

# Mack Molding increases sales, eyes more growth in 2011

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Mack Molding has increased its sales about 10 percent in the last fiscal year and is projecting double-digit growth in 2011.

Because of this growth, Mack, which has its northern operations headquartered in Arlington, hired 50 additional employees during the past 18 months, bringing the total in Vermont to 450. Mack anticipates hiring an additional 10 to 15 employees in 2011.

Areas where Mack is recruiting new talent include engineering, sales, quality, manufacturing, and technical support.

Jeffrey Somple, Mack's northern operations president, attributes the sales growth to its increased product development in the medical-device manufacturing market.

"It was 1 percent of our business in 2000, and it now represents 32.5 percent today," Somple said. "We expect it to become 50 percent of our sales over the next several years."

Mack is concentrating on large, complex products that are difficult to ship and where customization is needed. It has been effective at obtaining projects from several large companies including Big Belly Solar, Pitney Bowles and f'Real.

According to Somple, "Several American concerns want to be identified with 'Made in the USA', and that is what we do."

A new machining center, about a \$1 million investment, enables the company to do much of its own milling and turning work, which was previously outsourced.

Several of the products now responsible for one-third of Mack's sales include cases, trays and instrumentation for orthopedic surgery; photopheresis units; drug delivery systems and oxygenators; disposables such as cutting blocks and components used in orthopedic surgery; large panels used for carts; and large diagnostic devices.

When asked whether the health-care system enacted into law by President Obama and the Congress will impact Mack's business, Somple replied: "We just don't know, our customers don't know and it is too early to tell."

Somple recognizes that the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) through its tightened regulation process is affecting Mack and similar companies.

"The FDA has told our customers – the OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) that are responsible for designing, marketing and distributing



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**Bryan Campbell, headquarters plant manager, shows Jeffery Somple, president of Mack Molding Co.'s northern operations, new equipment that combines high-powered turning capability with full-function machining, producing parts in a single step.**

the products we manufacture for them – that they are responsible for the end quality of their products, whether they manufacture them in-house, outsource them to companies like Mack or bring in components for further assembly. That means our customers and prospective customers are auditing us more than ever.

"We now have several audits annually from customers, the F.D.A. and independent auditing companies that we bring in for ISO (International Organization for Standardization) recertification," he said. "Likewise, we're now auditing our supply base more than ever to mitigate supply-base risk.

"This is actually an area that plays to another of our strengths – the financial wherewithal to employ the appropriate skill sets that qualify us for medical manufacturing – and at the same time to withstand the inevitable manufacturing delays that can result from intensified F.D.A. scrutiny on products before they can be released in the United States." ❖