

## Process Change Reduced the Need to Outsource



**Automation Development utilizes the Hurco VM1 and VM30 for part manufacturing. According to the company, parts can now be made in hours rather than weeks.**

Automation Development, Inc. in Terryville, CT, specializes in engineering and manufacturing custom turnkey automated assembly and packaging machinery for the medical, cosmetic, automotive and food industries. "As our business increased we had to eliminate the need to outsource to other shops any of our high volume machining of parts," said Dan Tonn, President. "Outsourcing made it difficult to control costs and delivery times. The way we solved this problem was to change our process."

Mr. Tonn and Jeff Behrendt, Co-Owners, called on Brooks Associates, Inc. of Norwell, MA, and Hurco for advice on changing from older bed mills to new machines with faster setup and simpler programming. They had considered CNC machines requiring complicated G-Code programming and decided to look for CNC controls with simpler, conversational programming.

Initially, Automation Development management chose a Hurco VM2, 3-axis vertical milling machine with the WinMax control. This machine provided, not only the conversational, simple-to-use graphical interface control but also featured the dxf drawing converter. After designing the part and machine in Solidworks, a 2D dxf drawing file is output to the Hurco for conversational programming. The Hurco VM2 has an 8,000 RPM, 20 HP spindle, comes with a

20-tool changer and a work envelope of 40" x 18" x 18".

The purchase of a smaller Hurco VM1 vertical milling machine one year later totally eliminated the need to outsource any milling of parts. A few years later a purchase of a Hurco TM6 CNC turning center with a 6" chuck, 12-station turret and 6,000 RPM spindle, eliminated the need to outsource parts that required turning. Their most recent expansion was a larger Hurco VM-30 with 50" x 20" x 20" of travel. The growth and success of Automation Development is the result of providing their customers with a high quality automatic assembly system in a timely manner and at a fair price. Hurco was a key factor in Automation Development's success.

The automation and assembly equipment designed and manufactured at Automation Development, Inc. is complex, in many cases requiring over 6,000 parts. "Eliminating outsourcing has given us control over the project costs and schedules. Instead of waiting 1-3 weeks for parts from an outside source, we can make rush parts in hours, not days or weeks," said Mr. Tonn.

"We now have total project control," said Mr. Tonn.

"Our machines are designed in-house using our Solid Works CAD software. The frames for the machines are fabricated in-house as are all of the machined parts. We have two electrical engineers who design and program the control



**Designed and built by Automation Development for five-piece pump assembly, this machine produces 100 assemblies per minute. The automation and assembly equipment designed and manufactured at Automation Development is complex, in many cases requiring over 6,000 parts. Eliminating outsourcing has given them control over the project costs and schedules.**

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## Process Change Reduced the Need to Outsource *(continued)*

systems for the machinery we build.”

Quick changeover from one part to another is now a capability on the new Hurco machines. Many of the parts only require simple shop floor programming so the machine operators take advantage of the ease of programming on the Hurco WinMax conversational control.

The custom automation and assembly machines manufactured by Automation Development Inc. include rotary dial, chassis, and robotic assembly equipment, high speed continuous motion machines, assembly machines tied directly to molding, packaging machinery, custom tooling and assembly fixtures, vibratory feeders and part loading systems and vision inspection and measurement systems. All machines are custom designed for customers as 3D models. After being manufactured the machines go through testing and runoff before shipment.

Automation Development, Inc. provides design services, CNC milling and turning, fabricating and also does grinding and welding. An added capability with the new Hurco machines is engraving of parts for tracking purposes.

Jeff Behrendt, with a manufacturing engineering background, and Dan Tonn, with CAD and machinery design background, founded Automation Development, Inc. in 1996 and have continued to expand the company. Bringing 100% of the machining of parts in-house has helped them improve control of costs, time and quality of the parts manufactured, resulting in improved quality and deliveries for their customers.

For more information contact:

Dan Tonn

President

Automation Development, Inc.

73 Container Dr.

Terryville, CT 06786

860-583-0852

[sales@automationdevelopment.com](mailto:sales@automationdevelopment.com)

[www.automationdevelopment.com](http://www.automationdevelopment.com)

Hurco Companies, Inc.

One Technology Way

P.O. Box 68180

Indianapolis, IN 46268

800-634-2416 / 317-298-2622

[info@hurco.com](mailto:info@hurco.com)

[www.hurco.com](http://www.hurco.com)

Michael Klier

Brooks Associates, Inc.

300 Longwater Dr.

Norwell, MA 02061

860-460-9664

[mikeklier@comcast.net](mailto:mikeklier@comcast.net)

[www.brooksmachinery.com](http://www.brooksmachinery.com)

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