

Mack Molding buys product development firm

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Custom injection molder Mack Molding Co. is expanding its product development services with the July 22 acquisition of Milford, Conn.-based Synectic Engineering, Inc.

Financial details of the deal between the two privately held companies were not disclosed. All 18 of Synectic's employees will remain with the company and the now-wholly owned subsidiary will retain its name, Mack officials said.

Adam Lehman will be elevated from Synectic's vice president and COO to president, reporting directly to Jeff Somple, president of Mack Molding's Northern Operations.

Somple said the acquisition will help close the ever-present gap between product development and full production for both companies.

"It really fits into the front end of our value chain. What they're good at is the up front product development and realization process," Somple said.

"A gap exists today between the beginning of a product and getting it out the door in volume... while another company works to make a product work, the manufacturer ends up trying to work out production for it on the fly, with concurrent engineering. And it works out but you might end up with a high reject rate, long cycle time, things you have to live with all because you didn't really develop it on the front end. With this acquisition, we'll be doing it all from the same company."

Founded in 1981 by Jess Stein and Pam Zeller, the previous owners who are retiring, Synectic operates on a five-phase, fixed-price development model, rather than taking the more conventional time and materials approach. So a client knows exactly how much they will pay for definition, concept development, engineering development, design for manufacturability, and pilot manufacturing.

Mack will also have access to Synectic's brain power as well as its 3D CAD platforms, a model shop, an in-vitro tissue lab, and an on-site Class 10,000 clean room for pilot manufacturing — for which Somple and his team already have big plans.

"I've already warned them that my engineers and sales people are going to bombard them with all the little problems on products that maybe we've been limping along with because we didn't have ready access to this kind of development team or facility," Somple said. "Sometimes, in acquisitions, a company is just buying sales but with this, we're really expanding our true capabilities."

"We are all very excited about joining Mack, which will allow us to keep programs under one roof," Lehman said in a news release. "We'll now be able to provide uninterrupted oversight and support for the full life of a program, rather than handing off to a manufacturing partner. The whole process will now be seamless, because Mack will be involved from the start."