

# PMPA Member Fischer Special Tooling Wins at Problem Solving and Performance

In 1957, Howard H. Fischer founded what would become Fischer Special Tooling, a machining shop which at the time was one of the few in the Cleveland area that dealt with tungsten carbide. In its early days, Fischer Special Tooling manufactured parts for cutting tools, gages and high-heat applications.

Today, the company operates in Mentor, Ohio, with its 14 employees in a 10,000-square-foot facility where it has expanded upon its former product line and now specializes in parts that solve problems for customers through rigorous attention to detail.

“We tend to be higher in precision and performance than many of our competitors,” Kevin Johnson, president of Fischer Special Tooling, says. “We come in when a customer or end user needs something done right, such as making a custom tool for a new application.”

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One of Fischer’s innovative solutions is its Hyper-Change, a precision holder that allows for tooling changes to occur in less than 10 seconds. The product originated after the company was approached by a customer who couldn’t get the repeatability or rigidity they needed for high-volume precision machining. The result is a precision holder that reduces labor expenses, eliminates tooling adjustments and allows older equipment to compete with modern CNCs.

“We went at it with a totally different approach and concept,” Mr. Johnson says. “We’re looking to find those niches where people have to have that high precision and rigidity.”



Precision Carbide Tooling Engineered for High Performance

Another unique asset to Fischer is the company’s trepan form and end-facing form tools, which cut end features often difficult to manufacture and, according to Mr. Johnson, is a unique offering for PMPA members. Fischer also has two of the few Swiss CNC form grinders in the U.S., which are able to hold tight tolerances and give the products a nice finish.

While Fischer remains on the cutting edge within its niche, Mr. Johnson says overseas production and a lack of trained engineers in the United States is increasingly becoming a threat to the precision machining industry. According to Mr. Johnson, as parts become smaller and more complex, there is an increased demand for an engineer’s method of problem solving. He also mentions that many products that are easy to make are often outsourced to countries outside of the U.S.

“To dominate a market, you need creativity in the process. Fischer helps customers creatively engineer process tooling,” Mr. Johnson says.

A member since 1996, Fischer Special Tooling has been active in PMPA to gain, and share, technical expertise. PMPA’s Management Update conferences and technical advice have been crucial in Fischer’s development and has greatly expanded the company’s engineering prowess. Mr. Johnson says the ability to rely on other companies for advice and questions has allowed Fischer to grow from a knowledge and customer standpoint, equally.

“PMPA has been a one-stop shop from a management and technical perspective, and every company needs some guidance,” Mr. Johnson says. “Whether you’re a toolmaker or a machine shop, you’re going to gain some powerful and well thought-out practices.”

*Fischer Special Tooling is located at 7219 Commerce Drive, Mentor, Ohio 44060. Phone: 440-951-8411.*

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