

# Steven Bankler, CPA, Ltd.

## Client Spotlight: Keaco, LLC

Mark Keatts was at the top of his game selling electronic packaging solutions when he was forced to shift gears. It was the late 1980s and surface mounted components were just being introduced, which changed electronic packaging dramatically. Keatts helped design some of the first component reels still used today for packaging surface mount components, and his sales efforts catapulted his international employer through the change successfully.

Then he was suddenly let go.

“I was in Kerrville, so there weren’t a lot of options for me,” he remembers. “I told my wife Lori: We have a problem.”

A loyal customer in Singapore encouraged Keatts to go out on his own, and that’s just what he did. For more than a year he worked from the kitchen table building his own company. By 1991, Keaco began marching forward through many industry and economic changes thanks to Keatts’ ability to spot opportunities and take risks.

“The electronics industry is very cyclical, and it can turn on a dime,” he says.

They started out making only component reels but soon moved into making the carrier tape for the reels, too, which Keatts considers a turning point. Keaco now has 29 forming machines and is one of the top carrier tape manufacturers in the country.



Keatts’ eagerness to innovate around customer needs has now expanded beyond the electronics industry and into other areas like medical and manufacturing.

“We were approached at trade shows by manufacturers in various industries with very specialized needs,” he says. Those conversations turned into solutions like mixing wells for rapid strep test kits and thermoformed pocket tape for diabetes test kits.

As the corporation grew, so did its tax bill. Keatts started working with Steven Bankler, CPA, Ltd., to help reduce unnecessary tax obligations and to get a better handle on businesses finances.

“Right away Steven recommended a business structure change I wouldn’t have thought to consider on my own. It improved our succession plan and should result in big tax savings,” he says.



And with taxes once again under control, Keatts can better focus on the business, which now manufactures carrier tape and packages about 140,000 components every day from its new building in Schertz, Texas. Keaco has also grown into quite the family

affair. Keatts’ son, daughter-in-law, daughter and her fiancé all work for the business now, too.

*Learn more about Keaco, LLC at*

[keaco-smt.com](http://keaco-smt.com)

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