



Customer **SHOWCASE** Program

Case Study Ron-Al Mold & Machine Inc.

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Kent, OH-based Ron-Al Mold & Machine finds itself in a challenging situation. Despite a solid reputation based on years of experience making molds for rubber parts for the automotive, railroad and appliance industries, Ron-Al is facing a declining industrial base in their local Midwest region along with increasingly stiff competition from overseas.

SOLUTION

Ron-Al Mold & Machine is facing a challenge that is becoming increasingly common among U.S.-based manufacturers. Ron-Al's traditional customer base is declining, and at the same time many of their remaining customers have been forced to source overseas in order to save money and remain competitive in their own markets. Rather than downsize or give up, Ron-Al decided to find new opportunities to apply their skills and equipment, outside of the local mold-making market.

While searching the Internet, Ron-Al owner/vice president Alan Siciliano found MFG.com, but he didn't join the online marketplace right away. "Bill Ryan at MFG.com called me a number of times after that first contact," Siciliano says, "but I didn't join in and start using the site until last year (2007). I wish I had done it two years ago."

Early in 2007, Ron-Al began to shift the focus of their business away from being exclusively focused on mold-making to add a more diversified machining service operation. "We are still a

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-Alan Siciliano
Owner/Vice President

mold-maker," Siciliano stresses, "but it used to be our only business. Now we have established a machining division that does short-run, general machining, turning, EDM, and deep-hole drilling for customers in a lot of different industries, all around the country."

While they have been able to find and service local business in and around their home base in Kent, OH, Ron-Al has now been able to secure considerable work from customers in Texas, California, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Colorado, Illinois and other states through MFG.com. "There's a lot of business out there (on the MFG.com site), and we've found some great customers," Siciliano says. "We are targeting the oil industry but we have also done some work in robotics, aerospace, and other industries as well."

Ron-Al specializes in short run orders – generally less than 50 or 100 pieces, although they do complete the occasional larger order for small parts. "We just completed a job for a Pittsburgh company that was for 16 each of four parts," he





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says, "A Texas company awarded us an order for 11 each of three parts, then re-ordered six more of each a short time later. Now we just quoted another job for them." Repeat business is common. Once Ron-Al has been able to demonstrate their quality and responsiveness on that first job, customers often come back for more of the same or for another part that they need.

While freely admitting that he has not really used the site to its fullest, Siciliano is very pleased with the ability to find the work he needs to keep his shop busy. "I'm on the site every day," he says. "At first I was submitting 3 or 4 quotes a week after

searching and locating the kind of jobs that we wanted. I'm actually still putting in about the same number of quotes every week but I'm a lot smarter about it now. I've been able to refine the searching and quoting process so our success rate is a lot higher." Siciliano admits that there is a learning curve. "We hit the ground running, and got business pretty quickly from MFG.com, but I'm still learning. It's a heck of a tool, and there's a lot more information out there than I am taking advantage of at the moment."

Right now, about 40% of Ron-Al's business comes from MFG.com and Siciliano expects that percentage to grow. "The mold business is pretty busy right now," he says, "but when it slows down again I know I can go right out to MFG.com and fill up our capacity."

ABOUT RON-AL MOLD & MACHINE

Ron-Al Mold & Machine, Inc. is a Kent, OH-based manufacturer with two divisions. The mold-making division specializes in rubber molds for the automotive, railroad and appliance industries. The machining division has 8 machining centers, 2 turning centers, 4 EDM machines and deep-drilling capabilities for all metals, and seeks small-lot work, especially for large parts. The machining centers can handle pieces up to 36x60. The company recently completed turning work on pieces up to 20 inches in diameter.

BENEFITS

- Market services nationwide
- Find business as-needed to fill available capacity
- Diversify away from traditional market into more robust industries, or follow business cycles as particular industries grow or contract
- Select the kind of business that is the best use of capabilities – lots of opportunities to choose from, so choose those that are best matched to capabilities