

About the Authors

The father and son team, Carl, Steve, and Phil Sommer, own and operate Reliable EDM in Houston, Texas. They specialize in all types of EDM (electrical discharge machining) wire EDM, ram EDM (also known as plunge, and sinker EDM), and small hole EDM. They are the largest wire EDM job shop west of the Mississippi River.



Reliable EDM—Specializes in wire EDM, ram EDM, and small hole EDM

Carl Sommer, president, has witnessed firsthand the dramatic changes in the machining field. In 1949, he started working in a machine shop in Brooklyn, NY. It was not long before Carl began working as an apprentice tool and die maker where he learned to make dies with hand files and filing machine. Then he found a job in precision tool and die shop. The owner of the precision tool and die shop sold it, and in the new company Carl gained broad and valuable experience in virtually all areas of the machining field—precision tools and dies, fixtures, and short run production from such companies as IBM, Gyrodyne, Thikol, Fairchild Stratus, Remington, and Sikorsky Helicopter. He operated all machines, worked in the inspection department, and made precision dies where parts were ground to within .0001 (.0025 mm). (That's less than 1/20th the thickness of a human hair.) Then Carl became a foreman for a tool and die and stamping company.

Carl decided to become a New York City high school teacher. So for most of the 1970s, he worked as a New York City high school teacher in the industrial arts department. During this time he also conducted extensive

research into the problems facing America's educational institutions. This research, as well as proposed solutions, culminated in the writing the book, *Schools in Crisis: Training for Success Or Failure?*

Carl moved to Houston, Texas in 1978. The pay was so poor for teachers, that he re-entered the machine tool industry—first as a tool and die maker, then as a tool designer for one of Houston's largest tool and die and stamping shops. After six months Carl advanced to the position of operations manager, and for 5 1/2 years managed the entire company. At this shop the stamping dies were milled or ground. When the company purchased a wire EDM machine, it revolutionized their tool and die making. Now the most difficult shapes could be machined accurately into hardened tool steel.

In 1986, Sommer started Reliable EDM with his two sons. One of the major needs he saw was that individuals needed to be educated concerning the benefits of wire EDM, so he sent information to companies describing the process and the capabilities of wire EDM. Within four years, they became the largest wire EDM job shop in Texas; within nine years, they became the largest wire EDM job shop west of the Mississippi River.



One of Reliable's Wire EDM Departments

In the beginning Carl operated the EDM equipment, and with his machining background built all sorts of fixtures for the EDM shop. With his company being profitable, Carl began to follow his dreams of writing

children's books that would teach children the principles on how they can become successful. He has written 20 children's books that have won numerous awards. He is also writing three large literacy programs, *Reading Success*, a phonics literature-based reading program for adults, *Reading Adventure*, a phonics literature-base reading program for children, and *Number Success*, a practical math program from addition to trigonometry (this math program will be on 47 DVDs). For more information go to www.advancepublishing.com.

Steve Sommer M.E., vice president, received his mechanical engineering degree from the University of Houston. When Steve graduated from college, the oil crisis hit Houston and he couldn't find a job as an engineer. While going to school he worked as a machinist, so with his machinist background he found a job working as a tool and die maker. While working as a tool and die maker, he was asked to run the EDM department. His experience in engineering, machining, tool and die making, and EDMing continues to be a valuable asset for Reliable EDM. Steve has a thorough knowledge of the machining trade, computer programming, and the EDM process. He has worked over 20 years in programming and operating EDM equipment.

Phil Sommer, vice president of operations, has a degree in business administration and heads the EDM operations. He also has extensive EDM experience. Phil has years of experience in running an EDM shop and dealing with customers.



Wire EDMing to 36" Tall

Illustration: 3 1/4" Keyway EDMed 33"

The family team built their business on following the Golden Rule of doing to others what one would like being done to them. Following the Golden Rule and the exceptional experiences of this father-and-son team are the major reasons for Reliable's remarkable growth and success. With their machining background, they have modified EDM machines where they can cut parts 36" (914 mm) tall, and wire EDM a single-hole cavity in tubes up to 22" (559 mm) deep. They do all kinds of work for aerospace, defense, petroleum, plastics, electronics, medical and many other industries.

Since their company uses all the EDM equipment discussed in this book, Carl and Steve are uniquely qualified to write *The Complete EDM Handbook*. In regard to the first book Carl and Steve wrote, *Wire EDM Handbook*, Jack Sebzda, editor in chief of *EDM Today*, stated:

FINALLY...A comprehensive, professionally written book, all about Wire EDM is available to the EDM community!...

The 'Wire EDM Handbook' puts a wealth of practical, to-the-point information at your fingertips. Written for people at every level of EDM experience, this professional, hard cover book, belongs in every EDM shop." (EDM Today has repeatedly advertised and sold this book for many years."

Wire EDM Handbook went through four editions and has been used as a textbook in US colleges and technical schools. When this book was first published, an EDM salesperson who travelled to Germany told Carl that there was a book in Germany on wire EDM, but our book "makes money." This was a high compliment. Our aim in writing *The Complete EDM Handbook* is to provide practical advice for all the EDM processes. We have seen many articles with all sorts of technical information that we in the shop would never use. We have avoided this in writing this book.

There is information in this book that can literally save companies thousands of dollars. Since Carl has worked as a tool and die maker, tool designer, and operations manager of a large tool and die shop, his information alone in chapters 7 and 8 can save companies tens of thousands of dollars if implemented. Throughout this book there's much practical advice for everyone.

For more information, feel free to contact them.

Reliable EDM

6940 Fulton St.

Houston, TX 77022

800-WIRE EDM (800-947-3336)

Tel. 713-692-5454

Fax 713-692-2466

Web site: www.ReliableEdm.com

E-mail Phil or Steve@reliableedm.com