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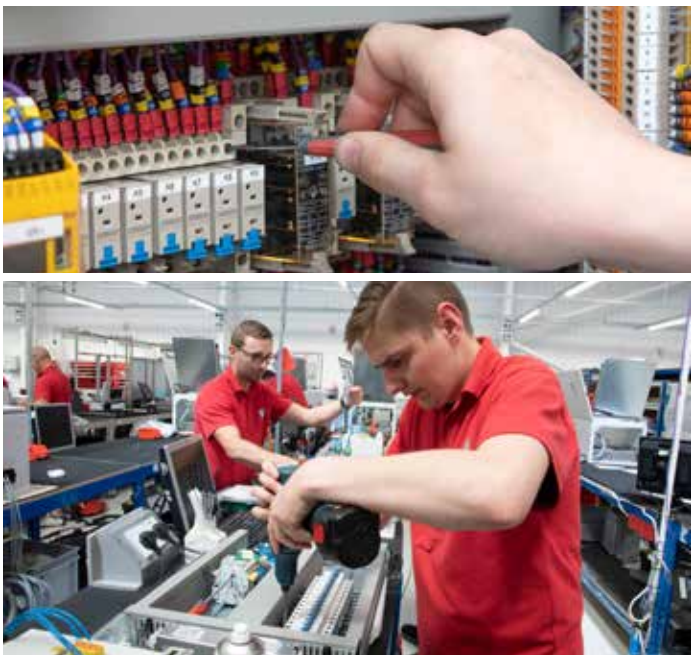
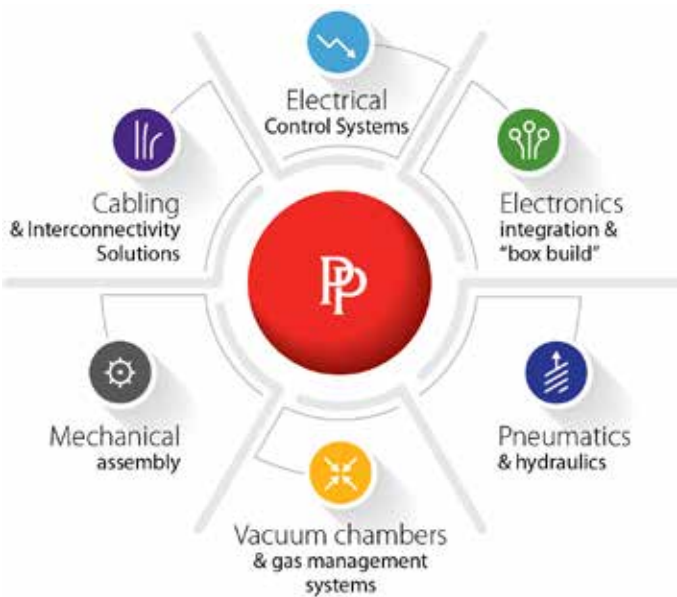
**Stewart Robertson**  
Head of Finance

## Introduction

As an acknowledged leader in the provision of control & automation solutions to some of the World's most successful machinery builders, we have had the opportunity to publish a number of articles in the UK's premier journals for the manufacturing industry. These case studies have been used to highlight and promote the very real business benefits that have been realised through the close working partnerships with our clients, including:

- Increased sales
- Reduced manufacturing costs
- Improvements in quality
- Improved production throughput times
- Reductions in customer lead times
- Increased profitability

*"We look to adopt a consultative approach when engaging with our customers, looking to first fully understand and appreciate their areas of constraint and 'business pain', before we look to design a manufacturing solution that will deliver specific remedies, based on their individual needs. The solutions we offer are able to deliver significant and measurable results for our customers."*



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# There's outsourcing and then there's PP outsourcing

Machine builders and OEMs will likely have considered outsourcing at some point, or have implemented an outsourcing strategy for their manufacturing operation. There's nothing new in the decision to outsource, but there is a clear distinction between the types of outsourcing undertaken and the business benefits that materialise for each.



Most outsourcing is based on a decision to sub-contract out a particular product at a 'piece part level' to a number of different suppliers. This will provide some benefits, but the added value to operations, along with the commercial impact that a strategic outsourcing partnership can identify, will be missing.

