Vending Sharpens Tool Management

Pentagon EMS Corp. (Beaverton, OR) is a global leader in the PC board assembly tooling market. Founded in 2002, the electronics manufacturing solutions company grew ten-fold in its first three years of operation. Today, Pentagon has more than 50 employees, a satellite manufacturing facility in Mexico, advanced CNC machining technology, and, more importantly, countless strong customer and supplier partnerships to enable it to offer unmatched product and service excellence.

According to Hugh Young, production manager for Pentagon EMS, the company prides itself on designing and manufacturing tooling that makes PC board assembly operations fast, accurate, and reliable. "Our line of work revolves around quick turnaround times. When a customer approves their tool design by noon, we make it, assemble it and ship it overnight, enabling them to use it the very next day."

Because everything at Pentagon EMS moves so rapidly, Young says he can't afford to run out of the tools that keep the company thriving. "It's never an option for me to tell a customer we can't do their job today because we're out of an end mill," he notes.

Young knew it was time to replace his inventory management processes when a regular cabinet with sliding drawers just wasn't cutting it anymore. "I never knew if a machinist broke five end mills the night before, leaving us completely out of them."

With inventory control being at the top of Young's mind, he chose a vending solution from MSC Industrial Supply Co. (Melville, NY). The system incorporated an automated dispensing unit with "add-on" frame that enhances the tooling stock process, bringing inventory management to the next level at Pentagon EMS.

"When researching vending equipment, I found several companies wanted to sell me candy-type vending machines. However, I liked the sophistication of the MSC solution, and, as a current MSC customer, I knew the pricing was going to be right where it needed to be," says Young.

MSC's vending system electronically integrates with Pentagon EMS's business network, a benefit that allows Young to enjoy worry-free inventory management, because he has complete control

over reordering, audit trails, and reporting capabilities. "It's great. I can look every morning to see how much of each tool I have. Plus, I have my minimum and maximum set to where I never run out of anything," says Young.

MSC's dispensing unit electronically integrates with Pentagon EMS's business network, providing Hugh Young (shown here) with complete tool inventory management, because he has complete control over reordering, audit trails, and reporting capabilities.

Breakthrough productivity improvements using MSC's vending system have lowered Pentagon EMS's overall tooling spend.

The MSC dispensing unit also provides 24/7 secure access, emergency override during power outages, cost-saving documentation, and automated replenishment. Plus, as Pentagon's needs change, MSC's vending solutions have a modular design for easy reconfiguration.

Young says that when he originally started talking about purchasing a tool crib for the company, several employees thought it would be the end of the world. Many assumed they would be spending all day trying to get the tooling out of the machine. However, they quickly discovered the easy-to-use touch screen takes approximately 30 sec to log in and get their tool.

As it turns out, Pentagon EMS is anticipating more growth in the near future, and MSC will play a strong role in helping the company continue to run this successful business more efficiently. Currently, Pentagon EMS is in the process of getting ISO-certified and increasingly taking on new job-shop work.

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For more information on MSC Industrial Supply, go to www.mscdirect.com or telephone 516-812-1608. **ME**