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With Faßnacht Mould-Makers, Germany.

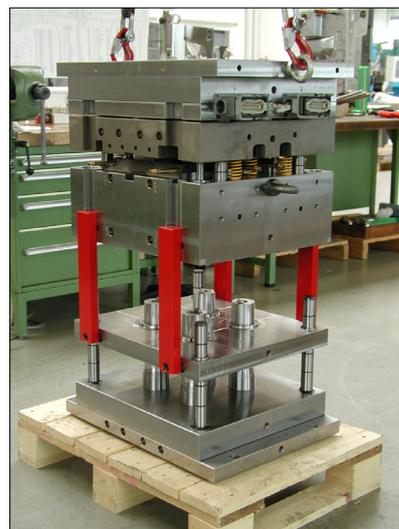
Faßnacht Mould-Makers was started 15 years ago by Wolfgang Faßnacht, together with his brother and one other colleague. To start with, it was a kind of garden-shed operation, but over the years the business has grown to become a renowned company with 15 employees. With relatively healthy growth, Faßnacht has no current plans for further expansion, concerned that this could be at the expense of the working atmosphere and product quality.

The mould making company specialises in injection moulding applications. "We are strong in this segment with a reputation going beyond regional borders. Companies from the automotive, medical technology sectors, packaging and white goods industries and construction and electrical industries all count as customers", explains Wolfgang Faßnacht. On the theme of outsourcing, Faßnacht has a simple definition: everything which somebody else can produce less expensively is outsourced. Structural elements are only manufactured if there is spare capacity. All components which do not require "know-how" and can therefore be produced in a mechanical workshop, are subcontracted to other companies. Conversely, every machining operation which influences the quality of the tool, the mould and the fine adjustments - in a word - the "know-how", is carried out by Faßnacht.

Sometimes customers come for advice on moulds which were not manufactured by Faßnacht claims Wolfgang, "The difficult parts are our strength". Part of the strength is to recognise at the outset which parts cannot function. The trained eye for recognising potential difficulties of a part was fundamental in winning a contract for which a tool was to be made for the BMW function housing. The housing for the navigation and climate control equipment is located in the central console of the 3-Series car. The customer had contracted a competitor of Faßnacht to make a similar part and had encountered major problems. During purchase order discussions with the customer, Faßnacht indicated all of the areas where there could be practical problems. The customer was so impressed that he gave Faßnacht the additional work.

The Bobingen team needed 16 weeks to complete the order. Throughout this time VISI Series, was in use. As soon as the data was made available the VISI Viewer was put into action. "I look at the part, analyse how I can make this mould and where possible difficulties could be?" explains Wolfgang Faßnacht regarding the procedure. Using VISI Modelling, one of the two designers at Faßnacht determines the parting faces and designs the mould. The customer validates the mould and the design phase is complete. This process took only 4 weeks and the blueprint for the mould existed as a 3D-model, together with a parts list and complete GA drawings.

The mould tool structure is bought-in almost complete. "In Meusberger and Hasco we have two manufacturers of standard parts with such quality of delivery, that we could order from them almost blind" claims Faßnacht. The steel inserts are ordered as P inserts, which are already milled with the required offsets.



About The Company:

Name: Faßnacht Mould-Makers

Established: 1990

Staff: 15

Business: Injection Moulding
Specialists

Benefits Achieved:

- Fast turnaround from design to completion; including parts list and complete GA drawings
- Ability to import CAD files in a whole range of formats
- Ability to repair poor quality CAD data automatically
- Continual added value through maintenance contracts and software updates
- Excellent on-site training and software support

Comments:

"The collaboration between ourselves and the MECADAT team is excellent, simply perfect."