PP Control & Automation operate at that higher level, where an outsourcing strategy is all-encompassing and acts as a foundation for a mutual partnership. A more considered and focused approach compared to outsourcing through numerous channels will offer significantly higher benefits to the customer.

### Be careful not to add complexity where it isn't needed

Outsourcing to multiple suppliers will create additional complexity where machine builders and OEMs actually require simplicity. An outsourcing partner with a streamlined approach, acting as a single source of communication and operational activity, is hard to come by – there are very few specialists that are capable. PP C&A, however, are one of those capable specialists.

#### Consider a machinery builder that outsources the following:

- Printed circuit board assemblies to one or two suppliers
- Cable harnesses to another supplier
- Fabrication work to several suppliers
- Backplate and rail assemblies to another supplier
- Pneumatic sub-assemblies to a specialist supplier

It isn't hard to understand why this approach becomes too complex too quickly. It is important to break that proposition down and...

Ask the following questions:

- How many piece parts?
- How many suppliers to manage?
- How many orders to process?
- How many parts to stock?
- How much time is taken in final assembly?

The answers to those questions will paint a very complex picture. One that could be blocking efficiencies in vital areas, reducing costs in one area but adding to them in another, generating laborious administrative tasks and creating a model that becomes difficult to manage.



### Combine & Conquer

Now consider a higher-level outsourcing solution where one partner can manage every activity in the supply chain for you. The benefits would be much healthier, and they would include:

- Complex assemblies delivered straight into your business
- Options configured to meet your precise production needs
- Massive reduction in vendors and piece parts to order and stock
- Reduced production times and increased manufacturing agility
- Increased rate of responsiveness to meet customer demand
- Outperforming competitors with improved lead times



Most outsourcing methods allow manufacturers to focus more time on core competencies such as product innovation, research and development or sales and marketing. A decision to outsource often hinges on various barriers to growth, including people, space and production lead times.

Whether a machine builder is struggling for available workers with the necessary skill, has a lack of space for new builds as orders grow, or is falling behind schedule and seeing lead times rise; outsourcing alleviates these pain points.

Operational benefits are one thing, but a strategic partner like PP C&A will also have the capability and capacity to manage a complex supply chain, leading to commercial benefits. Outsourcing supply chain management allows the customer to focus less on tactical 'day-to-day' purchasing activities (typically, placing and chasing) but focus more on strategic supplier development activities that reap greater rewards.

Access to extensive supplier networks, providing additional opportunities to establish new relationships or build on those already embedded, is also an area that manufacturers can only benefit from with a strategy developed with a high-level outsourcing partner.

Managing the entire supply chain with the infrastructure embedded within PP C&A ties manufacturing processes together in a streamlined manner and carries numerous commercial benefits. Explore them in 'The tangible commercial benefits behind the transfer of supply chain ownership' blog.

The tangible, real world and potentially massive benefits of a strategic partnership with a high-level outsourcing supplier are many and varied. The Outsourcing page will offer further insight.

Whether a machine builder is struggling for available workers with the necessary skill, has a lack of space for new builds as orders grow, or is falling behind schedule and seeing lead times rise; outsourcing alleviates these pain points.

"A decision to outsource often hinges on various barriers to growth, including people, space and production lead times."

### The demand for flexibility

The ability for a machine builder to maintain high levels of production flexibility in relation to changing demands has never been greater. Some markets are more predictive than others. Certainly in some sectors, where for a new sales opportunity to be realised for a machine builder, they require a fast ramp up in capacity to meet an expected customer lead time on a potentially larger order. OEMs that work closely with a strategic outsourcing partner will always have the ability to scale up quickly compared to a more vertically integrated business with multiple internal constraints.

Equally, with so much economic uncertainty in the world, it is quite possible that demand could drop off. Perhaps a short-term 'blip' or perhaps something more significant. Again, if a company has greater flexibility on resource and fixed costs by working with outsourcing partners, they will no doubt be able to weather any storm in a more positive manner.



Article by  
**Ian Knight**  
C.I.O





# Customer Case Study



**"We have grown almost 50% over the last five years and this has been made possible thanks to the partnership we have established with PP Control & Automation"**

## The customer requirements

A B Graphic International Ltd (ABG) originally engaged PP to design and manufacture the electrical back plates on its new **Digicon 3 digital print finishing machine** and delivering them to the ABG facility in Bridlington, where the cables and harnesses would then be fitted.

