

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Every business needs prospective customers and sales opportunities. Every business can also benefit from multiple sources of sales, especially those that tap otherwise unreachable markets.

SOLUTION

Since first encountering the MFG.com online marketplace about 2 years ago, Burney Williamson, head of sales project management for Met-Tek LLC in Indianapolis, has made the marketplace a key part of his plans and strategy. "MFG.com accounts for fully one-third of our sales," Williamson says. "The other two-thirds are local / regional business and pursuit of federal contracts. Interestingly, he first heard about MFG.com from the corporate attorney. Nevertheless, Williamson recognized the potential and quickly jumped on board as a regular user.

Williamson checks the site several times a day, keeping a watch on requests for quotes that meet Met-Tek's targets. "I have searches set up for nearby opportunities – 100, 200 and 300 mile radius – as well as broad U.S. and Canada searches," he says. A considerable amount of their success, however, has come from the coasts – Washington state, Virginia, South Carolina and Massachusetts, for example. "Maybe buyers in the mid-west aren't as aware of the marketplace," he opines, "or else we're just more competitive against machining operations in those higher cost areas."

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*-Burney Williamson
Head of Sales Project Management
Met-Tek*

Met-Tek is an active quoter on MFG.com. "At any given time, we might have as many as 90 quotes out there," Williamson says. "In 2008 we completed 22 contracts for customers through the MFG.com marketplace."

Met-Tek does milling and machining on a variety of materials from plastic and tubing to various metals and alloys. Capabilities include forming, assembly, welding, brazing and powder coating. The medical equipment industry has been a particularly rewarding area for the company recently with a good deal of business also completed in aerospace, machinery and electronics.

Many times, a new customer (or an existing one, for that matter) will order a few parts for use in a prototype, then come back later with a production-volume order for the same parts. "One customer in the biosciences arena recently ordered several sets of parts – variations of a design – and field tested the various configurations. We expect an order soon for quantity 200+ of the successful variation."

Williamson emphasizes that he is looking to establish solid, long-term relationships with

companies they serve on the MFG.com exchange. "We're not looking for the one-shot contract" he says. "We provide good products at a good price and strive to establish a rapport that will encourage the buyer to come back to us when they need more parts."

ABOUT MET-TEK

Formed in 2005, Met-Tek, LLC operates a state of the art manufacturing technology center on the northeast side of Indianapolis, producing quality parts for a variety of customers since 1994. Capabilities include making models and prototypes to runs of up to ten thousand parts. Production includes materials ranging from plastics through any family of metals and alloys, and composite materials.

Met-Tek specializes in high technology machining and fabrication for the medical, aerospace, machinery and electronic industries. In addition to turning, milling, and finishing, Met-Tek also does forming, powder coating, welding, brazing and assembly. The company maintains a wide selection of numerical-controlled machine tools including Mori Seiki multiple spindle CNC turning centers, Okuma CNC vertical mill centers, 5 Hurco vertical machine centers, as well as manual small run fabrication equipment.

Williamson says the rating system in MFG.com is a vital part of the service. He always checks potential customers' ratings – "It's on our to-do list," he says – and he keeps a close eye on Met-Tek's ratings as well. "You live or die by your rating," he says. "You'd better keep them high." He adds that Met-Tek seems to be getting a lot more invitations to bid of late and attributes that to the high rating the company has been able to build and maintain.

He also carefully screens the successful proposals on those opportunities where Met-Tek does not win the business. "I want to know how the successful supplier's quote was different from ours and what we would have to do to be more successful in the future. This is invaluable information that any company would love to have on every proposal."

BENEFITS

- Additional source of prospective business beyond the usual local and regional selling
- Ability to pre-set searches to easily find appropriate potential business
- Market reach throughout North America
- Competitive intelligence – ability to analyze wins and losses after contract award
- Easy-to-use site, great customer service