

# Thomason Machine Works reduces tooling waste by 30% and cuts PO ordering time



## OVERVIEW:

### Thomason Machine Works, Inc.

Founded in 1978 by James Thomason, Thomason Machine Works is now a second-generation company, with sons Dave and Mike, along with Jim, running day-to-day operations. The company is known for high-precision machining, including production of fasteners and fastener replacement/repair parts, feed rollers and transfer fingers and arms, and other parts for automotive, aerospace and drill rig customers around the world.

**Application:** Inventory management for a range of turning, milling and general metalworking applications

**Location:** 37,000 sq. ft. in Rockford, IL

## CHALLENGE:

**Cut costs and improve inventory management efficiency and productivity**

## SOLUTION:

**MSC ControlPoint™ Inventory Management solution helps reduce tooling costs and improve inventory-ordering processes**

## RESULTS:

**Tooling waste has been reduced by 30%, while inventory-ordering costs have been cut by \$18,000 annually**

Time saved in procurement can be applied elsewhere, and boost productivity.

# “The MSC ControlPoint Inventory Management solution has helped us control and manage our inventory on a daily basis. Over the years, MSC has helped us reduce our tool waste by up to 30%.”

Jessica Schoester, Customer Service Director

### CHALLENGE

In all, Thomason has 12 CNC machining centers, six CNC turning centers, two wire EDM machines, several manual mills, manual lathes, surface grinders and ID/OD grinders, and other supporting equipment.

However, Thomason, like many similar-sized shops that run full throttle almost every shift, struggled with tool inventory management—especially accountability and organization. The company stored most of its tooling in cabinets in its primary office area. There were also containers throughout the shop, as each machinist had their own personal stash of taps, end mills, drills and other tools.

“It was very unorganized,” says David Thomason. “One day, four guys would have a half-dozen taps that were the right thread size; the next day, no one had any taps that were the proper size for what we had to machine.”

### SOLUTION

MSC had deep knowledge of Thomason’s needs; the companies had been working together for more than 12 years. Upon examination, when MSC’s metalworking experts suggested an inventory management solution, the benefits quickly became apparent.

“We now have an MSC ControlPoint Drawer unit that’s supported by a few accessory Lockers that all run off the same inventory management software,” says Mike Thomason. The unit is loaded with almost 800 items, including Kennametal, Accupro, Hertel and Allied tools, and a range of MRO supplies. The company plans to expand capacity with more units in the near future.

Tool reordering is automatic, occurring each night through the unit’s inventory management software, programmed with preset quantities based on Thomason’s needs. Delivery is made via UPS the next morning. All MSC shipments come clearly marked and separated for the vending machine so anyone at Thomason can put everything away in minutes.

### RESULTS

“The MSC ControlPoint Inventory Management solution has helped us control and manage our inventory on a daily basis,” says Jessica Schoester, Thomason’s customer service director. “Over the years, MSC has helped us reduce our tool waste by up to 30 percent.” She includes cost reductions both in removing unused tools from inventory and the savings in reduced consumption and tool hoarding. “It enables us to manage the way things are used,” she adds, “to make sure there’s no waste or unnecessary expenditures on our part.”

“What MSC really provides is a total inventory management solution that actually doubles as a time management system, because our management can now focus on getting work pushed through the shop faster, versus wasting time on the phone ordering bags of oil dry,” adds Mike Thomason. He estimates that they have saved one hour per day ordering and processing POs, which comes to a savings of \$18,000 per year.

### SUCCESS FACTORS

**Reject Business as Usual:** You’re under pressure to run faster and smarter; don’t accept the status quo. When tools are scattered around the shop, and you find yourself running out of inventory—which stops production—you need to make a change.

**Get a Second Pair of Eyes:** Work with a supplier with deep industry experience and the ability to provide advice on tooling, MRO and your production processes. An expert partner can bring you new ideas that can have a dramatic impact on your business.