

[Back](#)

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Mack acquisition expected to create jobs

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ARLINGTON — Local manufacturer Mack Molding has acquired medical product development company Synectic Engineering of Milford, Conn.

Mack's president of northern operations, Jeff Somple, said he expects the growth of Mack will bring new jobs to Vermont.

"I like to use the term on something like this, 'We don't make acquisitions to get bigger. We're big enough. We make acquisitions to get better because you can always get better,'" Somple said.

"This is a case where it would be hard to maybe draw a direct line, but I would be shocked if this does not add jobs to Vermont because we're going to be getting more work because of this acquisition," he said.

Mack, best known for molded plastic manufacturing, announced this week it had acquired Synectic. The terms of the agreement between the two privately owned companies were not disclosed.

Synectic's 18 employees include mechanical, electrical and biomedical engineers, clinicians and industrial designers. The company will maintain its facility in Milford and its name.

Somple called Synectic a "great fit" for Mack because the idea of getting involved earlier in the product development process is becoming more popular. Synectic was an attractive acquisition because the company has been around for about 30 years and most of its engineers have been with the company at least 10 years, he said.

Many of the products made at Mack's site in Arlington are for the medical field. Mack officials have tried to make the company more attractive to customers by adding services like product design. When the design and manufacturing is within the same company, the customer can get a better product, the company maintains.

"Traditionally, there has always been a lot of finger-pointing between the people who came up with the concept and the people who actually make it," Somple said. "You know, 'This design is terrible, that's how come we're having trouble manufacturing it,' and the designers are saying, 'Well, the design's fine, you just don't know how to mold.' This does away with all of that because the responsibility is all under one roof."

In a statement, Adam Lehman, president of Synectic, said that was one of the reasons he was happy to join Mack.

"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," Lehman said. "The whole process will now be seamless because Mack will be involved from the start."

While Mack has looked at many companies for acquisition or partnerships, Somple said Synectic stood out because it offers a fixed price to customers for design, rather than charging for time spent and materials used, and it has a five-phase development process.

Somple said some direct benefits will be felt in Arlington, including access to Synectic's customer base.

"Over the course of the last 30 years, they've done work with a lot of Fortune 500 medical companies in New England," he said. "They have a blue-chip customer base that we're going to be exposed to right now."

Mack will now be able to begin production sooner and more efficiently, Somple added.

He said Synectic was also an appropriate fit with Mack because they are both New England companies and many of Mack's customers are already in the Northeast.

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