



## John Bergmans' Secret Weapon

John Bergmans is passionate about solving challenging technical problems, particularly in the area of rocket propulsion data acquisition and control, and laser-based sensing for industrial applications. In his business of developing specialized instrumentation and control systems, he sometimes needs special fixtures, brackets and other unique parts, and he often needs them in a hurry. Bergmans, owner and principal engineer of Newport Beach, California-based Bergmans Mechatronics LLC, considers MFG.com as his 'secret weapon' for getting quality manufactured parts quickly and effectively.

Bergmans Mechatronics' business is solving technical challenges that exist at the intersection of the mechanical, electronics and software fields. Bergmans applies this expertise to, among other projects, data acquisition and control systems for rocket engines and for laser-based combustion instrumentation equipment. Each project is unique and requires some combination of custom electronics, software and mechanical components to bring it all together.

As a technology-based company, the design is core to the product and putting the pieces together to make a particular device is an activity that parallels the design. In short, Bergmans designs the equipment then builds it on-the-fly. Oftentimes, he will design mechanical parts – brackets, fixtures, and other components – and needs to get them made as quickly as possible to complete the project. That's where MFG.com fits in as a key resource for fabricating and delivering products on-time.

"It could be difficult to find a machine shop that has both the capabilities and the availability I need when I need it on my own," Bergmans says. "I can't really forecast what I will need, but when I need it I need it quickly and with good quality, too." Bergmans' solution to this challenge is to post his specs on the MFG.com portal and have companies with the capacity quote on the job. "That's where MFG.com shines," he says, "I can get quality parts in a short period of time."

Bergmans experience with the MFG.com online marketplace can best be illustrated through a recent experience. "I had a situation in November where I really needed some parts to complete a system by November 26," Bergmans says. "It was 17 unique parts with a total quantity of 52 pieces, mostly aluminum, anodized, with a few stainless parts. There was also a bit of welding involved. I posted the specs on November 1 and 2, and awarded the job on November 5 to a company in New Mexico, Zoemax Manufacturing in Albuquerque. Zoemax completed the work and shipped me the parts. They arrived on November 16. The parts were perfect and my total cost was under \$2,000!"

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**-John Bergmans**



Bergmans has not often gone back to successful suppliers for repeat business. "When I have had a good experience with a supplier, I might try to use them again but they often don't have the capacity to respond right away at that moment in time. So I go right back to MFG.com. There are lots of eager companies out there and only the ones that can do the job and have the shop time available will quote on it."

As to the quality of the work, Bergmans has no complaints. "The quality is good. Sometimes there might be a minor problem but on the few occasions this has happened, the suppliers have always either fixed the problem or replaced the part."

Bergmans first found MFG.com through an online search when he was employed at another company. One aspect of his job there involved sourcing manufactured parts and he had his first experiences with MFG.com in that position. When he started Bergmans Mechatronics in 2003, he immediately made MFG.com part of his team, even listing it as a prime resource on his company web site.

"One nice feature of the MFG.com service is they review the drawings I submit before posting them to the site," Bergmans says. "It adds a few hours to the posting process but I find it's a good check point. They make sure everything is complete and understandable for the machine shops and sometimes they'll add some comments to make things more clear. This is great added value for buyers and for the bidders."

Bergmans has nothing but praise for the customer service people as well. "They always seem genuinely interested in helping and are unfailingly friendly and pleasant. It's a pleasure doing business with them." Most importantly, the MFG.com portal has proven to be a reliable source for quality parts, competitively priced, and delivered on short deadlines. It is truly a 'secret weapon' that Bergmans is happy to have in his arsenal.

Bergmans describes this process as "really amazing... almost magical" to make contact with a company that he would never have heard of, a company that has both the capabilities and the time (capacity) available when he needed it.

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