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Cribs: Hard Manufacturing continues transformation with updated product line



An updated crib product sold by Hard Manufacturing, a Grider Street company.

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Hard Manufacturing sells pediatric cribs and beds into the majority of U.S. children's hospitals.

It's long been a comfortable position for the Grider Street company, where 42 people work.

But when Marjorie Bryen took over the company three years ago from her father, Bill Godin, she started the process of preparing Hard Manufacturing for the future. The company hired an engineering team and started talking to its customers, a process which led to the development of significant updates to its product lines.

Hard Manufacturing's new cribs include

a new electrical system, powered by linear actuators instead of old-style motors, which allows for a quick CPR release button and a battery backup. They're also available in new colors, as a nod to the evolving aesthetic sensibilities of large hospital organizations.

The new cribs and beds will come with new mattresses that take into account changes in the foam industry while still providing pressure reduction required by the hospital setting. The new mattresses will be produced by Buffalo-based Otis Beds.

Bryen said the goal is to convince customers to renew their products earlier, and to win more share of the U.S. hospital market.

"Our products have a very high renewal rate but also a very long life cycle," Bryen said. "We hope this release will incentivize people

to renew sooner instead of having our cribs for a few years too long."

The company is putting increased focus on international business, with new sales partners channels in both Australia and Hong Kong. Hard Manufacturing also sells cribs and beds into the homecare market.

Finally, the company is expecting to release a bassinet product in the next nine to 12 months, which will put Hard Manufacturing in the market of serving healthy newborns. Bryen said the company's bassinets will feel more sturdy and usable than the competition.

Hard Manufacturing traces its roots to 1876, but it's been a long time since the company made a sustained effort in the name of growth.

"We've stabilized things and put this company on a new and different path," Bryen said. "We asked ourselves how we can change what we're doing to be a leader in the industry."