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### Corner drawer

Developed for corner drawer systems and specialty furniture, **Gingrich Woodcraft Inc.** offers its line of solid wood angled drawers that can be ordered to fit undermount slides. The corner drawers can be custom sized with different angles, dividers and inserts. They are available in a variety of species.

Info #200



### In-line spray system

Cefla Finishing America's FlexiSpray in-line moulding sprayer is designed specifically for finishing mouldings, profiles and linear components. The machine features a maximum working/spray width of eight inches. It can be equipped with either two or three coating lines, and up to six spray guns. Constructed with large glass panels, optimal viewing of the finishing process is possible.

www.ceflaamerica.com

Info #201

### Multi-function saw



Edgetech's model CTS730 and CTS740 countertop saws are designed to combine both the mitre and router functions into a single machine. Standard features include PLC controls, variable speed control

in forward and reverse, and 90-, 45- and 22 1/2-degree mitre positions.

www.edgetechusa.com

Info #202

Use this peel-off label on Reader Service Card



## CNC behind door number 1, 2 and 3

### INVESTMENT IN MACHINERY CUTS PRODUCTION TIME IN HALF FOR CANADIAN MANUFACTURER

Matthew Britten

By Adam Freill

The addition of modern CNC sawing equipment is doing more than just adding efficiencies to a Canadian factory that produces door facings, it is helping the company to maintain its cost-competitiveness in an ever-challenging international marketplace.

Located about an hour south of Halifax, the Louisiana-Pacific Corporation (LP) plant in Chester, N.S., is one of more than 30 manufacturing facilities the company operates across North and South America. Its 360 employees produce siding, industrial panels and door facings as part of LP's specialty products division.

Approximately one year ago, the facility's

lean six sigma black belt, Matthew Britten, was given the task of coming up with a more efficient way of processing the "master sheets" in its door facing manufacturing line. Each seven-foot-wide, 16-foot-long master will become, on average, six, six-panel colonial door facings, destined for distribution to door manufacturing facilities around the world.

Prior to the purchase and installation of a MultiCam 5000 series CNC this past fall, processing these masters involved numerous steps, robbing the plant of efficiencies and productivity. The former method required a pair of employees to trim edges with a skill saw as

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Pictured from left to right: Scott Bezanson, Tim Oakley, Alan James, Matthew Britten.



Stacks of door facings.



Unloading the CNC machine.

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the masters emerged from the presses. Then, the trimmed masters would be transported to a panel saw where they would be cut in books, 12 masters at a time.

“Because we had to do a book of completely one type of master,” explains plant manager Phil Ellwood, “we had to sort them out as well.”

This was a real time drain, as the press that produces the master sheets can fabricate more than one type of master in a single cycle. With the CNC saw, when the company has three plates in the press producing three different patterns, the masters can be stacked and cut as they come off the line with no need for sorting.

“We basically went from having to have a complete pallet of one type of master...now we can mix them up, we’ve basically moved to a one-piece flow,” says Ellwood. “It has saved a lot of room for us in the warehouse because we don’t have to sort them out anymore. And, of course, it lowered our inventories because we had untrimmed masters and trimmed masters. We basically cut our master inventory in half.”

With the current process, the inventoried masters are stacked in pallets and moved by forklift around the plant. When it is time for sawing into individual facings, they are moved to the CNC saw and the sheets are manually moved onto the saw where laser guides line up the pattern.

“We basically just type in the recipe number for that cut and the saw cuts it out,” explains Ellwood. “So we go from master to what we call finished door facing in one step.”

“The way we were doing it, we were getting a lot of ergonomic issues. And we had some soft tissue injuries with the trimming, as well as at the panel saw, so this solution gets us away from those issues,” adds Britten.

As for adjusting to the new equipment, not only was the saw easy to install, it is simple to operate and to program as well.

“The start-up of the machine was incredibly fast. It was literally a plug-and-play,” reports Britten. “I went down to Dallas...we did some trials...we brought it up here, plunked it in place, wired it in and,

within a day-and-a-half, we were processing panels.”

The 5000 series machine that LP brought in is a custom, 51-foot-long unit. “It is a 5000 series width, but we got it a little bit longer because while we are loading and unloading one half of the table, the gantries are cutting on the other half,” states Britten.

This setup allows the load/unload cycle to be masked by the machine, which helps gain the efficiencies sought through the application of lean practices. The machine never stops machining. While it is processing on one half of the table, plant employees off-load and re-load the next of the 115-pound masters to be processed. The results have been dramatic.

“The old system was 240 manual seconds per master processed. Now, we are at 120 manual seconds,” says Britten. With a goal of processing 400 masters in an eight-hour shift, the productivity gains are hard to ignore.

Also difficult to overlook is the ease with which the saw can be programmed. Britten reports that he was able to learn how to program the required macros in about three hours, and has since trained another LP employee at the plant to ensure that someone with appropriate training is always available, should a new pattern be required or a macro require revision.

“If a pattern came at us that wasn’t programmed in there, I could probably modify one of the existing programs in 20 or 30 minutes and get it downloaded to the machine,” says Britten. “We would be running it in an hour or so.”

Although the factory is undergoing a shift that will see it ramp up the manufacture of the other building products in its stable, there are no plans to exit the door facing business, and the addition of this new equipment will help LP maintain a share of the door facing market, despite devoting less of the plant’s production time to the product line.

Says Ellwood, “The long-term view is we won’t be doing as many door facings in the future as we are doing now, but this project was really to keep us in the game cost-competitive wise.” **WW**

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