



MRIM™ production grade tooling manufactured in less than 4 weeks, used to produce high-quality mouldings with a gloss finish and colour matched precisely to customer requirements

14 part assembly of mouldings tooled, manufactured and assembled at Midas Pattern Company to create a stunning visual finish for cutting-edge analytical instrument



## CASE STUDY

# Midas Pattern Company expansion programme leads to Europe

Bedford is proving to be a highly successful location for tool-makers Midas Pattern Company. The business specialises in the manufacture and supply of high-quality rigid polyurethane mouldings and has just unveiled the largest expansion programme in its 17-year history.

With the objective of doubling turnover and profit, the company is developing its operation and market reach, both in terms of sector and geography.

Rachel Collier Midas' Sales Manager says: 'This is a very exciting time for us with expansion on a number of fronts. Our main focus for growth is in winning more new tooling work in the medical and instrumentation field for healthcare and life science businesses for which our strengths in delivering high-quality in low volumes is ideal.'

The lease on a new unit adjacent to Midas' existing facility has just been signed, providing an additional 10,000 sq ft, a 30% increase on current floor space. The workforce has grown by 25% since the start of 2006, giving a current headcount of 67 and there are plans for further recruitment of technical staff over the next two years. At the same time, over £250,000 has been invested in new capital equipment and facilities in order to increase capacity and improve the company's technology base.

Rachel Collier explains: 'Our new unit will primarily be used for the high technology side of our business, where we will focus on precision tool making and pattern making, the latest CNC technology and measurement equipment. Our current building will then be dedicated to the production of polyurethane mouldings, allowing for a rationalisation of the production process and further increasing efficiency.'

'Autumn 2006 marked an exciting new departure for Midas. We exhibited at Medica in Dusseldorf, the world's largest medical trade fair, taking one of the 16 'pods' available to UK companies on the East of England International (EEI) stand. This was made possible by EEI and grant support from UK Trade & Investment. The opportunity enabled us to show our unique polyurethane moulding process, providing medical and analytical instrument manufacturers from all over the world with high-quality enclosures in low volumes, utilising our unique low-cost MRIM™ and FASTrim™ tooling. We are very grateful for the help we have received in organising our attendance and, as this was our first overseas exhibition, being able to benefit from financial assistance.'

“We exhibited at Medica (which) was made possible by EEI and grant support from UK Trade & Investment.”

East of England International delivers UK Trade & Investment services to regional businesses seeking to trade internationally. We also provide free and confidential advice to overseas-owned companies looking to establish a presence or expand in the UK.



“A combination of delivering quality products on time and providing excellent customer service has provided the foundation for Midas' success in this highly competitive marketplace.”

Rachel Collier, Sales Manager, Midas Pattern Company



Dental CMM enshrouded with complex polyurethane mouldings

‘We are also undertaking UK Trade & Investment’s Passport to Export programme, delivered by EEI, which will give us invaluable advice as we expand our market horizons to Europe and beyond.

‘Our international plans are helped by our location. Being within a short distance of major UK airports is important for international customers visiting us and, increasingly, our trips to mainland Europe. London Luton Airport has an extensive range of European cities served on a daily basis and, as our export business grows, fast and easy access to the EuroTunnel at Folkstone will become more significant. Our location has also enabled us to expand by taking an adjacent unit rather than having to relocate the company or have a split-site operation.



Three Interactive mouldings provide form and function to this laser microscope housing

‘UK travel is also made easy by our Bedford base. We have access to good roads, linking to the A1 and M1, which is useful for travelling to Oxford and Cambridge where there is a great deal of business innovation in the field of instrumentation and medical devices. This is an important factor in terms of our growing customer base in this sector.

‘With its historical engineering base, Bedford has a pool of people skilled in tool making. EEI also introduced us to the East of England Development Agency’s Towards 2010 Programme which has provided funding, enabling us to retrain and support staff already skilled in traditional engineering. Our workforce is primarily in production, apart from ten or so in management or in customer-facing roles. Over the years, our loyal workforce has enabled us to successfully integrate CAD/CAM and CNC tool making techniques with traditional pattern and mould making.

‘There are two helpful partnerships which have aided our growth and expansion. The Towards 2010 Programme has linked us with Cranfield University from which we can obtain training and advice. We have also benefited from our relationship with the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) and have used its consultancy services to help decide on the production layout in our new unit.

‘Last but not least, the lifestyle offered in Bedford is very attractive. Only 40 miles outside London, you can find reasonably-priced housing and wonderfully diverse countryside all around, as well as an excellent range of leisure activities.

‘Our expansion plan may be underway but we are committed to maintaining the same values for which Midas has become known: excellent quality and personal customer service.’

#### KEY FACTS

- Midas Pattern Company, based in Bedford, specialises in manufacturing high-quality rigid polyurethane mouldings. The company has just unveiled the largest expansion programme in its 17-year history, with the objective of increasing turnover and profit and extending its market in terms of sector and geography. Already a number of developments have taken place: the acquisition of an adjacent new unit, a 25% increase in headcount and over £250,000 invested in new capital equipment.
- The company exhibited on East of England International’s stand at Medica 2006 in Dusseldorf. As this was the first exhibition Midas attended outside the UK, it benefited from practical help as well as financial assistance. Midas is also embarking on UK Trade & Investment’s Passport to Export programme, delivered by EEI.
- Bedford is proving an excellent location for Midas as it enters a major period of expansion. It provides access to good roads, port and airport links, and staff already trained in engineering skills. Local organisations have provided support, and the excellent quality of life on offer is helpful in attracting new people.

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