However, during the design engineering discussions, it quickly became apparent that a more value-added design would be beneficial, allowing for a modular, configurable and pre-wired (Plug & play) style solution with significant benefits.

## The PP Control & Automation solution

Engineers from both companies came up with a new way of assembly that involved developing a more standard **enclosure system**, which would allow the panel to be easily slid into the machine.

Once a successful enclosure system design was created, the **cable harnessing** and the **interconnectivity** around the machines could be considered. It became apparent early in the process that a modular approach would be a lot more cost and time effective.

PP were then assigned the task of designing a process that would see the modules fully-assembled at its world-class facility.

Cable harnesses were designed to ensure that they were jugged to the optimum lengths and therefore could be plugged straight into the mating halves around the machine, whether distributing power or signals.

ABG could make the switch from hard wired sensors to M8 and M12 connectivity, allowed for swift assembly and test. Using distributed I/O technology vastly reduced wiring time and paved the way for a complete 'plug & play' assembly process around the machine.

As a spin-off project, PP and ABG collaborated on a Power Distribution Unit that mounts at the front of the machine and distributes the power to each of the modules.

- Modular control system design
- Distributed I/O
- 'Plug & play' style connectivity
- Standardised power distribution

## The real business benefits

*"Thanks to our commitment to outsourcing, we are now more efficient and have cut production and sales lead times significantly. Importantly, PP has also given us the additional capacity that allows us to go after new business safe in the knowledge we can quickly ramp up production to cope with it."*

**Phil Robson, Operations Manager**  
**A B Graphic International Ltd**

- 60% improvement in electrical fit-out time
- Eliminated 700 days of production each year to be re-allocated to other areas
- Production capacity increased by over 50%
- ABG now offer custom module configurations to customer specific machine requirements



**"The need to provide our customers with a more comprehensive outsourcing solution that enables them to focus on growing their sales revenue and market share is critical to our joint success"**



**Sean Cayley**  
C.O.O | PP Control & Automation





# The tangible commercial benefits behind the transfer of supply chain ownership

When considering the benefits of strategic outsourcing, the obvious and clearly significant areas of focus tend to be directly linked to an organisation’s need to grow sales revenue and market share by increasing production capacity, creating flexibility within the manufacturing process and reducing lead times, both internally and for the customer. However, in addition to the production and operational advantages, there are also the regularly overlooked commercial benefits.

### Supply chain ownership

An important portion of the overall outsourcing process should be the outsourcing partner’s ability to take on supply chain ownership and manage the exercise for its customer. This requires valuable experience and the necessary competence, in order to streamline the supply chain; improving efficiencies and associated costs at the same time.

Businesses often overlook the very real cost advantages associated with this transfer of supply chain responsibility. It’s not just the cost in time saved by outsourcing order placement (the average estimation of which is circa £90 per PO raised), but also in the corresponding tasks of booking goods in, packaging disposal, parts storage and movement, delivery note processing, paying supplier invoices and so on. The costs build with every additional administrative task within the arrangement.

### Save physical space

That’s process cost saving, now consider the physical space saving achieved when the inventory levels required to support machine builds are transferred to an outsourcing supplier. This is space that can be better utilised in supporting value added activities. Additional production space is often a high priority for a growing business.

By removing the physical inventory, stock value is minimised and working capital “cash on hand” is improved, whilst associated commercial payment terms can be managed to ensure an improved cash conversion cycle. This can be further maximised if the outsourcing partner is delivering precisely at the optimum time for production needs.

“Businesses often overlook the very real cost advantages associated with this transfer of supply chain responsibility”



### Innovation

‘Taking on’ supply chain management does not mean that the customer dilutes its relationship with key technology providers – just the opposite. The creation of a new collaborative relationship can develop, and in conjunction with these technology partners, an outsourcing provider can add a different viewpoint on the overall activity. With innovation at the heart of the relationship, the advantage to the customer could be pivotal to the achievement of cost savings and better process efficiencies for the business.



### To summarise

The following list is a snapshot of the very real commercial benefits associated with the transfer of a supply chain to an outsourcing partner.

