EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME: L&M Fabrication & Machine, Inc.

INDUSTRY: Fabricating Steel for Signs and Structures, General Structural, Complex Fabrications, and Industrial Fabrication

LOCATION: Bath, Pennsylvania, USA

CHALLENGE: Automate existing processes for faster throughput and higher accuracy

SOLUTION: Installation of Peddinghaus equipment including the FDB-2500 plate processor, BDL-1250/9B drill line, DG-1100 band saw, and MDL-1000 drill line

RESULTS: Higher levels of production efficiency, and accuracy

Diversified Profitability

What does it take to thrive in today’s unpredictable markets?

Few will dispute that the rules of business have changed during the last several years. With many organizations claiming to see light at the end of the tunnel there is still no argument – business as usual, is no longer business as it was. Fabricators that are able to find new markets and diversify their backlog will in no doubt benefit now and into the future.

L&M Fabrication & Machine, Inc. located in Bath, PA can attest that the world is a different place than it was in 2007 – but their lean production and diversified workload has continued to foster growth even as some markets continue to be unpredictable.

Located just over an hour outside of Philadelphia - the “City of Brotherly Love” - in Bath, Pennsylvania L&M Fabrication uses their ingenuity and innovation to continually exceed customer expectations. With over 40 years of service to the steel industry L&M does whatever is needed to get the job done. Boasting a broad client base in numerous industries that span the world L&M has ingrained versatility and quality into every step of their fabrication process.
No Such Thing as a “Normal Job”
If you ask Keith Ashner, Managing partner, or Bobby Cesanek, Jr., Operations Manager, what a typical job is at L&M they can maybe tell you what they are working on at that given moment, but as far explaining the markets they are involved with the list is never-ending.

You will see parts for projects that include: cement plants, power projects, miscellaneous steel, railroad work, sign structures, infrastructure projects, and structural applications (that have included the new World Trade Center in Manhattan) go through their shop on any given day. Pictures of numerous custom projects adorn the hallways at L&M as badges of honor, and each has a unique story that goes with it.

It’s safe to say L&M has never been afraid to venture into new markets. When Anthony Lack started the company in 1967 his vision was to machine and fabricate steel. It didn’t matter what it was for – whether it was small odd-jobs for local farmers or custom parts for a wide array of projects, a job was a job and L&M has never hesitated to accept new challenges.

This attitude of “whatever it takes” has stayed with the company throughout the years, even as ownership moved from Anthony to his son Bruce. The company has continued to grow exponentially from its origin and today supplies a multitude of unique steel components to companies all over the globe.

With this diversified workload commonly demanding tight deadlines standard procedure needs to be flexible - but most importantly - efficient. On top of that, each project has diverse demands and unique regulations – L&M’s skilled workforce and cutting edge equipment are the backbone for their modern day profitability.

The First Steps Toward Technology
Bobby Cesanek works today as L&M’s Operations Manager, but in his 28 years with the company he has worn multiple “hats” throughout the organization. Starting his career at L&M on the shop floor Bobby learned the areas that L&M could potentially improve their processes, and one day he got his chance.

Bobby’s understanding of modern technology and the benefits that software could offer came to light in the early 90’s when he convinced the company to buy its first PC with Autocad. That day the game had changed forever for the team at L&M.
“Before Bobby brought the software into the picture we were manually drawing full scale layouts of parts. It was an incredibly tedious process, but then we got our first autocad center with our first PC. It was just the tip of the iceberg with how we began to modernize our processes and immediately we were amazed at how technology could improve how we fabricated” – Keith Ashner

This first taste of modern technology left a lasting impression at L&M. The improved prepwork and simplified processes through automated drafting helped the organization realize how important technology could be. Keith, Bruce, and Bobby knew that modern techniques would become a permanent fixture at L&M.

The Right Tools for the Job
In 1999 L&M purchased their first CNC plate burning machine, shortly followed by several small CNC ironworkers, and a CNC punch press. As the company grew into new industries they saw more structural shapes coming through the shop. The team at L&M decided that it might be time for another investment into structural shape processing – a Beam Drill Line.

