A man with glasses and a red t-shirt is standing in a warehouse or storage room, organizing shelves. He is reaching for a container on a shelf. The shelves are filled with various colorful containers, some labeled with numbers like '125' and '150'. The background shows more shelves and a door.

BCY's James Browne boxes up an order for the company's advanced bowstring materials.

One of the principal challenges of innovating anything within the archery industry is to be specialized enough to be able to create something exceptional, while at the same time possessing enough empathy to understand what archers really want. When the two things—specialization and empathy—come together, true expertise is the result.

Ray Browne and Bob Deston



By Bill and
Sherry Krenz
with interviews
by Travis Reginek

One of the best examples of that is the longstanding work of Ray Browne and Bob Deston of BCY Inc. For two decades, they've blended their unique specialization in advanced bowstring materials with a keen grasp of where archery equipment and archers were going next.

The background of their specialization began decades ago. Ray Browne was born in Dorset, England, educated at Exeter University and shortly thereafter landed a job with Bridport Industries, a specialty United Kingdom textile manufacturer. Bridport specialized in twine, rope, cordage and netting. Ray started in inventory control, but swiftly moved into sales and management.

Bob Deston was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, received a degree in textiles from the University of Massachusetts and quickly went to work for American Thread, one of the largest thread producers in the world. Bob's talent centered around product development and manufacturing.

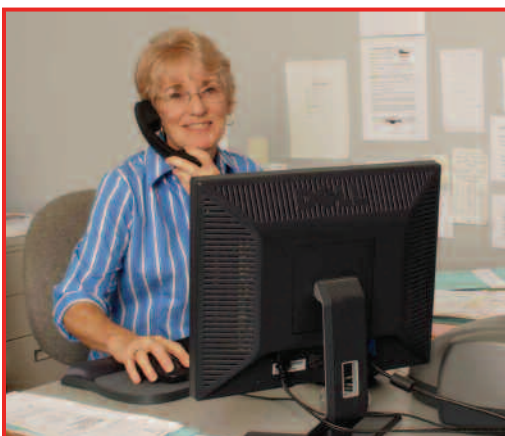
of BCY Inc. TRUE EXPERTISE



TOP: Archery is the heartbeat of BCY Inc. The company's goal is to provide advanced, superior bowstring materials that enable archers to shoot better. BCY's Chris Deston, Ray Browne, Bob Deston and Roger Browne pose on the target range.

MIDDLE: Judy Plouffe, Sally Loughery and Dave Monighetti keep things running smoothly at BCY's headquarters in Middletown, Connecticut.

BOTTOM: Judy Plouffe heads up customer service at BCY and puts a priority on fast, friendly service.



In 1978, Bridport sent Ray Browne to the United States on a three-year assignment to boost sales for its American holdings. At first, Ray was stationed in Atlanta, but in 1980 was transferred to New England when Bridport purchased an American textile company that was focusing on archery bowstrings. That newly purchased company was Brownell.

From 1980 to 1982, Ray Browne served as vice president of sales for Brownell, learning the archery industry from the inside out. In 1983, he was named president of Brownell and served in that capacity until 1990.

During that time, Ray Browne interviewed and hired Bob Deston. "We were looking for a strong research-and-development person with an impressive textile background," remembers Browne. "Bob Deston fit the bill perfectly. I brought Bob in as manager of research, eventually added quality assurance to his duties and after just a few years made him vice president of operations."

At the time, Brownell was the leading producer of archery bowstring materials in the world. "Those were exciting times," Browne recalls. "For decades, Dacron had been the principal fiber used in manufacturing bowstrings. It was easy to work with and reasonably durable. But Dacron also stretched appreciably and was relatively heavy. In the mid-1980s, a new high-tech material called Spectra suddenly burst upon the textile scene. Spectra was lighter, faster and significantly stronger than Dacron. It also demonstrated relatively little stretch compared to the Dacron that archers were used to." Brownell quickly developed Spectra into a brand-new and revolutionary bowstring material they named Fast Flight.

"At first, individual archers and a few bow companies simply manufactured and added Fast Flight bowstrings to their existing compound bows," says Deston. "But you have to remember that the compound bows of that day all featured plastic-covered metal cables with bowstring-attachment teardrops located on the ends of those cables. Those metal cables wound around the bow's eccentric system, and the bowstrings of the day then attached to the cable's teardrops. With a conventional Dacron bowstring, that was a satisfactory arrangement as

Continued on page 40



TOP: Chris Deston is a world-class shooter and personally fields the majority of the technical questions BCY receives from archers around the world. He understands exactly what archers want and need.

