



by Robert Farrell, president, Farrell MarCom Services LLC

TACTICAL TOOLBOX

A toolbox manufacturer improves quoting responsiveness and accuracy helps the business grow

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C Industries, located in Elkhart, Ind., is a full-service fabricator and supplier of complex metal parts to the North American transportation industries. In addition to storage systems, toolboxes

and bumpers, the company offers advanced custom fabrication and engineering services. Since opening its doors in 1994, RC Industries has grown to a staff of more than 140 employees running and operating an impressive array of metalforming equipment. →



RC Industries, located in Elkhart, Ind., produces top-of-the-line toolboxes, but the company is also known for its advanced custom fabrication work.

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According to the team at RC Industries, the CL-900 fiber laser from Cincinnati Inc. coupled with a March automation system is as productive as two and a half CO₂ laser machines.

Metal processing capabilities include Cincinnati fiber and CO₂ lasers along with an arsenal of forming, punching, sawing, robotics, powder coating and welding equipment. With a reputation for quality, on-time delivery and value, RC Industries is developing successful, long-term relationships with its growing list of customers.

Outdated quoting

Like most fabricators, the company discovered that growing its business hinges on improving the speed and accuracy of quotes generated by the sales team. Lacking automation and real-time updates, RC Industries' previous spreadsheet-based process was labor intensive, riddled with inaccuracy, fragile and simply not delivering results.

Quoting speed, accuracy and consistency is vital for any business. With all its unknown variables and moving targets, the quoting process is no simple task for even experienced fabricators such as the RC team. In this business, the first reasonable bid in generally wins; but speed without

accuracy can spell disaster. Quotes that do not reflect current costs will win the contract but lose the company money in the end.

"The quoting process we had been using wasn't integrated into our in-house software systems," explains Chris Curtis, RC Industries' president and owner. "Consequently, we found ourselves handicapped in terms of how fast and accurately we could turn around a quote. We might bid a job only to discover that rising material costs had eaten into profit margins. Dedicating time and resources into looking up pricing variables severely limited the number of quotes we could put out in a week. We knew that growing the business meant that things had to change."

An article he read in an industry magazine prompted Curtis to consider an automated approach to the problem. Researching the market and comparing solutions led him to SecturaSoft. While the software clearly proved to have an edge over others on the market, it was the company's →

responsiveness and willingness to customize their product to meet the company's needs that sealed the deal.

An automated approach

Dawn Curtis, RC Toolbox sales, explains that SecturaSoft went to great lengths to provide a custom solution to fit the fabricator's various and unique requirements.

"The SecturaSoft team created multiple custom templates that allowed us to significantly increase quoting speed and accuracy while simplifying the method. In the past, the process was largely manual and relied on the experience and expertise of a dedicated quoter. By automatically calculating and inserting up-to-date material pricing, machine run times, operator costs, secondary operations and related cost variables, the software allows our entire sales team to quickly generate the highest quality quotes. As a result, the average number of quotes going out in a typical week has more than doubled."

Brad Stropes, COO, SecturaSoft, explains that SecturaFab software takes into

account all the time included into processing parts through RC Industries' lasers. This includes the load and unload time, pierce time and even programming time.

"SecturaFab can help make intelligent decisions for processing," Stropes says. "By leveraging true run times from different equipment, the software can help drive which machines should be used to cut different materials, part sizes and grades. In addition, the advanced nesting can help allocate true material prices for each machine."

The reliance on sales is a common denominator to all fab shops, job shops, machine shops and service centers. Yet the capabilities, strengths and challenges of each are unique. It is, therefore, often important for the software to be adapted for specific requirements.

"Listening is critical to understanding the needs of each customer," says Pierre Slabber, SecturaSoft founder and president. "We take our role as problem solvers seriously and listen to everyone



Now that RC Industries' Cincinnati lasers are backed by a new automated and standardized quoting process, the company is winning more bids and, in turn, increasing profitability.

from the CEO to the machine floor operator. An out-of-the-box application isn't right for every customer and we're happy to make the modifications and enhancements that will make their lives easier."

Wider implementation

Today, RC Industries leverages automated quoting on multiple fronts. In addition to customized business applications, the company is using SecturaFab to assist with →



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the general fabrication side of the business.

RC Industries features several Cincinnati machines, including press brakes and a shear. The lasers include two fiber lasers – a CL980 8-kW 6 ft. by 12 ft. and a CL960 6-kW 6 ft. by 12 ft., both with the March automation system.

The CL-900 series fiber laser systems offer a higher cutting speed and a high level of cutting quality. The use of fiber provides the capability of cutting sheet metal of varying thickness, ranging from thin gauge to thick plate. The nLight light source allows the laser cutters to cut mild steel, stainless steel, aluminum, red metals and more. The CL-900 series pairs with the March system for automation that allows for multiple unmanned shifts. Uptime, cost of operation and cost of maintenance all improve.

With its Cincinnati lasers and automated and standardized quoting process, RC Industries is creating more winning bids and remaining confident that they are optimizing profitability.

“Quoting is a sensitive process,” Curtis says. “Too high and you lose business. Too low and you cannot cover rapidly changing costs. With SecturaFab, our sales team doesn’t need substantial training to create accurate quotes.” ●

Cincinnati Inc. →

RC Industries →

SecturaSoft →