

CoverStory

Automation multiplies



New equipment and improved processes help a small shop become a multimillion-dollar operation despite the slow economy

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CNC doweling — A big part of the automation transformation at A. Secondino & Son was the addition of this OMAL HBD 1300 boring and doweling machine for fast and accurate joinery.

Shop Snapshot



Company: A. Secondino & Son Inc., Millwork Division

Location: Branford, CT.

Founded: 1929

Proprietor: Al Secondino

Primary products:

Institutional casework and millwork

Annual sales: \$4 million
(Millwork division)

Employees: nine to 12 in shop

Shop size: 9,600 square feet

Key equipment:

- ▶ Busellato JET Optima RT CNC router
- ▶ Casadei ALA 23 edgebander
- ▶ OMAL HBD 1300 boring and doweling machine
- ▶ Timesavers Speedsander widebelt sander

Small shops with a dozen employees these days typically hover on one side or the other of the million-dollar mark in sales. But that's far from the case at the Millwork division of A. Secondino & Son Inc. in Branford, CT. The company's shop runs between nine and 12 men and is on track to do \$4 million in case work this year. The difference is automation.

"Before (automation), we produced a few hundred thousand (dollars) per year," says Shawn Scalora, vice president in charge of the millwork operation. "We did a lot of work with conventional manufacturing but not like this."

And what's even more remarkable is that the change from conventional to automated production has taken less than nine months.

Ticket to transform

Scalora was charged with making the millwork operation an efficient and self-sufficient part of the larger Secondino general-construction operation by owner Al Secondino. At the time the shop was completely conventional, with a standard cabinet-style table saw at the center of production. Scalora knew that major changes were in order if the shop was going to effectively compete.

"We didn't know what to buy but we knew what we wanted to be," he says. He did extensive research and ended up talking with the folks at Delmac in search of an automation solution.

"We wanted a system to suit our needs, and basically we purchased a lean manufacturing system," Scalora says, lauding all the support he got