BOTTOM: BCY offers a broad selection of advanced bowstring materials, including strand materials, serving materials and string-making tools. Materials can be custom wound on large or small spools, depending on the needs of specific customers. BCY's Doug Morse (left photo) checks a large spool.

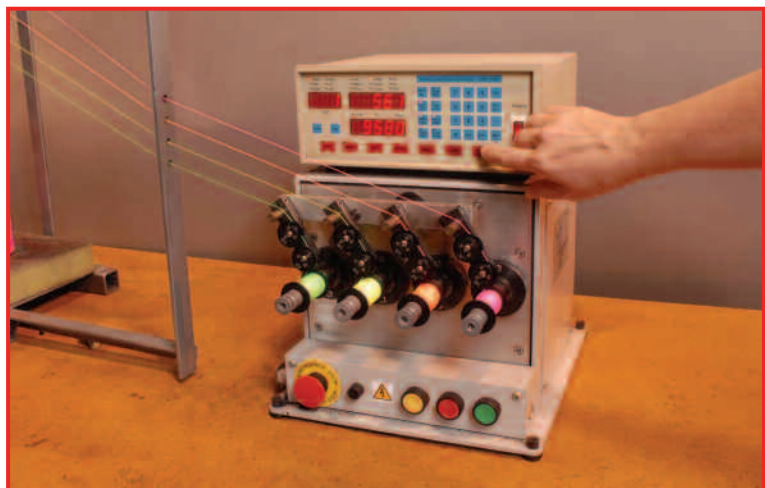


the Dacron material stretched during the shot and so wasn't overly hard on the teardrops. But, what we all quickly learned was that a Fast Flight bowstring had very little stretch and so put tremendous pressure on the cable's teardrop connections. In fact, should a conventional compound bow equipped with a non-stretching Fast Flight bowstring be dry fired, the typical result was that the teardrops were ripped from both cables, and the bow came violently apart. The good news, on the other hand, was that adding a light, tough Fast Flight bowstring to a bow instantly added about ten feet per second to the bow's performance. Archers loved that almost magical gift of arrow speed.

"Various solutions were proposed," says Deston. "After all, archers desperately wanted the extra arrow speed that Fast Flight provided. Eventually, a commercial solution to the dilemma was developed. That solution was a brand-new eccentric system that eliminated metal cables altogether, replacing them with high-tech Fast Flight cables and connecting those cables and the bow's bowstring to what were essentially teardrops machined into the bow's cams. It was a radical new design, but it paved the way for the safe use of Fast Flight on compound bows."

As the developers and suppliers of Fast Flight, Ray Browne and Bob Deston were at the forefront of that ground-shaking archery development.

In 1990, Ray Browne headed up a risky business maneuver. Browne and a group of other Brownell executives attempted to leverage a buyout of Brownell from parent company Bridport. The buyout maneuver was





not well received by Bridport, proved unsuccessful and the entire buyout group was unceremoniously fired.

“Quite suddenly,” says Browne, “I was outside of the archery industry, an industry where I had thought I had found a home.”

Over the next year or so, Ray Browne purchased another company, a wire and cable company, and moved on. But, he kept thinking about archery.

In 1992, Ray Browne received a call from Bob Deston, who had also left Brownell. A new material called Vectran had just appeared on the textile market.

“We need to build a bowstring from Vectran,” Deston said. “Vectran is better than Fast Flight. Like Fast Flight, Vectran doesn’t stretch (initial flex and elongation), but it also doesn’t creep (continual elongation under load).” Continual creep had long been a nagging problem with Fast Flight.

After much discussion, Ray Browne and Bob Deston—pioneers in high-tech bowstring materials—decided to get back into the archery industry. Along with another ex-Brownell employee, Dave Monighetti, Ray Browne and Bob Deston formed BCY Inc. late in 1992.

“Our ace in the hole was Vectran,” says Browne. “We went to work and developed a brand-new Vectran-based bowstring and cable material we named Streamline.”

Acceptance of BCY’s revolutionary Streamline material came quickly.

“Plenty of the bow companies had dealt with Bob and me for years,” Browne reveals. “They trusted us, and all the initial Streamline testing proved wonderfully positive. The result was that some of the largest bow companies quickly switched to no-stretch, no-creep BCY Streamline for their best bows. Things were looking great for BCY.”

Then the other shoe dropped, as it sometimes does with a brand-new material or product.

