



Amber Godwin



Ed Jatzlau



Kerke Smith



Sherry Crawford

HOW TO HIT THE ONE MILLION MARK

NOV team members (USA) share how it is the people that have guided the company towards its one millionth closure sale.



When it comes to closures, NOV has been innovating and earning its reputation as a market leader for a long time. As a testament to the company's longevity and success in this field, NOV recently confirmed its one millionth closure sale. The path to this remarkable milestone has been forged by the people of NOV, who work as a team to routinely connect customers with these crucial products for pipeline safety.

This article offers insight into four individuals with very distinct backgrounds and roles at NOV, united under a singular, driving purpose: ensuring that customers can depend on quality closures. Guiding us through the story of closures are: Production Manager Amber Godwin, Welding Lead Ed Jatzlau, Customer Service Co-ordinator Sherry Crawford, and Lean Engineering Manager Kerke Smith.





Figure 1. The Sentry™ closure is designed with heavy-duty components to withstand the rigours of long-term operation and can be opened in as little as 90 seconds.

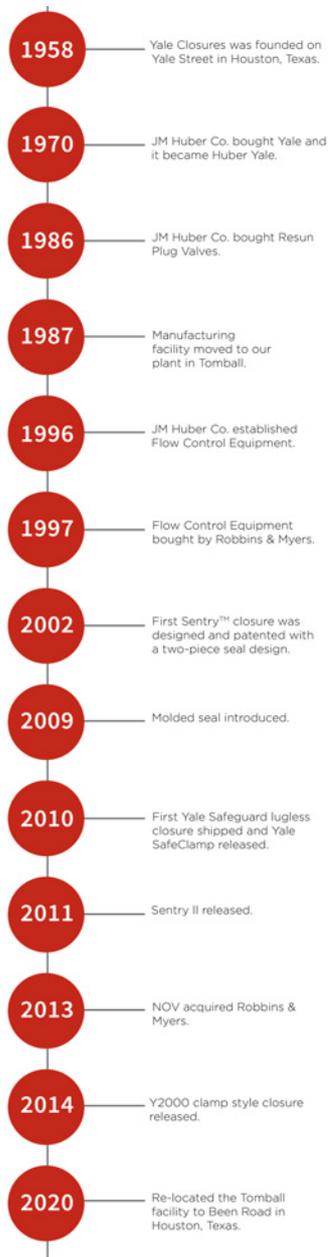


Figure 2. The history of NOV closures.

Godwin, who has been with NOV for 10 years, is firm in her belief that customers know NOV will always be here for them. “We have brand recognition in the marketplace. It speaks volumes that we have a product line that has lasted this long,” she says. “Some products come and go, but our customers can count on us.”

So, for the uninitiated, what exactly is a closure and how long has NOV been making them?

NOV has been active in the closures business since the 1950s. A closure functions like a door, providing quick and easy access to a closed system for inspecting pipelines and pressure vessels. NOV closures are customisable to any size to suit a customer’s specific requirements. For example, the company recently completed a 74 in. closure – a circumference equivalent to that of a small SUV.

Of course, a closure is more than just a door: it protects assets, products, and people from adverse environmental situations and physical harm. To that end, a tried and rigorous quality control process is followed for every closure.

“Customers get a reliable and quality product that goes through a number of steps at our state-of-the-art facility,” Jatzlau says.

As part of NOV’s culture of continuous improvement, its closures have regularly evolved to meet customer and industry needs.

“Over the years, we’ve listened to our customers as we’ve developed new closures,” Crawford says. “We have pipeline companies that depend on us to maintain their safety, and we’ve done a good job of working with them to develop products specific to their needs.”

Smith, having worked in engineering and engineering-adjacent roles over the last nine years, gets a little more technical as he discusses things from the product development side. “We’ve evolved from Sentry I to Sentry II; the Sentry II uses O-rings instead of lip seals – an easier design to install and replace in the field,” he says.

As NOV’s line of closures has grown, so too have the opportunities for engineering advancements, as Godwin explains. “Engineering has done design work to make better, easier-to-operate closures; they even look at the ergonomics of people in the field while the closure is attached to a pipeline. They’re always looking for opportunities to help products function optimally while in service.”

Naturally, the evolution of closures and the development of new features have resulted in a host of solutions to customer issues. Jatzlau, with more than three decades of experience in the business, is able to offer some examples. “On Yale Street, where our closures business started, we offered only a threaded closure back in the late 1980s. We now offer a closure that has no threads,” he says. “We have an interlocking device that holds the seal with our Sentry closures.

“We also offer the Y2000 closure that we developed. It is also threadless, with outer clamps over the hub, preventing the door from reopening under pressure.”

All NOV closures have pressure alert valves (PAVs) installed. Before a customer can open the closure, they must remove the PAV. Once this is done, the door can be opened safely.

Of course, for a company that prides itself on a stellar safety record, it certainly does not hurt to have team members like Crawford, who grew up around the industry and has put in 13 years with NOV. "My whole family is oilfield; my mom even worked for one of NOV's subsidiaries. We're roughnecks by blood, so this was my path in life," she says. "I wanted to be a teacher and I get to do training in my job now, so I have the best of both worlds." With built-in loyalty like this, NOV crews never lose sight of turning out products that they would want their own families to use.

At NOV, employee loyalty has led to the accumulation of a vast bank of knowledge and experience. Godwin's group especially racks up some big numbers when it comes to years of service. In welding alone, the team of eight welders have worked over 150 years with NOV. Godwin recently gave out two service awards – one for 35 years and another for 15.

NOV, with its innovative nature, has not only kept pace with industry needs, but continues to lead the market into the future, all while serving customers in the best way possible.

"Automation is where I think we're really doubling down," Smith says. "We're looking at having the 3D models of our

closures designed based on input from the customer. The new process automatically generates the required thickness for the design based on pressure, temperature range, and other factors. Hit 'generate,' and it creates documentation for the shop, effectively bypassing the need for a designer or engineer to have to manually generate the document.

"It also triggers the generation of a 3D model which puts together the components, general arrangement, drawing with building materials, customer information, everything you need to know about that order-specific closure. All this happens in a matter of two to three minutes, whereas previously it took the drafter 20 - 30 minutes for the drawing alone. So that's exciting."

Also new to NOV closures are QR codes. Godwin says these codes will connect added information to customers' fingertips. "They will be able to read these codes with their device, and they'll have access to catalogs, brochures, and drawings."

In reviewing all these advancements and accomplishments, it is not difficult to see how and why NOV has earned the deep trust of so many customers over the years.

NOV prides itself on being a global family. Its people possess vast expertise, deep product knowledge, and above all, a passion for excellence. These, coupled with the loyalty and the partnership of NOV's customers, have collectively resulted in the one millionth closure sale. The race to two million closures has already begun. 



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