- Reduced costs associated with tactical purchasing – day to day “placing & chasing” functions within the purchasing resource can be focused on strategic activities.
- Minimised goods in and internal logistics processes.
- Reduction in physical space for inventory – creating additional added value spaces (e.g. additional production).
- Improved working capital and cash conversion cycle times
- An outsourcing partner that has the ability to offer alternative suppliers and product solutions that can provide additional technical benefits.
- Combined customer and supplier purchasing needs, which opens-up an opportunity to leverage volume-based cost reductions.

“Consider the physical space saving achieved when the inventory levels required to support machine builds are transferred to an outsourcing supplier.”

When considering strategic outsourcing to unlock growth potential, the production and operational benefits that are often first examined should never be considered in isolation. It is important to not overlook the very tangible commercial opportunities, because they can make just as much impact to the bottom line.



Article by  
**Stewart Robertson**  
Head of Finance



# Customer Case Study



**"The strategic outsourcing agreement marks a paradigm shift in the way we manufacture and manage our supply chains."**

## The customer requirements

A huge surge in demand for the latest machines within the dairy industry means that Fullwood Packo has enjoyed particular success with its M<sup>2</sup>erlin robotic milking systems.

With significant advantages, the system has created a reduction in labour costs and increase in milk yield and volumes for its customers. However, with this increased demand comes increased manufacturing pressures and a need to reassess capacity and resources.

The company decided a more integrated machine build approach was required and that this would have to be discussed with a partner it could trust.

## The PP Control & Automation solution

After working together for more than a decade, PP Control & Automation (PP C&A) and Fullwood Packo brought together dedicated teams to plan future M<sup>2</sup>erlin production patterns and share ways in which the 'build' process could be streamlined, manufacturing costs managed, and capacity capability doubled - all without additional production space and labour resource.

Reviewing best practices gleaned from other industry sectors, the PP C&A 'design for manufacture' engineering team revised the current build processes and came up with a number of suggestions that would see it provide a significantly more cross-functional and added value build solution. It identified that the electrical and mechanical controls could be combined into a single integrated outsourcing approach.

Work then commenced on both production engineering - identifying areas of standardisation, option configuration, combined test requirements, as well as mapping out supply chain needs and engaging both current and new suppliers to ensure optimum quality, reliability and total production costs. To ensure reliability, PP C&A used a trusted method to intricately test the systems using a special test rig - a test which functionally checks the entire system through software, replicating the connectivity associated with the robot.

The supply chain challenge also required PP C&A to move fabrication and machined parts into its own supply chain to create additional production capacity with Fullwood Packo.

- Additional production capacity created for Fullwood Packo's growth plans
- Production levels and on-time delivery scores consistently high
- Advanced system allowed Fullwood Packo to maintain lead times and increase output by 100%
- 7,500 sq ft space created and 25 staff redirected into more value-added activities
- Intricate testing of the system before they arrive at Fullwood Packo's site
- Strategic partnership played a key role in Fullwood Packo increasing its turnover

## The real business benefits

The strategic outsourcing partnership has already delivered significant results for Fullwood Packo and played a key role in the company doubling its production and keeping up with customer demand. PP C&A continue to support Fullwood in scaling-up through a standardised approach to design and flexible customer configuration. This approach to engineering design support also ensures that all international safety legislation is met, including UL508a.

*"In addition to boosting our capacity, we have worked closely with PP C&A engineers to boost connectivity, incorporating a number of design iterations into the build so we can easily customise the machines to fit the client's exact requirements."*

**Aled Williams, Operations Manager  
Fullwood Packo**

Pictured: Aled Williams, Operations Manager

**"This is a great example of how a normal supplier/customer relationship has been transformed into a strategic partnership where both companies benefit from playing to their strengths."**



**Tony Hague**  
C.E.O | PP Control & Automation



# Why do Contract Electronic Manufacturers get it wrong when supporting Box Build?

The electronics industry is rapidly evolving and in the world of Contract Electronic Manufacturing, the need to consistently 'add value' and build 'long term partnerships' are phrases that are often declared but seldom delivered.

The question that commonly arises is "Why do CEMs often get it wrong when supporting Box Builds?"

