

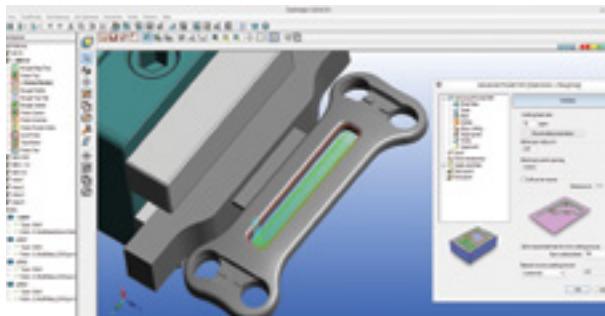
PMPA Technical Member PartMaker Inc. Finds Success through Pioneering CAM Software and Excellence in Applications Support

For almost 25 years, PartMaker Inc., a subsidiary of Autodesk's Delcam unit, has worked tirelessly to stay on the cutting edge of CAD/CAM software solutions—even when the CNC industry was still catching up to it. PartMaker Inc. president, Hanan Fishman, explains that when the company first introduced CAM software in 1996 to easily program turn-mill machines, machine tools that could do turning and milling in a single setup, the launch went over "like a lead balloon."

"The available hardware just wasn't ready for it," Mr. Fishman says. "In the mid-90s, turn-mills couldn't do much milling, so they were largely used as two-axis lathes. Many view two-axis turning as a simple task to program, so there wasn't much demand for sophisticated CAM software for turn-mill applications in the mid-90s."

That humbling experience sent PartMaker Inc.'s development team back to the drawing board, where it began learning about Swiss turning. While the lack of horsepower in the turn-mill machines of the mid-90s made them too primitive for PartMaker's software at the time, the company recognized an underserved niche in CAM software for Swiss-type lathes. According to Mr. Fishman, turn-mills have certain similar characteristics to Swiss-type lathes from a programming perspective, but there were also some fundamental differences that resulted in a gap in the market for CAM software for Swiss-type lathes. The PartMaker team built on the patented technology in its software for turn-mill machines to broaden its offering to support Swiss-type lathes, a development that earned it a second U.S. patent. The result of that development, PartMaker SwissCAM, was met with huge demand from PMPA members and the precision machining industry as a whole.

"Nobody had programming software for Swiss-type lathes," Mr. Fishman says. "Our technology made it easy, and as a result, we experienced meteoric growth."



The company's success in marketing its PartMaker SwissCAM software led to its acquisition by Delcam in 2006 (Delcam was subsequently acquired by Autodesk in 2014.) Today, PartMaker provides CAM solutions for eight key industry sectors, including medical, dental, aerospace, telecommunications and firearms. Mr. Fishman credits the company's deep knowledge of these industries as a large contributor to its success. The company strives to provide top-notch technical support, support which not only includes software training, but practical advanced manufacturing training as well. Another factor has been PartMaker Inc.'s ability to incorporate a direct sales model to serve its customers.

"CAM software for multi-axis turning and Swiss is a particularly narrow niche that requires a lot of domain knowledge and focus to be successful," Mr. Fishman says. "The direct sales model has been a cornerstone to our success as an organization, because it allows us to provide a high level of expertise, one that wouldn't have been available in the traditional CAM software reseller-based sales approach."

Since PartMaker's inception, the company has helped its customers overcome a number of challenges within the industry, such as outsourcing overseas, the demand for smaller lot sizes of more complex parts, as well as shorter lead times. PartMaker has also helped many of its users evolve into digital manufacturing as paper drawings have been replaced by 3D solid models as the norm in transmitting engineering part geometry.

A PMPA member since 2000, PartMaker was the first CAM software developer to join the organization. Since that time, PMPA has provided the company with a large customer base of manufacturers who need unique CAM solutions for a variety of CNC applications. In addition to growing its customer base, Mr. Fishman appreciates the PMPA's efforts to put a face on the precision machining industry.

"The PMPA is such a great organization because in the machine tool industry, there's a tendency to focus on the technical part of the business, but the PMPA focuses on the human and business side of things," Mr. Fishman says. "PMPA members are forward-thinking people who are shaping the landscape of manufacturing in North America. It's an organization we're very proud to have the opportunity to be a member of."

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