

Profile: Where Are They Now?

By Sherry L. Baranek

ABCO Tool & Die, Inc.: Eyes on the Prize

Continuing to focus on its specialty of producing optical molds, this mold-maker's vision of becoming a resource to its customers is realized by equipment and technology upgrades.

JUST THE FACTS



NAME: ABCO Tool & Die, Inc.

LOCATION: Hyannis, MA

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1972

SERVICES OFFERED: Manufacture plastic injection optical molds

INDUSTRIES: Optical as pertaining to medical, automotive, industrial, computer, electronic, industrial, military, safety and sport.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 15

ABCO Tool & Die, Inc. (Hyannis, MA) has been building Class 101 optical molds for many years in addition to offering a variety of services, such as consulting, mold design and build, sampling and reverse engineering. Upgrades in both technology and equipment have allowed ABCO to become a valuable, experienced one-stop resource for its optical customers, particularly in the military sector.

According to ABCO Tool president David Bourque, the company is not simply a mold builder. "Our experience has given us an understanding of optical design and manufacturing process that allows us to assist our customers in ways that might be considered value-added service," Bourque explains. "Optical molding has unique challenges pertaining to optical clarity, flow front, gating, surface finish, form, figure, geometric shape and optical correctness."

Setting Their Sights

Although ABCO Tool has had to downsize its workforce during the past 10 years, the company is still able to maintain productivity. "We are 15 people doing the work of what 25 of us did back in 2000. A part that used to take 100 hours to make now takes 50 hours."

Bourque attributes this to modern technology and the automation of the shop. "Our 15 employees now run 10 different pieces of CNC equipment, 24 hours a day, six to seven days a week," he notes.

Seeing The Future

Bourque is extremely satisfied with the work ABCO Tool does. "It's exciting and challenging," he states. "Many of our programs for military projects allow us to use cutting-edge technology."



Photos courtesy of ABCO Tool & Die, Inc.

Focusing on the optical market has allowed ABCO Tool & Die to specialize in this niche market and become a valuable resource to its customers. This photo shows a concave optical insert.

A Decade of Difference

ABCO Tool President David Bourque on industry's past, present and future.

- 1. Biggest industry change:** Global competition.
- 2. Top challenge in the past 10 years:** Lack of qualified people.
- 3. Top technology solution:** Advances in CAD/CAM, CNC technology and hard die milling.
- 4. Top business strategy:** Create a niche.
- 5. Best time in past 10 years:** When our customers learned that ABCO was a high quality, source for molds.
- 6. Worst time in past 10 years:** Post 9/11.
- 7. What you remember most in past 10 years:** Continuing evolution of technology.
- 8. Forecast for next 10 years:** Increases in technology and productivity; reduction in leadtimes and costs in manufacturables.

ABCO will continue to grow by investing in the latest technology over the next several years. "This will make us even more valuable to our customers," Bourque predicts. "I just attended a trade show in California that showcased amazing advances in optical devices in high-tech areas in medical and military. In the medical industry, advances had been made in diagnostic testing devices; in military, advances in lenses for a higher degree of eye and face protection and getting information delivered to fighter pilots and soldiers more efficiently; and in the energy field, devices to capture the sun's energy more efficiently. All of this will challenge us to continue to build even more sophisticated molds. This industry is here to stay!"

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For more information from **ABCO Tool & Die, Inc.** call (508) 771-3225, e-mail sales@abcomolds.com, visit www.abcomolds.com or visit www.moldmakingtechnology.com.