Most, if not all printed circuit boards will in one form or another, be built up into higher level assemblies or enclosures (Box Builds) which are later tested before being shipped. The requirement can be seen with mobile phones, in airport baggage handling systems and more recently, the emergence and evolution of AI and cloud computing. All of these areas are critical applications requiring a reliable service, often driven by time to market pressures.

OEM's often look to their CEM as the key 'box build' provider, having already built up the PCBAs and enticed by the convenience of day to day management with one vendor who can do it all.

No matter what business you are in, there will always be core competences and areas of added value. Naturally there is a wish to fully support the customer, increase share, profit and growth; but at what cost to you and the customer?

## A closer look at the CEM box build problem

CEMs are experts in populating printed circuit boards. They understand the electronic component landscape and can source and fulfil a vast range of technologies depending on the board design and chosen components. They know machine placement capability and often have skilled manual labour to support non-automated processes. Over the years, more and more CEMs have adopted a 'box-build' value added service in a plan to retain customers on what is becoming a cost competitive service. Competition likely arisen due to more automation of technology advancement.

Providing a box build solution in this way has its drawbacks and this is where the major issues lie; all too regularly is the capability under-valued. It's putting the PCBs in a box, adding a few cables, a fan, a power supply and testing right? Wrong. Depending on the end application, complexity and size, box builds can become a real challenge.

The challenge could arise from something as simple as limited space within the facility to build such a system and it could be that a CEM will attempt to build by utilising the staff they have, limited knowledge and decisions made based solely on customer supplied CAD and traditional labour models associated with placing electronic components.

Product gets quoted, PO placed, and the existing customer is happy – That is until it comes to materials sourcing, operational planning and then committing to a delivery date that continues to change. An OEM will want flexibility and competence in those areas.

*"Naturally there is a wish to fully support the customer, increase share, profit and growth; but at what cost to you and the customer?"*

## A strategic approach

PP Control and Automation have taken a different approach. As a strategic outsourcer with its core competency being 'Box Build and System Integration', populated printed circuit boards are just another material line item and the requirement is managed accordingly through an approved vendor process. With 80% of customers on a Kanban supply,

implementing the right processes and key vendor partnerships from the start is key. Robust planning and lean manufacturing operations backed by a skilled workforce of electro-mechanical technicians ensures that customers new and existing continue to benefit from a >98.50% OTIF service.

By outsourcing to a strategic supplier, a number of issues that arise with leaving the box build to a CEM that is unprepared will be eliminated. Firstly, it will be a core competence and therefore there is no worry of incorrectly skilled labour and a lack of experience. A strategic partner has the flexibility to scale up production, or down depending on demand. The capacity and resource is readily available and the latest state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment and expertise in handling box builds is a core investment for the business. There will be no lack of experience in dealing with non-electrical vendors and full supply chain management is available. Lastly, major benefits will occur if a strategic partner is identified early in the process and advantage is taken of expert DFM abilities.

*"Too often, companies allow a product design that engineers in unnecessary cost, creates a cumbersome supply chain and poor efficiency of build."*

Too often, companies allow a product design that engineers in unnecessary cost, creates a cumbersome supply chain and poor efficiency of build. Such companies then spend time and energy, post design, attempting to reduce costs... but it's too little, too late.

## Value-added design partners

With over 50 years of experience in the development of control systems for a wide range of different industries, PP C&A are also excellently positioned in the area of 'Design for Manufacture and Assembly' (DFMA) – in conceptual development of ideas as well as in basic consulting.

Many companies continue to develop a product design that leads to unnecessary costs, requires an inflexible supply chain, and leads to inefficient manufacturing processes. Decisive for the development of optimal design processes and products is the early integration of the development, production and purchasing departments of PP C&A and its customers.

PP C&A's ability to incorporate the expertise of established technology and engineering partners leads to innovative solutions that offer significant benefits to the customer.

PP C&A is a member of the Manufacturing Assembly Network (MAN Group) with access to its specialist skills across a variety of manufacturing disciplines, including full-service industrial design and a CEM company. Academic partners are also an important facet to the process and PP C&A have close relationships with Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) who can assist in technology development and access to prototyping support.

