise and pressure, that kind of discipline matters. For Jason, it left a mark that went beyond the job itself.

"There is always a frenzy of talking heads around you in this field and in the world," he reflects, "but adopting this approach as a young man, it naturally bonds you to how you should operate as a father, as a role model, as an educator, as a technician, and as a friend."

"Harry helped me learn not to be impulsive or reactive," Jason adds.

When the opportunity to move into a sales role came up, Jason didn't hesitate, though he also hadn't seen it coming. The opportunity went out to field staff before MSC looked anywhere else, a detail that wasn't lost on him. "They came to us first, before looking outside the company," he says. "That meant a lot."

His reason for stepping up was straightforward: he saw MSC growing and wanted to be part of shaping the company's future. "It's like my home, and I care about where it's headed," he says. "If I can help, just let me know how I can step up. I'm a blank slate, let me learn, and I'll do my best."

The adjustment from field to office has come with a learning curve. "It takes a lot of organization and communication in the office, as opposed to just managing yourself out in the field," Jason says. "It's very new to me." But he's not navigating it alone. "I love the collaborative effort everyone has been putting in. The resources, the input, all of it. It's helped me figure out how to best fit into this role."

Looking ahead, Jason is energized by the direction MSC is heading. "I'm looking forward to being part of where Andy (Heilmann) and the rest of the team are taking this company," he says. "They're moving us forward in a lot of positive ways." For Jason, one of those ways is bringing dedicated focus to MSC's PMA process. With his full commitment to his new role, customers can expect a more streamlined, attentive preventive maintenance experience.

Jason's years in the field give him a practical foundation that few salespeople can claim. He's been on the job, worked the equipment, and understands what it actually takes to deliver on what we sell. "I can see where MSC would be a good fit for new accounts, as I've been in situations as a tech in the field, troubleshooting various equipment," he says. "I know our capabilities and how to put them to work."

He's also keeping an eye on what his new role can mean for the technicians still in the field. "If I can help take some of the pressure off the guys in the field and make their jobs easier, that would be great."

Outside of MSC, Jason lives in Stanhope, NJ, with his wife Ana and their five-year-old son Owen. For the Wright family, weekends often involve burgers at Fuddruckers, trips to the mall, and building LEGOs with Owen. "I have the most loving family," Jason says, and for those who know them, it's easy to see why.

To his colleagues still out in the field, Jason has a direct message: "I was in the field for almost 12 years, so I can relate. Bring me your thoughts. Don't hesitate to come to me with ideas or questions, or to bring my attention to any issues you're having with PMs."



MDF, IDF, and Data Room Cooling: Why Redundancy Isn't Optional

MSC has spent a long time ensuring that MDF, IDF, and data rooms stay properly cooled and continuously operational, and one thing hasn't changed: when cooling fails, the facilities that fare best are the ones that planned for it with a reliable backup system already in place.

The explosive growth of data, AI, and IT infrastructure over the past decade has made cooling these spaces a mission-critical concern. Nearly all require not only a primary cooling system, but a secondary backup system as well. Servers, switches, and in-rack UPS systems generate significant heat, and keeping them cool and properly ventilated is essential to protecting your network infrastructure. It's a challenge MSC has been solving for facilities across the NJ tri-state area for 50 years.

MDF, IDF, and data rooms are highly secure with strictly limited access, as companies simply cannot afford to have unauthorized individuals near their networks. They must operate 24/7 with no downtime, be closely monitored, and be alarmed for temperature fluctuations. In the event of a power failure, a UPS system (uninterruptible power supply) bridges the gap until electrical generators come online. Cooling and ventilation follow the same principle: redundancy is essential, with a primary system running continuously and a secondary backup ready to engage at a moment's notice.

Smaller IT room applications, such as those housing a single row of racks, are typically room-cooled. These rooms continuously circulate air around the space and through the racks, mixing warmer and cooler air while removing heat. Room cooling is a common, cost-effective solution for lower-density setups. It often incorporates the building's existing HVAC system as the primary source of cooling, with a ductless mini-split or VRF (variable refrigerant flow) system serving as backup. In other configurations, two CRAC units may be deployed for redundancy, with one unit in hot standby, providing an N+1 configuration.

Many new clients come to MSC after experiencing system failures with no backup in place, or after relying on emergency spot coolers while their primary system was down. Others have persistent maintenance issues — condensate problems, frozen or dirty evaporator coils, unexplained temperature swings, nuisance tripping — that put servers, switches, and network infrastructure at risk. MSC's design and service team can evaluate your current setup and recommend a reliable, cost-effective solution. In many cases, we can repair or upgrade your existing system and add a redundant backup without starting from scratch.

A recent project at a large pharmaceutical company is a good illustration. MSC improved the facility's primary air handling system by installing a fan wall within the existing unit, significantly increasing reliability and control. We also installed ductless mini-split systems on emergency power in the MDF and IDF rooms as redundant backup cooling, then commissioned both systems, along with their power and controls, across multiple failure scenarios. The IT director was pleased with the project, the timeline, and the results.

