

NORTHSIDE MACHINE INVESTS FOR SUCCESS



Denny, Mike, Debbie, and Rich Smith of Northside Machine pose in front of one of their Mazak machines, a Variaxis 500-5X five-axis machining center.

Northside Machine Company, located in Dugger, Indiana, enjoys a first-class reputation with its customers by providing on-time service, quality workmanship, and competitive pricing. Owner Rich Smith understands a profitable company not only needs suppliers who can support his company's specific needs, it also must have valuable employees. That's why he believes in providing his employees with the resources and training required to manufacture quality products. This also means being willing to invest in the most innovative machine tools to support his business.

Currently, Northside Machine manufactures precision components for the military, firearms, automotive, and medical industries, all of which are demanding and competitive markets. To maintain a profitable and reliable business in these environments, a company must be lean and efficient. These markets also demand suppliers to be rock solid financially with a well-planned future.

In 1996, Northside Machine invested in a Mazak VTC-20B Vertical Machining Center from their local distributor, Shelton Machinery (Fishers, Indiana). Mr. Smith researched and compared the various machine manufactures before making this decision. According to Rich Smith, he chose to partner with Shelton Machinery and Mazak "because Mazak incorporated the latest in technology on their machine tools and Shelton Machinery

displayed great knowledge of the machines they sell." Since investing in its first Mazak, Northside Machine has returned to Shelton for 12 additional Mazak machines.

Many of Northside Machine's customers are established companies that require complex parts. The company is also often involved in prototyping parts and following through to the production phase. Through Rich Smith's leadership, Northside Machine has the ability to machine a wide variety of complex parts, either in development stage or in production due to his vision when purchasing equipment. This company does not purchase equipment for just one project. According to Mr. Smith, "We look ahead and try to be diversified without getting away from our core business decision. For instance, an additional option on a lathe many not affect the current project, but it could prove to be beneficial in the future."

Shelton Machinery and Mazak have been instrumental in Northside Machine's ability to be innovative in their machine tool purchases. Mazak is always on the leading edge of technology, and Shelton Machinery has the knowledge and experience to support the equipment. "Shelton Machinery has shown the willingness to work with us; everyone from the ownership down to their customer service people," Smith says. "They demonstrate both honesty and integrity while taking caring of their customers."

Another reason that Northside Machine consistently provides quality parts on time to their customers is their preventive maintenance program. All Northside Mazak machines are set up on a preventive maintenance schedule with Shelton Machinery. A Shelton Machinery service technician visits Northside Machine on a regular basis to perform routine checks. Referring to this program, Rich Smith stated, "it helps to reduce downtime, which increases productivity. Potential problems can be recognized before they cause production issues."

Along with a proactive maintenance program, it also is essential to take calculated risks. Northside Machine does this by purchasing equipment that may have more features than they currently need, but will help them grow in the future. Rich Smith states, "We know what kind of work we have done in the past where various machine options would have increased efficiency. Sometimes you have to go with your gut feeling, knowing an investment will ultimately pay off in the future. These types of investments make us more competitive."

Speaking of the future, Mr. Smith's sons, Mike and Denny, each with a mechanical engineering degree from Purdue University, are deeply involved in day-to-day operations. They have helped the company grow by sharing in management, production, and planning responsibilities. If you would like to learn more about Northside Machine, please visit their website at www.northsidemachine.com.



Various Northside parts