

The Wentworth Blow Mold Group (Wentworth Mold and Electra Form Industries(EFI)) is the world's largest, independent mould maker and a division of Wentworth Technologies, with sales of \$180 million. Over the last several years the company has developed a business model allowing it to deliver prototype PET preform and blow moulds consistently in less than two weeks; in fact typical deliveries are 7-10 days! PETplanet discovered the key drivers for this success.



FTM® cold prototype molds delivered in three to seven days.

The Challenge

Mould makers in general are under enormous pressure to reduce delivery times and at the same time to lower prices. The power of huge buying conglomerates (such as Walmart, P&G et al) combined with fierce competition between brand owners puts the squeeze on moulders and mould and machinery makers. Mould makers have adapted by buying ever faster machining centres, introducing shift work, and speeding up the engineering process. It seems that Wentworth have incorporated this challenge into every aspect of their business with some noteworthy details.

The Strategy

Wentworth took the approach of total commitment at all levels, combined with close cooperation with the customer. This translates into engineering and production around the clock, seven days a week. A web-based order entry system, customised for individual purchasers, allows the specification and uploading of all relevant information. Customisation takes into account the client's particular machines and adjusts carrier designs and back plates, assuring the tools will fit into the machines. Dedicated application engineers review the files immediately, bypassing internal structures. Constant review of ordering and manufacturing leads to continuous innovation, discussed at quarterly meetings.



FTM® preform stack delivered in less than ten days.

The "Way of the Mould"

What actually happens when a customer orders either a preform mould or a blow mould at Wentworth? The first step is to enter all relevant data into the web-based, password protected ordering system, uploading files as necessary. The application engineer at Wentworth reviews the information and issues engineering and manufacturing instructions.



The FTM dedicated department operates 24/7

Engineering is fully automated using proprietary software, allowing detailed drawings and CNC data to be transferred to machining centres the same day, without the need for lengthy approvals and cross-checking. Machine operators use pre-cut components off the shelf. Only the specific preform or container dimensions need to be cut, whereas other surfaces, holes, threads and so on are already finished. It takes 7 to 10 days to manufacture and assemble a fully hardened preform mould stack that can later become part of the production tool.

Aluminium or stainless steel blow moulds take 6 to 10 days, with perhaps 2 more days for special engravings or texturing. These days are not business but calendar days so the

longest anybody would have to wait for a complete tool is 2 weeks. EFI has the ability to make preforms and blow them into bottles but most customers seem to prefer to carry out the trials at their own facility.

According to Nick Lewis, VP Sales & Marketing, “Our FTM program is consistently the fastest in the industry supported by our global facilities. Leading PET converters and endusers work with EFI and Wentworth on major new development programs because we can get them faster to market worldwide. In recognition of this service to the industry we recently received Moldmaking Technology magazine’s “2004 Leadtime Leader” award.



FTM® hot prototype moulds
delivered in
10-12 days

Wentworth is also translating this “lean manufacturing” philosophy into a production environment. Since December 2003, Wentworth has been operating a dedicated “Super-Cell” in Poland for the manufacture of 150 mm diameter quick-change blow moulds. The operation is staffed 24/7 in engineering and manufacturing, and allows production moulds to be delivered in 4 weeks or less.

The “SuperCell” supports the other facilities in Canada, the US and the UK by adding valuable capacity for PET blow moulds, while serving the local Eastern European market.

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