“When Streamline was pressed into mass production, a glaring flaw in

Vectran’s capabilities slowly revealed itself,” admits Deston. “The problem was compressive failure. When you put a tight serving on a Vectran-based Steamline bowstring, the compression of the strands under that serving could cause the material to suddenly break. Obviously, that’s a

disaster for a bowstring or cable.”

“After more research,” said Browne, “we made the gut-wrenching decision to recall all Streamline material. Because Streamline was BCY’s main bowstring product at the time, that recall nearly put us out of business. Fortunately, two things

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TOP: The development and blending of unique bowstring-material formulations is a BCY specialty. Ray Browne and Bob Deston have honed that craft over nearly three decades in the archery industry and even more time in the textile field.

MIDDLE: Roger Browne tends a BCY waxing machine. Careful control of wax content ensures peak bowstring-material performance.

BOTTOM: BCY ships on time, thanks to its practice of maintaining large quantities of raw fiber materials and its efficient blending, coloring and spooling operations. Roger Browne moves a full pallet of raw materials.

kept us afloat. My wire and cable company was doing well, and Bob discovered that a blend of approximately 30-percent Vectran with 70-percent Spectra yielded a bowstring/cable material that was exactly what the archery industry was looking for. It was light, strong, no-stretch, no-creep and it didn't suffer from compressive failure."

"We called our new blend BCY 450 Plus, and, undeterred, we set about regaining the trust that the bow companies and individual archers had initially shown us."

Gradually, and based on the sterling capabilities of 450 Plus and the long-standing industry relationships of Ray

Browne and Bob Deston, BCY clawed its way back into the good graces of the archery industry. It's hard to keep a good company, or good men, down.

Today, BCY Inc. is one of the world leaders in supplying archers with advanced bowstring materials. And, given the specialized textile expertise of Ray Browne and Bob Deston combined with their feel for the archery industry, it should surprise no one that BCY has continued to innovate new and better bowstring materials for archers.

In 1996, for example, BCY became aware of yet another new material with great promise. That material was called Dyneema, and Bob and Ray saw it as an obvious replacement for Spectra. Dyneema was stronger and had less creep than Spectra, and the duo quickly developed an all-Dyneema bowstring material they called DynaFlight 97.

"DynaFlight 97 is a trouble-free, low-creep and very cost-effective bowstring material that is ideal for economical compound bows and today's advanced recurves," says Browne. "It's also ultra reliable."

In 1998, BCY developed 8125, a 100-percent Dyneema product that is exactly the same diameter as Fast Flight, but features less creep and high arrow speed.

"Using the right number of strands for the application, BCY 8125 is probably the fastest bowstring material out there," adds Browne. "It's really quick, and its primary application is in bowstrings on high-end compound bows where maximum arrow speed is the main objective. Top 3D shooters and speed-oriented bowhunters simply love 8125 bowstrings because they're so fast. To meet that demand, today's leading custom string makers have developed bowstring manufacturing processes which capitalize on that extra speed, while at the same time significantly reducing string creep."

Even more recently, BCY developed 452X, the next step beyond its much-touted 450 Plus. Identical to 450 Plus in terms of strength and no-creep, 452X features a remarkably small strand diameter. In fact, its strands are half the size of 450 Plus, and that

Continued on page 44

delivers a better strand bundle for faster, more stable bowstrings and cables. BCY 452X is today's top-of-the-line bowstring material.

Ray Browne, Bob Deston and Dave Monighetti are the principals at BCY Inc. Browne is president, Deston is general manager and Monighetti oversees the company's financial matters.

"We've grown steadily over the years," says Browne. "We also frequently reexamine our business formula to determine why that is. To us, it seems a combination of things. To begin with, we work very hard to research, develop and offer the best and most advanced bowstring/cable materials available. We've also set up our manufacturing operations so that we're

remarkably versatile in terms of such things as color availability. Today's archers want lots of color choices in bowstring materials, and we currently offer over two dozen different colors with all of our bowstring materials."


"In addition, we provide prompt shipping, exceptional customer service and strong technical support. Much of that comes from our outstanding staff. Judy Plouffe heads up customer service, and she does a wonderful job with all of our customers. Chris Deston, a world-class shooter in his own right, handles technical support. Chris attempts to respond to every telephone call, letter and email within 24 hours."

