

St. Louis acoustics firm grows revenue 19% — quietly



Herb (blue) and Ned Golterman of Golterman & Sabo.

DILIP VISHWANAT | SLBJ



By Greg Edwards – Reporter, St. Louis Business Journal
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Golterman & Sabo, a St. Louis manufacturer of acoustical products that absorb sound, has increased revenue 19% this year, thanks to changing tastes in interior design and new tax laws.

Sales at the family-owned company increased to \$38 million this year, up from \$32 million in 2018.

“The primary driver is that people are designing office space with an open-ceiling concept,” said Herb Golterman, who owns the company with his brother, Ned Golterman. Think industrial design, with exposed pipes rather than ceiling tiles. Sound-absorbing materials that previously had been on a ceiling have to be placed elsewhere.

Golterman & Sabo makes sound-absorbing fabrics for ceilings, walls and panels and installs them, for example, in conference rooms, schools, recording studios and gymnasiums to make them quieter.

The second driver has been tax laws. “Tax credits, especially accelerated depreciation, spurred the construction industry,” Herb Golterman said. “Regardless of your politics, that legislation was a big boost to construction. For instance, we put on a new roof and were able to write it off.”

Golterman & Sabo has two buildings with a total of 114,000 square feet in the Tree Court Industrial Park in Kirkwood. Since 2017, it has made more than \$1 million in capital investments.

This year the company sold one of its four subsidiaries, AR Nelson Co., which sells hospital curtains and the tracks they slide on. “The rest of our company is focused on acoustics, and it didn’t really fit,” Herb Golterman said. “It’s a different market.” Terms of the sale were not disclosed.

The other three subsidiaries are G&S Acoustics, G&S Architectural Products and FabricWall. The company has more than 100 employees, about 10% more than last year, and many have worked there 20 to 30 years, Herb Golterman said.

Golterman & Sabo has worked on many major projects in St. Louis, including the \$380 million revamp of the Gateway Arch grounds and the \$8 million penguin and puffin exhibit at the Saint Louis Zoo.

The Goltermans’ grandfather founded the company in 1946 as the Herbert Golterman Co., which sold chain-link fences. Their dad, Ed Golterman, joined the business soon after. It became Golterman & Sabo under the leadership of the late Ed Golterman and the late Steve Sabo Sr.

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