

JUNE · 08 · 2020

MANUFACTURINGTECHINSIGHTS.COM



American Tool and Engineering



The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the forefront of providing Plastic Tech consulting / services and transforming businesses



American Tool and Engineering A Quality Shop for Machined Aluminum Molds

merican Tool and Engineering (ATE) is a family-owned company dedicated to designing and manufacturing highly precise, and complex aluminum thermoform, pressure form, twin sheet, and blow molds. Founded by Dennis Hobson and Jerold Taylor, in 1992, ATE had a humble start as a little shop that made patterns with two CNC machines. Dennis employed his decades-old experience as a pattern-maker to build a comprehensive and efficient business model that solely relied on legacy print interpretation and handbuilt methods. With a compact team of four and limited resources, the company's portfolio was confined to thermoform tooling and casting operations, for the first few years. Nevertheless, as with any business driven by passion, ATE established its presence and excellence in thermoforming and blow mold manufacturing by 1996.

As the industry continued to evolve, ATE began to adopt a more contemporary approach to business, infusing cutting-edge technology in day-to-day operations. "The opening of a new 15,750 sq ft, temperature-controlled mold shop at Industrial Parkway was, in fact, the initial and the most crucial step toward an accelerated growth for the company—in terms of both technology and business," says Chance Rose, the Sales Manager at ATE. Not only did this step help them scale at a rapid pace, but it enhanced their capacity to diversify their clientele and serve them better and faster.

Later, in 2013, Matt Hobson and Sonja Hobson, taking the legacy-baton from their father Dennis, began to lead ATE as its GM and Administrative Assistant. Under the leadership of the new generation, ATE underwent a radical shift in the business model, from a conventional hand-built model to a capital-intensive approach, thriving on technology. From there on, ATE was keen to expand its in-house capabilities and invested millions of dollars in procuring newer, more advanced CNC machines and designing software solutions.



In 2017, ATE purchased its first five-axis machine, which helped advance their machining capabilities to manufacture complex molds with undercuts, lifters, slides, and inserted pinch. This also enabled the company to significantly reduce their machining time by eliminating multiple steps for getting the cuts done. 2019 marked the addition of a new five-axis HAAS CNC UMC 1000SS, which further enhanced ATE's machining capabilities to the extent that they became the leaders in manufacturing large, deep, complex, intricate, and precise thermoform and blow molds.

Weitzenkamp, Sales Engineer at ATE. Further, with a core focus on customer satisfaction, ATE maintains constant communication with clients and follows up to ensure satisfaction. "We stand behind our molds and support any customer issues," adds Rose. Another factor that sets

With this advanced equipment,

66

a team of 45 industry experts, and longstanding experience in handling diverse projects, we have evolved into a global leader, serving customers worldwide

 $\mathbf{0}$

ATE apart from the rest is its competitive pricing. Located in North Central Iowa, where the cost of living is low compared to other states. The company delivers its products and services at a significantly lower price.

With such a value

Going forward, ATE aims to continue innovating and expanding its in-house machining and inspection capabilities to better serve its diverse clientele. "ATE strives to be the best. We are constantly pushing the envelope by adapting to changes and innovating in an attempt to make a positive impact on the manufacturing industry," concludes Dennis.

"Today, ATE is equipped with 13 CNC machines, which includes two five-axis machines, updated programming software, and a Faro Arm for mold inspections, making the company technologically ahead of its competitors," says Dennis. "With this advanced equipment, a team of 45 industry experts, and longstanding experience in handling diverse projects, we have evolved into a global leader, serving customers worldwide."

100055

What makes ATE the most sought-after partner for manufacturers is its capability to deliver high-quality machined-aluminum molds at a shorter lead-time. "We conduct comprehensive testing and inspection before products leave its facility to ensure that they are 'plug-and-play' molds for our clients," says Chad