PP Control & Automation can assist in every stage from early design concepts, design for manufacture and assembly, supply chain design & optimisation, product standardisation, design approval processes, build, test and logistics – a complete "end to end" contract manufacturing solution that fits your very specific needs.

## PP C&A can offer engineering design support in relation to:

- EN60204 Standards
- CE Low voltage directive
- Compliance to latest safety legislation

PP C&A work closely with its technical partners, supporting specialist, market specific standards, EMC consultancy and advice in relation to NFPA79. In addition, PP C&A can offer a full design capability for:

- UL508A (USA Market)
- CUL508A (Canadian Market)



Article by  
**Garry Myatt**  
Sales Director



# Customer Case Study



## The customer requirements

Inventor-e was established in 2001 as a technology business to provide point-of-use solutions to industrial manufacturers and the facilities management markets.

Over the last six years, the Solihull-based company has focused on the development of its cloud-based 'Sourcerer' platform and providing disruptive solutions to enhance the relationship and supply chain management of its distributors with its manufacturing clients and with direct relationships with OEMs.

Turnover has increased by 60% in the last year as market leading organisations, including Babcock International and Rexel, have adopted its technology and, with new solutions on the way, the expectation is that sales will grow by 600% between now and 2021.

The firm's USP is through its ability to innovate industrial vending and, after significant discussions, it was decided to identify a strategic manufacturing partner that could manage the build of the systems and, importantly, give it the ability to scale-up quickly.

An initial meeting with PP Control & Automation (PP C&A) originally took place back in 2013, but at that time, the type and style of the opportunity was not a good fit for either party. However, all lines of communication remained open and in 2018, further dialogue took place and a new partnership was duly formed.

## The PP Control & Automation solution

With Inventor-e's orders picking up rapidly, the timing was 'perfect' to explore working with PP C&A as a strategic manufacturing partner of SmartStores Secure, an access-controlled cabinet that uses the SmartStores app for access and to issue, return and restock product.

Following a meeting with operational teams at both companies, a manufacturing cell was created at PP C&A's facility to build the initial systems - all built to current design and shipped at the end of last year.

The build process allowed engineers from both companies to work together to explore areas for potential design improvements, as well as new supply chain opportunities that could be created through a collaborative supplier network.

These conversations highlighted a number of improvement suggestions and additional systems/variations of the product that are now being explored to support specific product vending and application needs that will provide Inventor-e's customers with a world leading solution.

Another important capability that PP C&A could provide was supporting the design specifications and approval process, with particular emphasis placed on the need for UL approval. This would enable the product to be sold and supported into the potentially lucrative US and North American marketplaces.

Inventor-e can now focus on its core competences of technology development and software integration, in order

to provide innovative industrial vending and inventory management solutions. PP C&A continues to support as a true manufacturing partner with scalability, who can also assist with future product design and development.

Speed to market and agility will be key to future success and both companies are confident that they have a partnership in place that will deliver.

## The real business benefits

In just a short space of time, PP C&A has proven to Inventor-e that strategic outsourcing can offer it a cost-effective way of building its growing range of point-of-use systems quickly, giving it peace of mind that rapid scale-up can be achieved.

It has also highlighted how design iterations can be easily integrated into the 'build' process to satisfy the growing requirements of clients for bespoke solutions that fit a wide range of industrial and facilities management applications.

This confidence has come at a very opportune moment for Inventor-e, who has completed an exclusive agreement with a global distributor on its current product range for industrial sectors (excluding aerospace and healthcare).

The volumes for this contract could be game-changing for the business and would not be possible to achieve without a strategic manufacturing partner in place to support with the ramp-up.

A meeting has already taken place at PP C&A's state-of-the-art production facility and a number of initial actions agreed to look at strengthening the supply chain and sourcing new suppliers that can meet production volumes and are UL compliant.

A certification specialist has also been introduced to complete a full evaluation and design review to the relevant North American standard (UL62368).

Whilst the relationship between the three companies is at an early stage, there have already been discussions about the strategy of PP C&A building products both in the UK and North America in order to support market demands.

