



Move Over Multi-Palletization.

*One-Up Machining
Proves Cost Effective.*

HISTORY

A visit to Productivity's showroom way back in 2008, would plant an idea in manufacturing supervisor Jody Miedema's head that in time would change the way Alliant Techsystems Inc. (ATK) runs parts. ATK is a world leader in affordable and innovative defense solutions for U.S. and allied security requirements; the largest supplier of military ammunition; and prime contractor for several advanced precision weapon systems. It is a leader in tactical and target missiles, strategic missile and missile defense propulsion, integrated medium caliber gun systems, electronic warfare systems, and tactical systems.

ATK has been in the sporting equipment accessories business for more than 75 years. An umbrella company that has merged the talents of more than 15 different companies, ATK welcomed in Outers located in Onalaska, WI, in early 2000. Before that Outers relocated from their original home in Texas in the early 80s and has been a primary metal manufacturing company for firearm accessories since 1930.

A primary line of Outers has been Weaver optic glass systems and solid, industry-standard rings and bases for riflescopes and binoculars. Extreme clarity, a hardy exterior and a sturdy platform, have made Weaver optics legendary for 79 years.



Jody Miedema and Bob Zastrow.



Idea would change the way ATK runs parts.

ISSUE

In early 2009, Jody revisited Productivity along with Bob Zastrow, engineering manager, to visit with their long time sales rep and friend Roger Olson. "Roger has been our equipment sales representative longer than he has even been at Productivity," says Jody. Roger knew what they were looking for and the challenges they faced to aid in the production of their new product line. ATK was using the multi-palletization process they have always initiated in the past. However after experiencing a live demonstration of a Robodrill working within a workcell, Jody and Bob knew they needed to rethink their strategy.

Armed with all the numbers, the two went home and discovered there would be a significant cost savings machining one-up verses multi-palletization. In addition, the data showed that the initial cost of the equipment was going to be cheaper than all the tooling dollars they would have to spend using the multi-palletization method. Plus the lights out machining advantages would reduce part production cost by nearly 50 percent. It was clear that not only would it be cheaper to go one-up, but by the end of the day the company would produce more parts.

While they are still in the infancy stage, ATK has several items scheduled to run in this piece of equipment and is seriously considering additional cells.

Bob Zastrow's father grew up in the west side of Wisconsin; however as a boy Bob was raised near Milwaukee. "All my family lived and hunted in this area prime with hunting and fishing and it was always my dream to find a job on this side of the state," said Bob. So when he ran across an ad for a product engineer in Onalaska, WI it was a dream come true.

Bob's formal training was from the University of Wisconsin Parkside where he received his mechanical engineering degree. Bob became the new products engineer from 1996 to 2001 and then when the engineering manager retired Bob stepped into the position.

Jody Miedema was born and raised in the Onalaska area. His father worked for Outers for 36 years focusing on farm products and services, a department that has long since vanished. Jody had the opportunity to work for Outers right after high school but decided instead to move to Arizona. Not sure what he wanted to do with his life Jody returned home and decided to take a job starting at ground level with Outers in 1989. "I did not attend college but I did get lots of schooling" laughed Jody, "I worked hard and learned every day." Jody was promoted from his product coordinator position after two years and then was asked to run the night shift. Jody was responsible for all activities during that shift. In 2004 the tenured supervisor Don Boise retired and Jody was promoted to manufacturing supervisor.

