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A rewarding retrofit

By Carl Kirkland

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At a moldmaking startup company in Calgary, AB, cooler heads prevailed. At a fraction of the cost of new machining centers, the high-performance retrofit controls they purchased optimized the performance of their machines.

A state-of-the-art constant velocity control (CVC) developed by technology entrepreneur Carlo Miceo at Miceli Technologies Inc. (MTI; Essex, ON) was retrofitted to a decade-old Fadal vertical machining center at a startup company, Fidelity Machine & Mould Solutions (Calgary, AB). Almost immediately the co-owners Jeff Litster and Ryan Arsenau, achieved the productivity and operational benefits they needed to manage their growing demand for their services.



An affordable retrofit Constant Velocity Control system from MTI transformed a 10-year-old VMC, and helped transform this startup into the biggest moldmaker in town.

In just a few hours after powering it up, their old VMC reported itself as a new machine. And, though both Arsenau and Litster were skeptical, they discovered that the CVC's learning curve took half the time involved with other OEM controls they used.

Just last year Litster and Arsenau decided to leave Windsor, ON for the growing business opportunities sparked by Alberta's energy sector. They and two other friends from Windsor—Corey Homick and Joseph Brant—opened Fidelity in the summer of 2007 and their business quickly grew, particularly in supplying tooling for cable overmolding. Today they do three to four such jobs a week.

"We quickly became the major source for injection molds in the area. About 50% of our work is in general and CNC machining," Litster says.

Fidelity started out with two OKK vertical machining centers: a MCV820 and a smaller 1996-vintage PCV55. "We needed maximum speed from them, primarily to keep up with cable overmolding demand. Mechanically, these machines were capable of moving at 300-inches per minute, but their outdated controls were incapable of pushing that speed accurately at anywhere near these speeds."