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2018 SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS

# Kuehne Company

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Periodicals





SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS WINNER

# LEADING THE WAY IN CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING

**Kuehne Company**

BY DENÉE CRUMRINE | PHOTOS BY FINAL FOCUS PHOTOGRAPHY

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN IN BUSINESS for 99 years, it's likely you're doing something well. Such is the case for Kuehne Company, a family-owned business out of New Castle, Delaware. Kuehne produces high strength sodium hypochlorite (bleach). They supply bleach to most major water and waste water municipalities in the Mid-Atlantic region. In addition to their growth and reach, Kuehne was named a 2018 Superstars in Business award winner thanks to its legacy of innovation, customer service and commitment to community.

The Kuehne Family founded the company in 1919, building their first chlor-alkali plant in Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1959. They acquired The Chloramone Corporation of Delaware City, Delaware, in 1989. In 1998, Kuehne built the first brine-to-bleach chlor-alkali plant in the United States. The company has grown to 123 full-time employees, boasting an average tenure of 13 years.

Being in a mature market, Kuehne must be efficient and innovative in maintaining their business and preparing it for the future. In 2015, the company constructed a state-of-the-art brine-to-bleach manufacturing facility in New Jersey, which cut operational costs and reduced bulk transport of chlorine via railcars into a major metropolitan area. In 2018, Kuehne has begun engineering a state-of-the-art brine treatment system for the Delaware facility. They also implemented a 5S system to reduce waste and improve store room inventory accountability, and audited equipment service schedules so that equipment could be replaced before failure. These efforts, among other initiatives, correspond with Lean Manufacturing best practices, and lend to a smarter way of doing business.

They aren't just proactive in the day-to-day, but in extraordinary circumstances as well. In October 2012, Hurricane Sandy devastated the New Jersey coastline. Kuehne's New Jersey facility endured 18 hours of



MARVIN S. GILMAN  
**SUPERSTARS  
IN BUSINESS**



**2018 SUPERSTARS IN BUSINESS AWARD  
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storm surge, more than 11 feet of water in the facility, and 10 days without power. Kuehne still managed to serve its customers, thanks to tremendous advance disaster planning. Kuehne restored power within three days, moved command and control functions to its Delaware facility and created a mechanism to communicate with its customers and employees.

The larger issue at hand during this time for the company, however, was its employees.

“We needed to make sure that our employees impacted by Sandy were being taken care of, so Kuehne distributed small backup generators and fuel to them. None of it would have been accomplished without the dedication of our entire team. Even with this devastating event we were able to distribute end-of-year bonuses, and achieve our financial objectives for 2012,” said William Paulin, Senior Vice President and CFO for Kuehne Company.

In addition to its employees, this Superstar is also connected to its community in a variety of ways. The company supports the Pathways to Prosperity initiative by hosting high school interns, in partnership with William Penn High School and Delaware Technical Community College. Kuehne is also a primary responder in the CHLOREP® (the Chlorine Emergency Plan) and TRANSCAER® (Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency Response) programs; and they are an active member of The Chlorine Institute and Chemical Industry Council of Delaware.

“The Kuehne Company is honored to be recognized as a Superstar in Business. We strive to serve our customers and the community in many ways, while working hard to maintain a family tradition of taking care of our employees and enjoying our successes together,” said Kuehne Company Plant Manager, Alan Rogers. ■



# WHAT IT TAKES ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ TO BE A SUPERSTAR IN BUSINESS



## ★ The Organization

- ★ Must be a member of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, in business for a minimum of three years and employ 150 or less
- ★ Illustrate that the organization has a clear mission statement, vision statement, guiding principles or strategies for success that is demonstrated to not only business and community partners but also to those within the organization
- ★ A company that is always searching for strategies to continue grow, prosper and foster a better community for its employees and Delawareans

## ★ The Application

- ★ Tell a story of passion and how the organization came to be
- ★ Provide detailed examples of how the organization has continued to sustain and grow through recent economic challenges
- ★ Show profitability and viability of the organization
- ★ Explain why the organization stands apart from the rest
- ★ Present challenges and demonstrate how the organization solved those issues
- ★ Prove a commitment to the community
- ★ Share customer, employee and community partner testimonials

## ★ The Selection

- ★ Withstand a review process comprised of 15-20 prominent leaders in the community
- ★ Tell a compelling story that stands out from the rest

