

at keeping their pricing and delivery times in a comfortable and steady flow.

After a year or so, I went back to visit again and found them in an entirely new location and the company had modern facilities with a presence I thought I would never see. From the outside, I could see that a total transformation had taken place. Even the employees had corporate shirts on with the company logo. They took me to lunch at the corporate dining room, which to our standards wasn't bad, and all the working employees had company shirts and were even making their kimchi outside the lunchroom building, drying it on what appeared to be clotheslines. They all had stainless steel bowls of soup and chairs and tables to eat on, and I was so impressed with the transition I could hardly believe it. The manufacturing was even more impressive with automated sorters and straighteners going at full clip. However, the employees didn't look Korean; I found out they were from Vietnam as the South Koreans had already transformed their economy and most of the Nike shoe plants, which could be seen as these large empty warehouse facilities, were still there, but the manufacturing had already moved to China years ago.



Yunan workers feed 1" aluminum tubing to be "pultruded" down to 13mm, pickled, straightened, and anodized to give its beautiful and statin finish.

See the video of the plant:
LesLaMotte.com.

Our relationship continued for many years, and it kept growing. Just before 9/11, we found out that we had not paid one of our major suppliers for a year and now we were behind and needed to pay \$250,000 immediately. Since at that time that would have been about one-quarter of our total year's income and the total amount we spent on aluminum tubing in one year, what appeared like a boom had suddenly gone kaboom—and the effects of 9/11 took one more

shot at our bow. We had just expanded our offices and invested in redesigning them and expanding our ability, and now both of these put us in a most difficult position. We were faced with having to look at letting go of almost all of our employees