

# Industrial Control Service, Inc. Celebrates 50 Years of Innovation and Growth

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[Industrial Control](#) Service, Inc., a leading provider of automation control solutions, proudly celebrates its 50th anniversary. Founded in 1975 by John and Doris Ermatinger in their walkout basement in Holland, Michigan, the company has grown from a small repair business to a prominent distributor of automation products and solutions.

The journey began with a \$5,000 loan from their parents, allowing John and Doris to start a repair company for drives and electronics. The business quickly evolved into designing and manufacturing automation control panels for local manufacturing product lines. By the late 1970s, Industrial Control shifted its focus to distributing controls and other automation products, assembling a strong product offering with the help of the [Association of High Technology Distribution](#) (AHTD) of which they were founding members.

In the mid-1990s, the company moved to a new commercial location on Chicago Drive between Holland and Zeeland, Michigan. They hired full-time sales engineers to help manufacturers understand and apply newer technologies. In 1989, their oldest son, Karl Ermatinger, joined the business to digitize operations with new computers and software.

In 1996, Industrial Control relocated to a brand-new building in Zeeland, Michigan, featuring a

**INDUSTRIAL CONTROL**  **50<sup>th</sup>**  
AN MCE COMPANY **ANNIVERSARY**

**Advanced  
Manufacturing  
Expo**



Mark Ermatinger, GM of Industrial Control & President of AHTD

large training room and showcase lobby filled with automation and information for customers. The company doubled in size within a few years, prompting the hiring of their other son, Mark Ermatinger, to focus on technology, sales and marketing.

A turning point came in 2002 when John read "The E-Myth Revisited" by Michael E. Gerber, leading to the hiring of an E-Myth coach for Karl and Mark. This coaching helped explore and develop every aspect of the business and their customers. In 2003, Karl and Mark bought the business as John and Doris prepared for retirement.

The recession of 2008-2009 tested the new leaders, causing a significant drop in income and our workforce. However, with the help of sales consultant Dave Kahle, the company implemented a new commission program, leading to an average sales increase of almost 19% every year for over the next decade.

In 2017, Industrial Control signed a new vendor, Mobile Industrial Robots (MiR), and began offering self-driving autonomous floor robots. This technology became the company's largest vendor by 2023. The COVID-19 pandemic further tested the company's resilience, but with strategic resolve and the help of Michigan's Work Share Program, the company weathered the storm.

On June 1, 2023, [Motion and Control Enterprises](#) (MCE) acquired Industrial Control Service, Inc. as Karl and Mark remained to manage the company with MCE's support. In January 2025, Karl transitioned to part-time with a focus on migrating to a new ERP system, while Mark continues to lead as General Manager.

Some things of note: John and Doris are celebrating their 63rd year of marriage. Mark also became the President of AHTD for the 2024-2025 term after serving on the board of directors for 12 years. Karl and Mark founded the Advanced Manufacturing Expo (AME), now in its 10th year this August. The expo, included in the sale to MCE, features four halls: Automation, Metalworking, MRO & Safety, and i4.0 Tech Hall.

Mark Ermatinger  
Industrial Control  
Mark@IndustrialControl.com

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