- World class manufacturing cell created quickly and without significant direct investment from Inventor-e
- Lead times reduced for the SmartStores Secure system by over 20%
- Additional manufacturing capabilities has helped Inventor-e increase sales by 60% and create 10 new jobs
- New design iterations explored that will improve the configuration of the systems
- Support with making the systems compliant and ready for distribution in the United States and North America
- Manufacturing agreement being designed to support new exclusivity agreement



**"Strategic outsourcing with PP C&A is allowing us to globally scale our business with a trusted partner, without the significant direct cost of setting up our own manufacturing facilities."**

*"The team at PP C&A has provided us with a lot of food for thought on future builds and we have already used its design and engineering expertise to improve our solutions and reduce costs."*

**Andy Ingram, Sales Director  
Inventor-e**



*"The company wants a manufacturing partner who can not only grow with it, but also contribute its own production knowledge to develop solutions that will improve the end service for the customer."*



**Tony Hague**  
C.E.O | PP Control & Automation



# Playing the game of Risk

Tony Hague, CEO of PP Control & Automation, explains why strategic outsourcing offers the perfect antidote to risk and the uncertain times manufacturers are increasingly facing.

We are currently living in what many media commentators are calling 'unprecedented times' and it's difficult to argue with that notion, especially when it feels like uncertainty is growing by the passing day.

In fact, if you look at the global economic landscape there is a toxic cocktail of events clearly developing. Trump's well publicised US trade war with China promises to suck the rest of us into a potential slowdown whilst, closer to home, we have the shambles that goes by the name of Brexit.

Just when you think politicians couldn't cause further issues along comes another bill or another amendment. Even staunch 'Remainers' from the business community are sick of the limbo we currently find ourselves in.

This uncertainty is certainly transmitting itself into the world of manufacturing, with recent PMI figures of 47.4 the lowest in seven years. And it's not just automotive that is struggling. We have seen small signs across many of the sectors we supply that confidence isn't what it was and that new projects and associated investment are being put on hold.

With all this in mind, it is no surprise that an increasing number of companies are looking to mitigate their risk and choosing to use strategic outsourcing as a way of achieving that.

Manufacturers are looking carefully at how they balance short-term term pain with the medium and longer-term picture and how they juggle maintaining capacity and inventory whilst protecting their cash.

If companies react to the uncertainty by cutting too deep, too soon it can remove their ability to respond when things begin to pick up and leaves them unable to meet existing or new customer demand.

Placing this risk with a strategic outsourcing partner is a viable way of avoiding 'Russian roulette' when it comes to the future of your business.

We currently work with over 25 world class companies on this basis, spanning over 12 different markets. Together,



we have developed relationships that allows our clients to focus on their core competencies, leaving PP Control & Automation to take care of non-core manufacturing processes.

The customer benefits from reduced operating costs, the elimination of unnecessary stock and reduction in work in progress and, importantly, improved manufacturing lead times.

They also gain immediate 'agility' with the ability to reduce and increase volumes at the press of a button – ideal in this current economic climate.

Now, imagine if they didn't have an outsourcing partner? If sales increased rapidly they would have to invest in new machines/buildings or costly sub-contract labour to

cope with the peaks. When times are tough and volumes drop, this could well turn into redundancies and capital equipment lying idle.

In our world, there are few costs for the customer to pick up when establishing a strategic outsourcing partnership. In fact, once an agreement is in place, we will take on the majority of the up-front costs, investing time and money into production engineering, setting-up test jigs/rigs and, if requested, taking on supply-chain management.



## Keep your suppliers closer

Whether it's the possible ramification of a no deal Brexit having an impact or not, there is no getting away from the fact that a lot of UK companies, who had previously offshored, are now looking to choose their outsourcing partner a lot closer to home.

Chasing the low-cost manufacturing environments of Eastern Europe and the Far East hasn't been as lucrative as first anticipated, with inconsistent quality issues and long lead times impacting on overall productivity and the final "landed costs" of parts.

The fall in Sterling has added more strength to the argument, with the UK now 30% more competitive than it was three years ago, making purchasing decisions a lot easier than they once were.

There are lots of benefits of having a strategic supplier close to your own manufacturing operation, not least clear visibility of stock and the ability to manufacture just-in-time.

## When the good times roll

History doesn't lie. Looking back at previous slowdowns, it is clear to see that companies that continue to invest are usually the ones that come out of the tougher times stronger and in a better position to grow and take on new opportunities.

