



TOOL & MANUFACTURING

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CUSTOMER SOLUTIONS: #62 WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS WHEN YOUR MACHINE SHOP GOES OUT OF BUSINESS?

There are myriad reasons why companies go out of business, whether it's economics, quality issues, or maybe just the retirement of owners or key players. When the company going out is your machine shop and you rely on them to produce your parts, their demise could trigger a chain of events that negatively impact your own business.



That's the situation one of our customers found themselves in recently. Their long-time parts manufacturer had to cease operations due to health issues with the owner. The manufacturer didn't have a succession plan and notified their customers that the business would close on short notice.

Since many companies rely on just-in-time product delivery so they can keep their parts inventory

low, this kind of sudden disruption can seriously impact their ability to meet their own customer demands. Rathburn Tool & Manufacturing has been helping companies manage all kinds of disruption for 40 years, even transitioning to our own second-generation leadership over that time.

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EVALUATING THE SITUATION

Our engineers met with the manufacturer to fully understand their needs, tolerances, volume, materials, and more, and created a plan to immediately transition their jobs to Rathburn. In this case, the company needed bushing housing assemblies requiring sawcutting, turning, milling and assembly services using low-carbon steel tubing.

ACTIVATING THE TEAM

With a turnaround time of 3–5 weeks, our team jumped in quickly, secured stock for the 5,000 parts needed immediately, and began reviewing CAD drawings and preparing our CNC equipment for the job. This process also revealed some inefficiencies in the previous processes, which can happen when companies use one shop for years without regular quality and efficiency reviews. For example, we were able to help the manufacturer find better options for material sourcing, more efficient ways to manufacture the parts using the latest technology, and even incorporate customer-supplied scrap bar ends into the production process.

Further, Rathburn engineers devised a fixture for a welding partner to use to consistently locate triangular tabs on the circular parts for better, more consistent welds. They also engineered unique fixtures to maximize sawcutting, milling and assembly production rates at Rathburn.

DELIVERING QUALITY

Within a week of our first launch meeting with the customer, Rathburn delivered the first FAI (First Article Inspection) parts for approval. The first production parts were delivered a week later. Throughout the FAI approvals and production ramp-up, Rathburn was able to prioritize the schedule to keep the customer’s production lines going and able to get all 10 FAIs approved. We even helped overcome their parts backlog in less than three months of the initial meeting.

If you’re facing supply chain disruption, parts shortages, or need to find options for a machine shop facing the retirement of their ownership and key leaders, Rathburn Tool & Manufacturing is ready to help you thrive. Our focus on great people and the latest technology to deliver the highest enables us to solve simple and complex challenges with and for our customers. Let’s talk about what success looks like for you.

Visit our plant in Auburn, Indiana and see for yourself how for 35+ years, we’ve used the latest technology while applying ingenuity and consistent quality standards to produce an experience our customers call “hard to believe”.

