



**Jack Stack, CEO  
SRC**

Springfield, Missouri  
[www.screman.com](http://www.screman.com)

SRC started in 1983 as a spin-off of International Harvester, remanufacturing diesel engines for trucks. CEO Jack Stack talks about starting and running a business in tough economic times.

“We were in a very severe recession in 1983 and faced with the possibility of losing our jobs. So a number of us went in together and bought the facility — theoretically, we bought our jobs — and went from being managers to owners. As owners, we started teaching our people how to think and act like owners. We took a bunch of mechanics and made them savvy about marketing and sales and customer relationships. We taught financial literacy, and started creating more businesses. In the past 28 years, we’ve been able to create and spin-off 59 different companies.

“But in the beginning, it was all about jobs. It was about staying in Missouri and raising our families and staying out of the unemployment line.”

Jack Stack talks about growing an employee-owned business.

“We had 119 employees when we opened in 1983, and now, worldwide, we have 1400. We look for attitude in our workers, that ‘gotta wanna.’ I’ve been in business going on 40 years, and I believe you can teach people anything. But, if they don’t have the desire — the gotta wanna — there’s nothing you can do. We really look for the person who has that desire, that attitude. That’s the key ingredient it takes to work here.

“We’re an employee-owned business, so our workers are business owners, and they’re tied into the true value of the company. They don’t just work for wages they work for equity. That’s a big play. A lot of them retire millionaires.

“We have a system where our workers understand business, and they bring fresh thoughts to the process. There’s always another idea that will eventually turn into a business. And we have people ready to take over the business.

“We’ve been able to attract Fortune 500 companies, the best in the world. We’ve done a lot of joint ventures, because these companies we bring in really catch the spirit of what we’re doing here. They really see it happening.”

SRC's Missouri story:

"I travel all over the world, talking about leadership, and I hear people on the east and west coasts say of SRC, 'those are just typical Midwestern values.' Early in my career, I took that as an insult. 'Midwestern values' sounded so flippant. Then it occurred to me, there's nothing wrong with Midwestern values! We're really focused here on creating jobs and leaving something better for the community.

"We have a real partner in Ozark Technical College. We rely on them for everything from motivational programs to highly technical programs, like engine overhauls. They're absolutely phenomenal when we bring in a new business or product line. We use their centers, their labs and their instructors, and they work with us to get funding for new ventures. Their accelerated learning processes have helped us a lot.

"I grew up in Chicago, and didn't know there was a Springfield, Missouri, let alone a Missouri. And then, all of a sudden, I ended up here in 1979, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me. Springfield is so diversified and so entrepreneurial. There's opportunity here, even in a down time. That tells you something about the resiliency of the people and the local economy. Missouri's probably one of the best kept secrets in the world."