

Precision engineer benefits from measured strategy

From modest beginnings in 1965, Dawson Precision Components (DPC) now boasts a 13000 sq ft modern production facility housing 37 employees and a comprehensive range of the latest CNC machine tools. DPC provides a wide range of turning, milling and precision machining services and works for industries as diverse as defence, medical instrumentation, automotive and rail.

DPC remains a family run business: Managing director Simon Dawson oversees operations with the aid of sister and finance director Julie Hughes and cousin and sales director Paul Dawson.

As Simon Dawson explains: "The recession has proved challenging for all manufacturing and engineering companies. Some subcontractors have gone to the wall trying to compete on price with outsourcing centres like China, but DPC has taken the opportunity to invest £2 million on new facilities and equipment and on refreshing the skills of our staff."

The investment has transformed the company's operation and output. New turning and milling machines have enabled volume flexibility and greater accuracy, enabling the production of turned parts to almost any specification and to an accuracy of five microns. Now single machines can perform a series of tasks, creating a consistent operation that saves time and manpower. This has also enabled the company to build redundancy into its systems – if one machine goes down or is engaged there is always another one ready to take its place.

DPC received its ISO 9001:2008 accreditation at the beginning of the year, certifying that it complies to the very highest standards in quality management. This relentless drive for quality has kept customers like Richard Kiddle, components buyer at iconic engineering company Cosworth happy.



"In Formula 1 there are extremely tight deadlines and tolerances and we only select a small number of suppliers to work for us on aspects of major contracts, where they can meet our own exacting standards," says Richard Kiddle. "We need to know that what comes through the door is delivered on time and to specification. DPC have delivered quality on time, every time."

Qioptiq develops and manufactures optical solutions for military and commercial products, including modules for head up displays for aircraft, night vision systems and sightings for rifles. It uses Dawson Precision Components for a broad range of vital components in its military and commercial products.

"Dawson Precision Components is one of our most reliable suppliers," says Mark Jones, senior buyer. "DPC only offer products they know they can deliver to the highest standard. As a result, their components are consistently delivered on time and to the highest quality, which makes it easier for us to meet our targets. We definitely wish more suppliers were like them."

One of the secrets of DPC's success is its ongoing commitment to the continuous development of its staff. For example, although the engineers are already highly skilled, the plan is for all DPC engineers to have completed their National Physical Laboratory dimensional measurement training by the end of the year. Along with this, many operators are studying NVQs and one is undertaking a degree in manufacturing engineering.

"The first quarter of 2010 has seen the projected turnover return to and exceed 2008 levels," says Simon Dawson. "We believe this justifies our business approach to quality and training and allows us to hit the ground running as the recovery kicks in."

DPC manufactures components to customers' instructions and drawings, from 'one-offs' to tens of thousands, in a range of metals and plastics including mild and stainless steels, titanium, aluminium, Perspex and Delrin.

Sales director Paul Dawson will lead a team joining other prominent subcontractors within the supplier zone at MACH 2010.

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