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FAMILY-RUN BUSINESS: Max Finkelstein Inc.

By [Tire Business Staff](#)



(Max Finklestein Inc.) Max and Irving Finkelstein

Founded: by Max Finkelstein and his brother Irving Finkelstein in 1919

Based: in Astoria, New York City

Family members involved today: 12 family members are involved and represent all facets of the business.

Number of locations: The company operates 13 wholesale locations with more than 1.3 million square feet of warehouse space, serving thousands of customers along the East Coast.

Number of employees: 385

Tire brands offered: Goodyear, Dunlop, Kelly, Pirelli, Kumho, Kenda, Carlisle and Goodride. Max Finkelstein Inc. provides passenger, light truck, medium commercial, ST trailer and specialty tires.

The story behind Max Finkelstein Inc.: Harry Finkelstein provided for his family by using a horse and wagon to collect junk, which would be sorted for scrap metal and sold for extra cash. That — along with the money made from selling fruit at New York's Washington Market on weekends — helped to support his family.



(Max Finkelstein Inc. photo)

An accident took the life of the Finkelstein family's patriarch, so at the age of 15, Max Finkelstein took over his father's business and used the horse and wagon to collect scrap tires and metal.

When World War I came to a close, the scrap metal market fell apart, but Max Finkelstein remained determined. He took the few scrap tires he had collected to a wholesaler in Manhattan and had them adjusted for new tires. That's when Max Finkelstein entered the tire business.

In 1919, Max Finkelstein began selling both new and used tires. A man in his mid-20s, he would travel the roads searching for new customers, while his 16-year-old brother Irving Finkelstein worked at the store, selling and mounting tires.

Together, the brothers built the business, doing everything they could to ensure inventory the customers wanted — even taking the elevated train into Manhattan to purchase tires they didn't have in stock and returning to immediately mount them for customers.

By 1927, the business was growing. It moved to a newly constructed building on land where the Finkelstein family's home and stable once stood.



(Max Finkelstein Inc. photo) Max Finkelstein Inc.'s Astoria, N.Y. location today.

When the Great Depression hit, Max Finkelstein Inc. was hit hard. In an effort to keep his business afloat, Max Finkelstein said he shrank the business by dropping bad accounts and building a solid foundation with good-paying customers.

Over the years the dealership has weathered tough economic times. Yet the business continues to grow today, as several generations of Finkelstein family members — grandparents, children,

cousins, siblings and in-laws — work together to ensure that the integrity of the business is not compromised.

Philosophy: Throughout its 97-year history, the company's philosophy has remained unchanged. Max Finkelstein said the business is dedicated to fast service and a strict code of ethics while working to ensure the customer is the most important person in the business. Nothing is too small to be bothered with — nothing is forgotten, he added.