

Mastercam software is driven with PMPA member needs in mind

Mastercam®, developed by CNC Software, Inc., is the most widely used CAD/CAM software in the world. Founded in 1983, CNC Software is one of the oldest companies in the PC-based CAD/CAM industry and operates with the main goal of providing its customers with superior software products that solve simple to complex design and machining problems.

Although the Mastercam product line offers a variety of software options for many applications, the Swiss-style machine market became a primary focus for Mastercam in 2010, when the company acquired software specific to the market.

“We’ve spent the last couple of years tweaking and tuning that software to bring it back to the market,” said Gary Hargreaves, vice president of business development, Mastercam/CNC Software. “Another aspect we’ve been focusing on is continuing to build our library of machine environments to support both newer and older machine tools.”

Mastercam’s primary product for Swiss-style machining is Mastercam Swiss Expert, specialized CAD/CAM software for precision programming. It is specifically designed for controlling Swiss-style CNC machines, reducing startup time, and is ideal for optimizing cycle times while supporting many tooling types.



“One of the main differentiating factors for Swiss Expert, from other software, is that it’s highly visual,” explained Bill Martel, technical services specialist, Mastercam/CNC Software. “The programs incorporate 3-D graphics and Gantt charts for process organization and synchronizing as well as process planning. Swiss Expert also provides full simulation of projects on the user’s fully tooled virtual machine, showing the code running in sync with the simulation.”

Mastercam prides itself on the breadth of its line and the strong support staff for the programs.

“The direction that Mastercam is going with our precision machining products is driven with PMPA members and their needs in mind,” added Ben Mund, marketing manager, Mastercam/CNC Software. Attendees at the Precision Machining Technology Show in April can see Mastercam in action in booth 437.

In order to provide the best solutions to PMPA members, Mastercam has a machine shop onsite with a variety of machine tools for testing the software.

“We’ve had five different Swiss-type machines on our floor in the past two years, allowing us to develop machine posts in house. For the research and development of Mastercam products, we use the shop to test our software the practical way,” explained Mr. Martel. “We cut a lot of parts in our shop.”

For Mastercam’s team, PMPA membership provides them with education about the markets that they serve.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

What Gives Your Shop Traction?

in broad daylight on dry, well-marked highways. Sometimes we find ourselves driving in the darkness, visibility limited to our head-lighted area, and with little knowledge of what may lie on the road ahead. Our shops too lack a clear vision of what may lie ahead, and we all know that the conditions for sustaining our business continue to grow more challenging from global competitiveness and adversarial government actions in regulatory, tax and other areas. Having a knowledgeable staff is necessary, but not sufficient. As the challenges we face continue to expand, so too does our need to reinvest in keeping our staff up to speed. Continuing education and training for all of our team members is critical to assuring our performance when the going gets tough.

Scale

Scale is probably the one determinant of our ability to serve the market that we take for granted and fail to give much consideration. Order quantity determines the capacity that your shop needs to successfully deliver the job, just as tolerances and features determine the capability needed. Most of us recognize that we have what we have when we are driving in difficult conditions. And I think that all of us realize that we have what we have when we approach a difficult stretch in our business journey. But unlike while driving, we

can change the relative scale or capacity of our shops as circumstances dictate. Having a third of your shop's floor covered with idle machines is not "being prepared" for the future. It is a parasitic load on the productive-capacity of the remaining production. There is no honor in keeping obsolete or unused equipment. Sunk costs are sunk costs. Look at your unused capacity through the lens of "highest and best use" to determine if it really belongs in your shop or ought to be converted to cash to allow you to upgrade your capabilities in technology, knowledge or staff capability.

Just like we put on proper boots, assure our tires are in good shape and walk or drive carefully according to conditions, so too should we as managers be paying attention to the four drivers of our shops' traction: having and understanding our technology, knowledge, staff capabilities and scale. Over- or under-reaching in any of these areas can put us into a skid or cause us to lose control, making us take extreme actions to keep on track. Yes, it is important to keep our eye on the goal. But even more importantly, it is critical to understand what gives our shops traction and drive them accordingly.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

PMPA Member Profile - Mastercam

"One of my most positive experiences through PMPA was actually going to a conference in Switzerland. I was able to learn about what the companies in the precision machining industry in Europe do and how they do it," Mr. Hargreaves said. "It was a great educational experience."

"PMPA really focuses on education of not only their current members, but of the future members. It's exciting to be a part of that," added Mr. Martel. "Beyond that, I'm very impressed with how PMPA is organized internally as well as how they organize their events."

Mr. Martel also explained that the information shared on all levels ranging from the technical conference to the Management Update and even local chapter meetings

provides an exceptional value to Mastercam as well as to the individual staff members.

"One of our original reasons for joining PMPA was for networking, which has been incredibly important for gaining face time with the customers that we serve. We also got involved for the many PMPA resources that are available to us," Mr. Martel continued. "As a company, there are many more opportunities we can take advantage of and there is even more that we can learn about the organization."

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