

Central Machines Inc.: Automated Excellence

Central Machines finds success in the pharmaceuticals market and with new modeling software.

When it comes to custom assembly systems, Lincolnshire, Ill.-based [Central Machines Inc.](#) says it offers some of the most innovative automation systems in the industry. The company has specialized in continuous motion, indexing dial, high-speed terminal insertion equipment, cap lining and closing machines since 1995.

Central Machines provides custom turnkey automation systems and stand-alone machines, and says it works with customers from all stages of a project to meet their specifications. Vice President Peter Kendler notes the company invests in new software and updates its equipment on a routine basis. Because of continuous improvement, it has helped its customers become more efficient, Kendler says.

Central Machines Specializes in Custom Automation Equipment



Central Machines is delving into new industries, such as pharmaceuticals, to help it cope with slumping markets. As it continues to invest in itself, the company puts its best face forward. Kendler recently spoke with *Manufacturing Today* about staying innovative and maintaining quality.

Manufacturing Today:

Could you describe your company's history?

Peter Kendler: We were formed in March 1995 by my father, Gerhard Kendler.

We started in a 2,500-square-foot industrial condo in Wheeling, Ill. In 1997 we knocked a hole through the wall (to the adjacent building, making it a) 5,000-square-foot facility. Then, in 2001 we purchased a 15,000-square-foot free-standing building. In 2007 we purchased a 35,000-square-foot facility and it's the only facility we operate out of now.

MT: What sets your company apart from the competition?

PK: Our innovation and cost-effective solutions with a focus on reliability and customer support. We have a solid, loyal customer base and continue

to penetrate new markets, while maintaining and expanding current industries served.

MT: How do you stay innovative?

PK: We build custom automation equipment and we are doing it a lot of times from a blank piece of paper. You need to come up with innovative solutions in the concept stage to see yourself through the entire process of producing the equipment.

We kick off with concept reviews, in-house design reviews, customer design reviews, and then we release (them) to manufacturing. All machining centers and wire EDM cells pull files directly from the network. Our fully designed electrical and pneumatic schematics allow for electrical panels to be fully built prior to machine assembly.

A thorough review with the machine builder prior to the assembly process highlights critical areas of the equipment. We have an in-house checklist for all departments, in-house acceptance and, finally, customer training and acceptance.

MT: Describe how you work with suppliers.

PK: Our suppliers are very

instrumental to our success. We rely on many of our suppliers to constantly push the envelope, from electronics to feed systems. At times I hear "(It) cannot be done." However, when challenging employees and working with our suppliers, we come up with solutions.

Our suppliers are many times also our resources for assisting in developing the right mouse trap for an application.

MT: Does the changing market affect you?

PK: Absolutely. The automotive sector is fairly slow, so right now we're putting more emphasis and focus on pharmaceuticals. You need to be able to diversify the different machine manufacturing requirements, standards and materials to adapt to these new markets.

We have to go after the market where the work is and it seems like it's consistent.

MT: How do your clients define quality?

PK: They base it on the efficiency of the equipment, and we are constantly looking to increase the efficiencies for our equipment and reduce the amount of operator intervention.

In many of our (plastic injection molding companies) customers' plants, single cells might normally produce 172,000 to 350,000 (components) daily, but (with our equipment) a similar cell produces 1.4 million (components).

MT: What are your plans for the future?

PK: We're going to keep growing. In March (2007) we moved into a new facility. We plan to reinvest in the latest equipment, designing software and programming software.

We're using AutoCAD Inventor now in engineering - a solid modeling software. In the shop on the wire machines we're using an Espree and in the machining center we're using Feature CAM. We're in the process of evaluating a wire EDM version and should implement it in the next month or so. (It's preferable because) of the ease of using our Inventor design files and bringing those to the workstation.

MT: What are you most proud of?

PK: Our continued customer loyalty and our ability to manufacture 98 percent of our equipment in-house. Also, I'm proud to watch our equipment develop from concept to producing our customers' products.