



Assembling Business Growth (Manufacturer Uses Technology to Raise Production)

By Don Moores, Middletown Press Correspondent

DURHAM - Technical Manufacturing Solutions, an electronics contract manufacturer, has recently implemented a new, high-speed assembly line, said Dave Bonito, the company's vice president. The automated assembly line, which was manufactured by Contact Systems of Danbury, will enable the company to expand its capacity to produce surface mount technology (SMT) printed circuit boards, he said. Currently, Technical Manufacturing Solutions, located at 645 New Haven Road, is producing SMT boards by hand, which he said is an unwieldy and slow process.

Some of today's printed circuit boards are manufactured with what is called through-hole technology, Bonito said. However, the industry is leaning more towards SMT. "It's definitely the technology of choice for PC board assembly," he said. "Nearly 70 percent of all board work in this country involves surface mount technology, and that number will no doubt increase in the near future." In fact, within five years, Bonito said, nearly all printed circuit boards will be manufactured using SMT.

The automated assembly line is the culmination of a series of improvements the company has made for itself in recent years, the most significant of which is achieving ISO 9002 certification, Bonito said. ISO certification is a quality standard that is set by the International Standards Organization, and is a benchmark for the internal processes of manufacturers and distributors alike.

Geared for companies that don't do design or engineering work, ISO 9002 is a modified version of the stricter, ISO 9000 standard, Bonito said. A contract manufacturer, Technical Manufacturing Solutions builds its products to customer-supplied drawings, which exempts it from the stringent regulations involved in ISO 9000 certification, he said.

Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly an aura of prestige surrounding ISO 9002, Bonito said. "It's a certification that is not given indiscriminately, and we're pleased to have received it because it has brought internal discipline to our company's many processes," he added. "It has also given us a significant advantage over our competitors," he added. "Our customers are mandating tighter quality requirements, which is something only ISO certification can yield."

The 20 people that Technical Manufacturing Corporation employs are in no danger of being displaced by the new assembly line, Bonito said. "The Contact Systems equipment will not automate the entire company, so there's no threat of anyone losing their job," he said. "In fact, it will actually increase our work force by 10 percent because we'll need additional people to run and maintain it."

The assembly line will also allow the company to increase production and gross sales, Bonito said. With a capacity to place 8,000 parts per hour, the line will expand the business by 25 percent," he said. "We're expecting to go from \$5 million to about \$6.6 million in the first year alone."

The Contract Systems equipment is also in keeping with the company's efforts to meet the needs of its customers, Bonito said. "As a service oriented company, we try to do everything possible to keep our customers happy," he said. "That's how we've been able to experience steady, continuous growth over the past 11 years, and that's how we'll achieve the growth that we anticipate in the years to come."

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