

# Fanuc Wire EDM and Robotic Automation Help One Dynamic Business Succeed in the PCD Tooling Market



In order to keep up in the competitive PCD (Polycrystalline Diamond) tooling supply market, one Indiana business stepped up their manufacturing to meet the challenge. With a strong commitment not only to its customers, but also its partners and dealers, this business has overcome considerable challenges to become the success story they are today.

“We aim to provide the best customer service in the industry,” explains Ron Migedt, owner of Riverside Tool Corp. in Elkhart, Indiana. “We pride ourselves on our long term relationships with our partners and dealers.” Migedt also notes that Riverside’s commitment to customer service is the key to their success. “Our customers are top priority to us, regardless of whether they are a small end user or a major player, we treat everyone with the same dedication and commitment.”



This business philosophy has led to steady growth for Riverside Tool, which was started in a garage with two employees in 1990. As the staff and business grew, they moved to a new location in 1996, where they started their successful CNC insert tooling venture. On August 19, 2004, Riverside Tool burned to the ground. While the structure was still on fire, Migedt and his team were formulating a plan for continuing business. Fortunately, there were no injuries, but the total-loss fire forced them to rapidly transition to their current 30,000 square foot facility. Even with this tremendous setback, they managed to bring production back on-line only 15 days after the fire, retaining their commitment to customer orders. This perseverance earned Riverside Tool the 2005 Indiana Blue Chip Business Award for weathering tremendous events to remain active in the community.

Today, Riverside Tool stands strong, producing its product lines of PCD Tooling, Insert Tooling, Spiral Insert Heads, Saw Blades, Solid Carbide Spirals, Router Bits, and Corrugated Profile Knives. With dia-

mond product sales on the rise, Riverside was in the market for a new solution to add to their production environment.

Ron Migedt, along with some Riverside staff, made the trip to IMTS 2006, to research a new EDM platform that would cater to their expansion. Key features of the unit they would purchase would increase productivity while addressing safety concerns, as well as lower overall operating costs. Their existing machine uses a flammable oil based dielectric fluid to perform the cutting operations. This leads not only to a higher maintenance cost, but also the added risk of a fire hazard should the process arc or ignite. It was at IMTS that Riverside connected with Methods Machine Tools, and a solution for their manufacturing and automation needs was found.





After an initial visit to the booth, Stephen Bond, National Sales Manager for Methods EDM, caught up with Midget to ensure they were able to view the products on exhibit and address Midget's questions. Midget remarks, "Steve Bond definitely went above and beyond." He continues, "He made sure to track us down, and that all of our concerns were addressed. Methods didn't flinch when they were presented with our goals." This dedication is what led Riverside to make a commitment to their new production environment with Methods Machine Tools.

Riverside Tool took delivery of a new FANUC 12-inch 1iC wire EDM with a FANUC 160i 5 axis control, fully integrated Hirschmann H150 rotary table, Methods exclusive PCDEdge programming software, and Renishaw probing system. This package allows them to "turn and burn" in a full 5 axis environment and streamline the PCD and intricate profile tool production they have become known for. In addition to the wire EDM, they also added a FANUC M16iB 6 axis robot with Hirschmann's Cell Control software, in order to automate the loading and production runs in conjunction with "lights-out" manufacturing.



A key feature of the FANUC platform is flexibility. The shop can always add another complete EDM machine and have the robot feed both centers, to increase production capacity. Other features include greatly reduced hourly maintenance costs and a water based cut environment, which eliminates the chance of accidental fire damage. Migedt states, "Our lights-out production rates are as high as 30-40%," which makes the safe unattended solution a tremendous benefit. All of these elements are combined with a unit price that is one-half that of the closest competition.

After installation, Ron Migedt noted, "Methods stepped up to resolve our concerns and provide us with needed expandability, all with tremendous value, in a market that does not allow you to overspend," Migedt continues, "Post sales support was also very good," reminding us that there is more to a customer commitment than just the delivery of a machine.

Overall, Riverside Tool Corporation has exceeded their requirements and met their goals with a total package solution from Methods Machine Tools. This started with the flexibility to provide an affordable, safe, and expandable workstation to produce high precision tooling. It continues with the sales, service, and dynamic support from one of the foremost leaders in machine tool integration.

[www.EDMtodayMagazine.com](http://www.EDMtodayMagazine.com)