







# Breaking the mould

**Sam Visser discusses the process that allowed TheAlloy to create a number of different products in a tight timeframe**

Having acquired a number of different companies and different product lines over the years Grass Valley charged TheAlloy with bringing uniformity to a range of broadcast equipment. In total there were 30 different design projects that were identified by Grass Valley as key to strengthening its market position as a leading supplier of professional broadcast equipment. "Grass Valley had lots of products within their product range that were designed by different companies," explains Matt Plested, principle designer and account director at TheAlloy. "Our task was to create a coherent brand identity for the products through the use of a comprehensive design strategy."

With a looming major industry exhibition, one of the biggest challenges was to create sleek new door panels for a range of electronic component racks. With the help of Midas Pattern Company the designers were able to tackle two major issues in the manufacture of these panels. The first was the sheer size of the largest component; and the second was the fact that the panel needed to be modular in order to fit different requirements. "Normally we would have had to make five different sized panels to fit the modules on the rack, but Midas Pattern Company was able to make a single mould that could be 'cut and shut' to fit as required," continues Plested. "Despite the fact that the company had very little notice they were able to do the job in less than five weeks."

With the two companies having discussed the project and the capability of the moulding process, Plested's team then created 3D CAD specifications and computer visuals for the new design, which were then sent off to Midas Pattern Company to begin production. Both parties kept in constant contact and the process went smoothly.

TheAlloy managed to deliver the products on schedule and as a result Plested was very pleased with results of the moulding process. "We are always looking to add maximum value through design, but we are sometimes constrained by the limitations of the manufacturing process used by low volume industries, which has traditionally been of pressed-metal construction. Having seen exactly what Midas Pattern Company can achieve, we now want to show more clients the huge 'value add' that a design is capable of when not restricted by process," he comments. "Combining TheAlloy's ability to rapidly deliver the look, feel and behaviour of tactile products, with Midas Pattern's ability to produce production-ready components in less than five weeks, makes us a very powerful partnership."

**Design consultancy** | TheAlloy

**Client** | Thomson Grass Valley

**Product** | TrinixNXT Digital Video Routers

**Brief** | Create a 'Big Rack' product identity that brings uniformity to a range of broadcast equipment and showcase these new designs as full size working prototypes at a major trade show in less than six weeks.

**Modelling and prototyping techniques used** | 3D printing and RIM (reactive injection moulding)

**In-house facilities** | Dimension 3D printer to validate local design details

**Prototyping bureaus or model makers used** | Midas Pattern Company