

Turning Panic Into Opportunity

An Interview with Bill Canady, Chairman, OTC Industrial Technologies and Chief Executive Officer, Arrowhead Engineered Products

EDITORS' NOTE Bill Canady is the Chairman of OTC Industrial Technologies and CEO of Arrowhead Engineered Products (AEP). With more than 30 years of experience, he specializes in driving organizational growth, cutting costs, and boosting profitability. During his time as CEO of OTC, he led a 43 percent increase in revenue and an 80 percent rise in earnings, with annual sales now exceeding \$1 billion. At AEP, he oversees more than 3,600 employees and \$1.5



Bill Canady

billion in sales. He shares key leadership lessons in his new book, *From Panic to Profit: Uncover Value, Boost Revenue, and Grow Your Business* with The 80/20 Principle. A U.S. Navy veteran, Canady holds a BS in Business Administration from Elmhurst University and an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

COMPANY BRIEFS Driven by decades of industry experience, OTC Industrial Technologies (otcindustrial.com) is a trusted, one-stop-shop supplier for comprehensive industrial and manufacturing solutions. With outstanding engineering and service capabilities and a nationwide network of industry-leading vendors, OTC is invested in customizing the right solutions for its customers in virtually every industry.

Founded in 1985, Arrowhead Electrical Parts (arrowheadepinc.com) has become a worldwide distributor of non-discretionary, mission-critical aftermarket replacement parts. The company, now Arrowhead Engineered Products, is trusted by over 50,000 dealers, distributors, repair shops, and small businesses to provide quality, fit, and selection. Arrowhead's global footprint includes 10 distribution centers in North America (nine in the U.S. and one in Canada), as well as one in the U.K., plus sourcing offices

in India and China. These state-of-the-art facilities not only put the company at the forefront of production, but allow it to continually expand its product portfolio and reach new geographical markets.

Will you discuss your career journey?

My career journey began in the Navy, where I was first introduced to leadership in high-pressure, mission-critical environments. The Navy taught me the importance of discipline, teamwork, and staying calm under pressure – skills that would shape my approach to leadership for the rest of my life. After my time in the Navy, I transitioned into engineering, and it didn't take long for me to realize that my passion was not just in solving technical problems, but in

leading people toward a shared vision. I eventually moved into executive roles, leading organizations like OTC Industrial Technologies and Arrowhead Engineered Products. Throughout my career, I've focused on driving growth and transformation by creating value through strong, empowered teams and a clear, results-oriented strategy. Each step in my journey, from the Navy to engineering to leading these companies, has taught me valuable lessons about the power of disciplined execution and the importance of building trust and engagement in any organization. My experiences have shaped my belief that growth isn't just about numbers – it's about people and the strategies that allow them to thrive.

Will you provide an overview of OTC Industrial Technologies and how you define its mission?

OTC Industrial Technologies is built around one central idea: empowering our customers to succeed. We provide innovative industrial solutions and services that optimize efficiency and drive progress. Our mission is to create long-term partnerships by delivering value, whether that's through our products, expertise, or the trust we build with every interaction.

Will you highlight OTC Industrial Technologies' products and services?

We specialize in advanced industrial equipment, systems, and services, covering everything

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from compressed air systems to fluid handling solutions. But what sets us apart is our focus on service excellence – our teams work closely with customers to not only provide the tools they need, but also to help them achieve their operational goals efficiently and sustainably.

Where do you see the greatest opportunities for growth for OTC Industrial Technologies?

The greatest opportunities lie in leveraging technology to create smarter, more efficient systems and in deepening our customer relationships. By focusing on emerging industries and investing in sustainability, we can ensure long-term growth while staying ahead of market demands. The key is not just growth for growth's sake, but creating scalable systems that truly serve our clients and their industries.

What interested you in writing the book, *From Panic to Profit*, and what are the key messages you wanted to convey in the book?

I wrote this book to share the lessons I've learned through years of leading organizations through turbulent times. It's a guide for leaders who want to go beyond just surviving the chaos and instead find ways to thrive, even when the odds are stacked against them. The key message in *From Panic to Profit* is that sustainable growth doesn't happen by chance – it's the result of disciplined execution. Leaders must focus on their people, prioritize effectively, and stay grounded in profitability while maintaining trust and engagement with their teams. In my experience, it's this combination of strategic focus and human connection that turns panic into opportunity.

What do you see as the responsibility that leading companies have to be engaged in the communities they serve and a force for good in society?

Leading companies have a responsibility to invest in the well-being of their communities. It's not just about business success; it's about contributing to a thriving society. This means supporting education, creating jobs, and being mindful of our environmental impact. At OTC, we strive to align our growth with meaningful contributions to the communities we're a part of.

What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you approach your management style?

Effective leadership starts with clarity – defining the vision, setting priorities, and ensuring alignment across the organization. Whether in the Navy or in my leadership roles at OTC Industrial Technologies and Arrowhead Engineered Products, I've always been focused on creating a clear path forward for my teams. This clarity gives people the confidence to act decisively, even in times of uncertainty, as outlined in my book *From Panic to Profit*. In challenging times, it's especially important to reinforce that clarity so the team remains focused on the right priorities.

Another key to effective leadership is empowerment. I'm a firm believer in giving people ownership of their work. My management

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BEST SELLING AUTHOR OF *THE 80/20 CEO*

style is collaborative and performance-driven, with a strong emphasis on building trust and holding people accountable. By giving people the freedom to excel within a structured framework, they can bring their best ideas and energy to the table. It's all about ensuring they have the tools they need and the space to perform at their highest potential.

In *From Panic to Profit*, I discuss how effective leadership involves being adaptable, transparent, and engaged with your team. By cultivating an environment of trust and

alignment, leaders can drive sustainable results and navigate challenges, ensuring the organization is prepared not just to survive, but to thrive.

What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?

Be curious and embrace learning. Focus on developing skills that make you adaptable because the world is always changing. Seek mentors who challenge you to grow, and don't be afraid to take calculated risks. Most importantly, understand the value of relationships – success is rarely a solo endeavor. ●