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TNT EDM

Industry: Tooling Design

Location: Plymouth, Michigan, USA

"CimatronE enables us to standardize with a single package throughout the entire design and production process, rather than using a different package for each step."

At A Glance

TNT has grown and expanded from its origin as a tool and die shop into a production-machining contractor for the medical, automotive and aerospace industries. Long regarded as one of the most progressive shops in the industry, TNT EDM continues to expand its operation and maintain its competitiveness through an adept use of technology.

The Challenge

TNT EDM works with large customers that provide the company with the most challenging and complex jobs. TNT is faced with the challenge of maintaining the high quality for which it is known, while responding to increasing pressure to lower costs and shorten delivery times.

The Solutions

TNT EDM uses CimatronE for all the tasks involved in the production cycle.

The Results

- Using a single package throughout the shop enables TNT EDM to continuously deliver high quality product on-time.
- User training time has been reduced and productivity increased.

| TNT EDM Standardizes Processes with Cimatron

TNT EDM has made a name for itself as a model tooling company. Its state-of-the-art facility in Plymouth, Michigan is designed to "demonstrate excellence to our customers and provide an extremely comfortable environment for our people," says Tom Mullen, TNT president and owner. "My employees are top-quality. The equipment and shop I provide should also be top-quality!"

Though TNT was founded as an EDM shop, much of its work today involves conventional and hard milling as well. Shop equipment includes high-speed 3-through 5-axis milling machines as well as orbital sinker and top-of-the-line Mitsubishi wire EDMs.

Challenge: Save Time and Costs, Maintain Top Quality

Its large customers provide TNT with challenging and complex jobs. TNT must maintain its well-known high quality, while responding to increasing pressure to shorten delivery times.

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TNT also faces production challenges. According to Chris Skinner, TNT system administrator, "We have CAD data thrown at us from all different types of software. We need a solution that is flexible enough to take any data and run the entire tooling process fluidly."

Solution: CimatronE Integrative Solution For Tooling

Today, TNT uses Cimatron for the entire production cycle. "We spent over two years looking for the ideal software, one that provides a more complete solution," says Skinner. In over eighteen years of using CAD/CAM software, Skinner has often been frustrated by the need to use different products for different tasks. "We wanted a single software solution for the entire design and manufacturing process. This means our solution needs a flexible translator that deals effectively with numerous data formats. It must have robust modeling capabilities with an intuitive interface. And probably most important, we need an NC solution that is true 'machinist software' in handling everything from very simple routines to the most complex surfacing, with minimal ramp up time for new users."

Results: TNT Wins New Business With Cimatron On Board

Skinner is happy to report that Cimatron proved to be different from other software investigated. "Using a single solution saves us lots of time that would otherwise be spent moving data and translating files. We save even more time since Cimatron is really geared toward tooling and automates many tasks, down to electrode design, process sheets, engineering changes, and 3- to 5-axis NC."

In addition to CimatronE integration and automation, Skinnners notes some other areas where Cimatron excels:

Hybrid Modeling: "Cimatron helps get things done quicker and better. It's very powerful and flexible for both solid and surface work. Even if the part model isn't optimal, I don't have to spend a day or two on part redesign – things like developing parting lines and surface runoff are very easy to get done."

Short Learning Curve: "In just a few weeks, even less experienced users have been able to tackle things on their own. The software is intuitive enough that EDM operators with no prior design experience are designing their own electrodes."

Customer Service: "The people at Cimatron really listen to our needs as users, and it shows with every new release of the software."

Winning new business with Cimatron

According to Skinner, Cimatron is helping TNT do a better job and win more business every day. "Recently, we landed a large customer because we were able to turn over the entire mold, from design to manufacturing, in two weeks. There's no doubt in my mind we wouldn't have been able to do it without the assistance of Cimatron software."

