

CNC machinists have a point to prove

How to achieve more productivity with less capital investment

By James Abbott



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A number of CNC machine tool suppliers were running their machines at 100 per cent spindle load at the highest feed rate and the deepest cutting depth.

Yes, it was a bit of a "blabney" competition but they were also making a serious point on how hard they can push their new technology.

Let's face it, the tooling suppliers will all tell you that for maximum productivity, the insert should fail at about 15min of cutting time.

So, if you push your machine tool at 100 per cent spindle load and end up changing inserts every 5min, it turns out you'll have the door open most of the day - increased downtime.



But as was proven by the machine supplier, a 2" x 0.8mm drill can actually be pushed through high tensile steel nearly three times harder than a decade ago, without all the squealing - increased productivity.

So technology has advanced a long way in the last decade.

Cycle times are nearly half that of a decade ago. And now that the machines are more reliable, lights out machining is more achievable than ever before.

And the selection of machine? It all depends on demand - CNC lathes start at 2 axis + C axis + Y axis which would cover just about all the applications required by a sub-contract machine shop. That's a lot of versatility.

But to get real bang for your buck, you need to match the improved machining tool technology with Lean Thinking. Do this and the results could be very potent indeed. Achieve more productivity with less capital investment? It sounds like an oxymoron. Global vehicle giant

Honda has been doing it for years and we've heard very little doom and gloom from this powerful automaker during the global financial crisis. Develop a culture of innovation and continuous improvement in your business and embark on a Lean Journey.

Indeed, at Astech 2010 The Federal Government was promoting Lean Thinking via its Innovate 2010 stand.

The exhibit showcased leading manufacturing technologies, management methodologies and process techniques for small to medium sized businesses.

The Innovate stand was divided into five key cells, one of which was Business Best Practice. It allowed business people to chat with manufacturing industry leaders in a non-threatening environment on topics such as Lean Manufacturing.

The aim of Innovate 2010 was to encourage small to medium sized businesses in Australia to adopt these leading technologies and

processes to be worldwide competitive.

Everyone is talking about technology and Lean Thinking.

If you are not, you may be left behind.

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