Those that choose to batten down the hatches and cut off spending all together tend to be the ones no longer here and their factories replaced by supermarkets and housing estates.

Whilst strategic outsourcing is a great way of mitigating risk, it shouldn't be viewed as a negative measure. In fact, it is actually the opposite.

By managing your costs, production capability and retaining the skills you need, you will create a platform that allows you to immediately turn on the tap when the good times return.

Increasing volumes can be switched on quickly and without massive outlay, whilst new opportunities that naturally emerge from an upturn can be chased knowing full well the production capacity is in place.

In summary, it appears that the uncertainty will get worse before it gets better. Mitigate the risk by exploring how strategic outsourcing can support your business both in the difficult times and in the good times.

NFPA 70 NEC or NFPA 79 machine safety codes.

As you can start to see, when considering all of the implications associated with UL508A and the potential significance of getting it wrong, or indeed simply making the wrong assumptions, we would always recommend that you seek the specialist advice of a professional organisation which has practical experience in this field.

## The benefits of outsourcing video series

PP Control & Automation has tapped into the thirst for video content and digital marketing by launching three new videos designed to discuss the benefits of strategic outsourcing.

The company has used the power of animation to talk potential customers through the process and how it can help them increase capacity, reduce lead times and mitigate the risk of fluctuating sales.

Videos are between 90 and 150 seconds long and are available via the company's website and through its social media channels, with the first one focusing on unlocking your growth potential, while the second one asks the question...are you losing orders because you're too busy.

"We have spent a lot of time and effort in exploring how we can target new markets and the techniques we can use to reach them," explained Tony Hague.

"One of the key areas we have focused on was digital media and generating new video content to promote across our website and social media channels was an integral part of this approach."

He concluded: "It seems to be paying off too. The videos to date have enjoyed over 1,500 views on YouTube and more across blog and social platforms"

The third video introduces how PP Control & Automation has worked with Ishida Europe, a world leader in the design, manufacture and installation of weighing, inspection and packaging lines, to increase its capacity and sales.

A customer interview and on-site footage explains how clients can benefit from some of the points raised in the first two mini films.





# Further reading

Aside from the case studies presented in this document, more information on strategic outsourcing and its benefits can be found in the ongoing blog series and multiple press releases – some of which are selected below.  
*Click articles for further reading.*

Are strategic partnerships the secret to agility?

[Click to read](#)



The huge benefits of a strategic outsourcing partnership - Ishida Europe

[Click to read](#)



£250,000 invested in 'world first' technology

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3 reasons you're losing orders to competitors

[Click to read](#)



Growth in the face of uncertainty

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Manufacturing apprenticeships: 3 common misconceptions

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Outsourcing - A risk mitigation strategy

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Celebrating 25th Mazak Europe anniversary with production milestone

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How manufacturers are increasing profits by £500,000 a year

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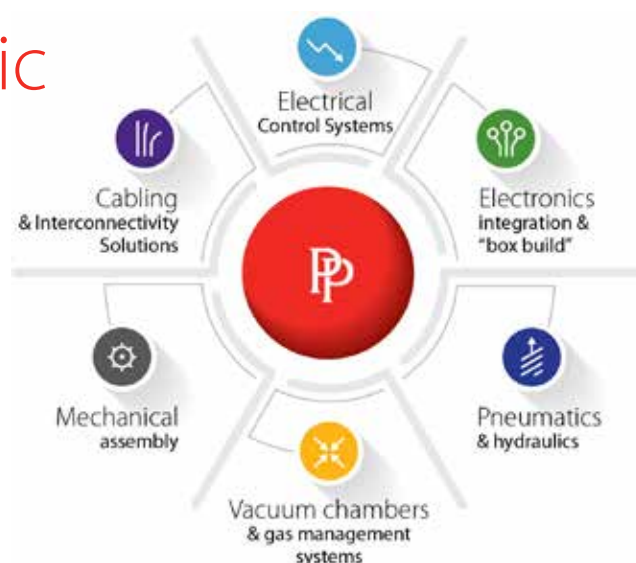






# World leaders in strategic outsourcing solutions

PP combine extensive engineering and production capabilities in order to design an outsourcing solution that delivers the desired result. Such a solution could be module or assembly based, part or full machine build – whichever provides the optimum solution.



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