Manfred Faßnacht
Co-Founder

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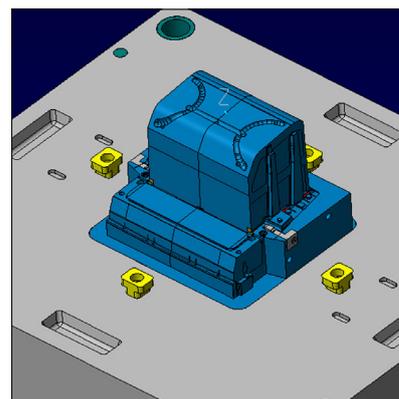
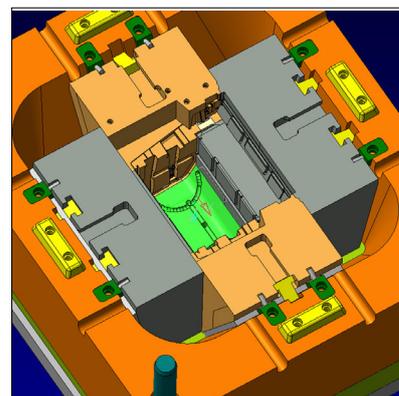
As a result, the Bobingen team not only save time, but also reduce the load on their own machines, which are designed for milling high-precision parts. After hardening and grinding, the contours are milled as closely as possible to final size, and the final operation is either EDM sinking using graphite or copper electrodes, or wire spark-erosion. In all cases where wire spark-erosion is required the stock removal from the contours is calculated using VISI Wire. "One big advantage of using VISI Series is that a lot of outside designers are working with it, so that we have continuity in the system", explains Manfred Faßnacht, who has now set up his own design office.

Faßnacht was introduced to VISI Series by an outside designer, who was searching for a new system to deal with the conversion to 3D data. Originally, Faßnacht wanted VISI Series as a support for his then current surface modeller, which did not have solid modelling capabilities. "I was of the opinion that VISI Series would not be superior to our surface modeller", admits Faßnacht, "but ever since we have had our own VISI system, we no longer use surface modelling". The system has been in use at Faßnacht since 1999. The conversion to VISI Series was problem-free. Having learned to use a surface modeller, the more-easily manipulated solid modeller created no difficulties. An observation that Ralph Schmitt, Managing Director of MECADAT, often makes: "People who have started by using surface modelling find it extremely easy to convert to our hybrid solid and surface system"

Version 13.1 was installed to Faßnacht at the beginning of April. The actual, planned annual major release had been made by MECADAT at the Euromold exhibition in December. "We had already delivered version 13.0 last year; a few updates were included for the CAM sector such as, for example a much-increased computation speed. Naturally we did not want to prevent our customers having access to this", explains Schmitt. Because of the large number of new and extended functions, version 13.1 release was essentially a major release. For example the VISI Mould module was completely re-written. Vero International Software, the manufacturer of VISI Series, developed a new concept offering the user more flexibility. The user can, for example, add or remove die plates or rotate posts at the design stage; procedures which in previous versions became permanent as soon as they were included. The required software was already included in 13.0, but had not been officially released. "We wanted to carry out some practical trials with a few customers and allow the results to filter into the final version" explains Schmitt.

Version 13.1 has a little more to offer: with surface modelling the present user can extend the complete surface envelope tangentially up to the trim limits. A single function relieves the user of the previous need to remove trim limits, extend surfaces, reset new trim limits and thereby close any gaps which might occur. C2-universal surfaces are now controlled for tangential connectivity. This ensures a smoother surface contour and, in turn, a better surface quality. The VISI Electrode module has also been extended with new functionality including the ability to produce the 2D engineering drawings automatically. The 5-axis simultaneous-machining has been optimised from a user-interface perspective. A few new features, which facilitate more efficient program output, are available to the user. MECADAT introduced the 5-axis simultaneous-machining module in the summer of 2005 and has already almost 100 licenses installed.

Version 13.1 also offers new interfaces. "We always stay up-to-date, in order to accommodate new types of component. This is an ongoing process, taking place with each new release", states Schmitt. Even when a major release has just been made, the development team at Vero are already working on future updates. Things are happening at MECADAT and at Vero, and Manfred Faßnacht also expresses his satisfaction with the MECADAT team: "What can I say?. The collaboration is excellent, simply perfect".



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