

Honing the Competitive Edge at Orbit Machining

Orbit Machining (Franklin Park, IL) wrestled with the question: Is it better to reduce cycle time or increase productivity to improve profitability? Yes, they really are different approaches, as learned by Orbit's owner, George Zarytsky. Founded in 1969, Orbit was among the first Chicago-area machine shops to embrace CNC technology and use it as a competitive advantage in a tough market.

Zarytsky's accounting background had him continuously analyzing how to drive down cycle time and gain more return on the company's investments in capital equipment. Over the years, Orbit invested in pallet changers, HMC's, 4-axis lathes, twin-spindle lathes, and bar feeders. And as good as his equipment was, he still felt his competitive advantage eroding.

With skilled labor scarce and prices squeezed, Zarytsky chose to embrace the newest technology – multi-tasking machining. His objective was to increase Orbit's proficiency in this new methodology and generate higher sales, margins, and profits. The strategy was to pass on a portion of the cost savings to customers to earn their loyalty and capture more work to justify the investment.

Ideally, the multi-tasking machine would out-produce CNC work-centers, complete the part in one set-up, and require less direct labor. A Mazak Multiplex 6200Y with a GL100F load/unload robot fulfilled this objective and more. With its twin spindles and

twin-turret turning and machining capabilities, it has outperformed even Orbit's lofty goals.

"This equipment has opened doors for us and changed the way we do business," Zarytsky says. "We compete on a global scale, with increases in profit-per-employee, productivity, efficiency, and quality, as direct labor and operating costs have dropped. All the while, our deliveries have improved and throughput is up 30%. Our edge is back!"