

# MassCEO Success Stories

## ESOP Business Profile

Burkart



Since its founding in 1983, **Burkart** has evolved from a small contract manufacturer into one of the world's leading makers of metal flutes and piccolos. What began as a two-person shop has grown steadily into a team of 26 skilled employees. As the company expanded, owner Lillian Burkart recognized that sustaining their high standards of craftsmanship would require a thoughtful transition in ownership.

**Burkart** has long been a pioneer in the industry introducing new metals and alloys and incorporating materials from sectors like jewelry and aerospace to enhance the sound and performance of their instruments. After nearly 40 years of innovation and excellence, Lillian and her minority partner began considering how best to preserve the company's legacy.

Because of the company's deep specialization, selling to a larger corporation wasn't an option. Outsourcing or relocating would mean losing the exceptional team whose skills are at the heart of Burkart's success. Nor did they want to entrust the company to someone without firsthand experience in the complex world of flute making.

With support from a COVID-era grant, Burkart engaged a business attorney to explore the transition to an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). This move ensures that Burkart remains locally owned and operated in Massachusetts, with the future of the company in the hands of those who helped build it.



Though the process of becoming an ESOP was complex, it marked a new chapter for Burkart. It allowed Lillian to step away from the workbench and into a guiding, advisory role, one that supports long-term planning and continued excellence. For her, employee ownership is not just a succession plan, it's a way to protect the values, culture, and craftsmanship that have defined Burkart since 1983.

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