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Garibaldi Glass Industries Inc.

'You don't know what you've got until...'



Lee Lorenzo separates shaped pieces of glass that have been pre-scored by a large, automated, computer-driven cutter. "You can really get hurt with glass," he points out, "so safety gear and safe practices are a must." Mr. Lorenzo can be seen wearing arm guards, rubber gloves, and safety glasses: He's also wearing steel-toed boots. Other safety gear such as ear plugs and masks are worn in other departments.

When Garibaldi's maintenance manager, Gerald VanGogh, received a job offer in research and development with another, world-wide company, it was too good an offer to pass up, he says.

But within a couple of months he was back at Garibaldi.

"The job included travel to different countries, the work sounded interesting, and it seemed like a good opportunity, but I was surprised at their ruthlessness," Mr. VanGogh says.

"The company culture was very different. I understand the world works that way, but I was used to knocking on [president] Carey's door if I needed some of his time and he'd drop what he was doing to talk to me.

"That sort of communication makes for a creative, problem-solving work environment and I had come to rely on that. But I didn't fully realize what I had until I didn't have it any more.



Garibaldi Glass employee Scott Wright uses a lifting frame with special suction cups to move large sheets of glass over to the cutting table.

"The other company was very much lacking in any of that sort of communication."

Mr. VanGogh says he also missed the give and take that is part of every day at Garibaldi.

"Garibaldi Glass is a high-paced place and a lot is asked of everybody, but it's also given back," he says, citing a recent experience with a new employee.

"He had only been here a month and was still on probation but said he had a family problem and needed some time off. The company's position was 'take it'," VanGogh says.

"It's a non issue. Here, family always comes first."