



A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair

Entrepreneur and KIOTI Tractor dealer Chris Masselas shares how he turned his childhood dream into a successful business

At 17, Chris Masselas started working at a tractor dealership. During the next two years, he became a journeyman, developed a passion for diesel, and worked at a number of places where he could get hands-on training repairing and maintaining tractors and other machinery. In addition, Masselas learned about the value of quality service and support and the importance of being honest and trustworthy when building customer relationships. Masselas also decided quickly, that one day, he wanted to run his own tractor dealership.

When he turned 22, Masselas began to pursue that dream and purchased his own shop – [A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair](#). A 500-square-foot shop based in San Andreas, California, A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair offered service and support for tractors and other mechanical equipment. Providing his support from day one, Masselas' brother Niko joined the business full-time after a few years. Soon the Masselas brothers' parents joined the business and with the four family members now partners forming a limited liability company, A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair found business on the rise. That's when they decided they were ready to sell tractors.

So, C. Masselas began searching for tractor manufacturers and it was not long before he met with a representative from [KIOTI](#), who took the time to get to know the Masselas brothers, walk through the A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair facility, research the market size, and realize the potential.

In 2015, they started selling KIOTI tractor products.

In 2016, A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair was named KIOTI's 2015 New Dealer of the Year. In 2017, A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair received [KIOTI's 2016 5-Paw Dealer Excellence](#) status, a certification which honors dealerships who deliver outstanding overall performance. In just two short years, the dealership has sold almost

100 KIOTI tractors to small homeowners/landowners in the Tri-county area (Calaveras, Amador and Tuolumne Counties).

What is the secret to this dealer's success? "Confidence," said C. Masselas. "The customer needs to be confident in us. They need to have confidence in the tractors we sell and in the service we provide. Buying a tractor is an investment, and we want our customers to be satisfied with their tractor and trust that we will work with them to care for it." C. Masselas continued to explain that the team at A-1 works hard to earn each customer's trust and keep the relationship strong.

Success also reflects the Masselas' confidence in KIOTI. Potential customers may not know much about KIOTI when they first walk through the doors at A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair, but it does not take long for the A-1 team to educate them.

"KIOTI prides itself on being a well-built tractor with great finishes and quality craftsmanship," C. Masselas explained. "I would put KIOTI side-by-side any other tractor on the market and KIOTI will blow the competition away. KIOTI tractors are well thought out from top to bottom, from fit to finish – and they are user-friendly."

KIOTI is part of a family-owned company, [Daedong Industrial Company, Ltd.](#), which has been a world leader in the engineering and development of mechanized farming equipment for 70 years. The company's responsiveness to complex market challenges, manufacturing excellence and commitment to durable, high quality products, has resulted in a worldwide presence in more than 30 markets around the globe.

C. Masselas looks forward to a long-term relationship with KIOTI. He appreciates the skill set and understanding that his KIOTI rep has given him since day one and continues to enjoy the relationship they have today. "It is a true partnership. KIOTI listens when I share feedback from our team and our customers. Whether we are inquiring about a part, have a service question or need some marketing support, there is always someone at KIOTI who is there to respond to our needs," explains C. Masselas.

An example of that responsiveness was in September 2015. Wild fires devastated the Tri-county area. The fires, California's third worst wildfire in history, started in the canyon and quickly spread from 1,000 acres to more than 75,000. Once the fires were out, residents pulled together to clean up. That's when A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair and KIOTI worked together to get tractors in the hands of folks who could use them to move trees, fences and other debris from their respective properties

safely and effectively. Then landowners used those same tractors to prepare that land for use again – for farming, grazing, etc. To this day, A-1 continues to grow and be a positive force in the Tri-county area.

Today, A-1 Sharpening and Small Engine Repair consists of a 7,000-sq.ft. facility with enough Kioti tractors to allow customers to see the products firsthand. With the success the Masselas' have had in recent years, A-1 is surely a dealer to watch.