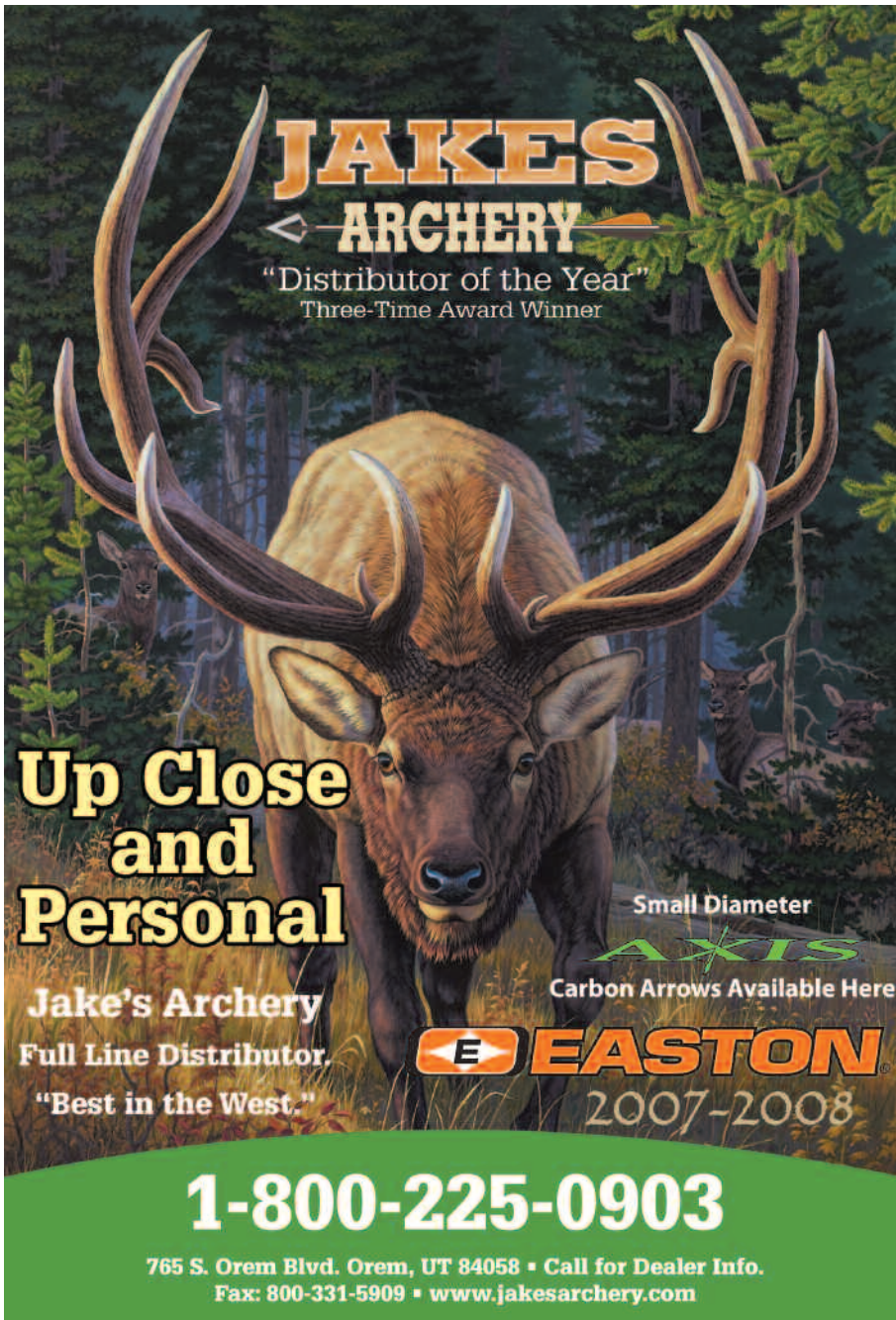
"We also get the word out and keep BCY's recognition factor high with strong advertising and marketing campaigns. BCY father-and-son team Bob and Chris Deston travel and exhibit at archery events and competitions worldwide. This year alone, they'll hit shows and shoots for BCY all across North America, in Europe and even in Africa."

"It's our firm belief," says Bob Deston, "that it's vitally important that we continuously talk face-to-face with individual archers to better understand and appreciate their desires and needs. Frankly, that talking at shows and shoots also shows people that we're keenly interested in what they do and what they want. And that's on top of the fact that we simply love what we do."

It's not easy to be a true expert in any industry. What happens all too often is the focus necessary for specialization clouds the ability to be truly empathetic with your customers.

BCY, however, blends an ongoing specialization in textiles with an amazing empathetic knack for knowing what archers want next. It's a matter of staying on top of everything and succeeding because of it.

For more information on BCY Inc. and its products, Circle #126, visit bcyfibers.com or call (860) 632-7115. 



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