“I remember when we first spoke to Danny Steyn of Ocean Machinery in 2003. He came to speak to us about the Ocean Avenger. He was in my office and wrote on my white board exactly how that machine could help us. I was impressed by his presentation, we bought the machine, and it did everything that he said it would - simple as that.” – Keith Ashner

With their diverse workload the Avenger was able to process a multitude of different shapes and sizes at a minimal initial investment. As Bobby describes “There wasn’t a lot that machine couldn’t do”. The addition of the Avenger opened more new doors to the organization. Structural projects become more prevalent at L&M and the organization continued to grow into new further diverse markets.

Retooling Again – With Peddinghaus
In 2008 the company was getting ready for another major CNC investment - never taking these decisions lightly Keith, Bruce, Bobby and their Material Prep manager Daniel Zellner took it upon themselves to explore all available options. The management team brainstormed together and decided where they wanted to improve their production strategically to accommodate active markets. With every addition of CNC equipment new opportunities had been presented to L&M, and this time would be no different.
A passion for quality in design and customer satisfaction are values both L&M and Peddinghaus hold dear.

All machine tool manufacturers were being considered so the L&M team had a lot of research on their hands. The group contacted multiple other fabricators and asked them about their equipment - specifically in regards to customer service, performance, and reliability.

When the fabrication world is your oyster where do you start? What equipment would help L&M stand out from the rest and give them the competitive advantage they needed to prepare their business for the future?

“We took a look at everything we were doing and asked ourselves ‘What next?’ …We went to the Peddinghaus Oktoberfest to do some looking around and it was great – we had the opportunity to see everything operate and ask any question we could come up with. The staff was very accommodating and I was especially impressed with the parts and customer service departments… It’s one thing to hear about it, it’s another to go and see it for yourself.” – Keith Ashner

After seeing the machines in action L&M added to their machine tool arsenal a new Ocean Avenger, BDL-1250/9B drill line, 1250-510 band saw, and FDB-2500 plate processor and haven’t looked back since. As Bobby describes “Our new machines have opened up new markets to us and will benefit us now and into the future”.

**The Peddinghaus Space Saving Setup**

Over time L&M’s shop has grown to occupy three different buildings on their corporate campus. With the massive profiles that they produce, paired with the difficulties involved with moving these components throughout production, shop floor space and flow of material has become a hot commodity.

In the main machine shop the Ocean Avenger is tucked into the corner and is put to work processing a wide array of materials. A special fixture designed by Daniel even helps the machine work as a horizontal drilling center when holes are needed in specialized components. When the Avenger isn’t drilling beams its drilling angle, when it’s not drilling angle it can process a multitude of specialized items proving that the Avenger is not just for the smaller fabricator.

In the primary fabrication facility across the street from the main office L&M houses the BDL-1250/B drill, 1250/510 saw, and FDB-2500 plate processor. Similar to many Peddinghaus machine installations all of the material is stored outside and fed through the wall saving on valuable floor space.
“We placed our conveyor outside and put the power units above the machines on a platform to save on space. This puts everything out of the way while making more room for fit up stations. We really rely on the cross transfer material handling for what we do and I don’t know what we would do without it, it just makes organizing profiles easier.” – Keith Ashner

When asked about their Peddinghaus investment Keith claims that beyond the technological advancements and production efficiencies they present, the people who stand behind them make all the difference - “We have been very impressed with the customer service aspect of Peddinghaus. All other things aside, machines drill holes and cut steel – who do you want on your team when you need help? We knew Peddinghaus was a company we could trust to do that.”

Prepared for the Future
The team at L&M approaches their business with a deep rooted passion for quality and customer satisfaction, from management straight down to the shop floor employees. Every employee at L&M has a strong sense of pride in their work, and is committed to excellence. Their diverse workload and flexible manufacturing facility have proven, and will continue to be the key to their success.

“If you’re not diversified today you will struggle. It’s difficult to rely on any single industry to stay steady at times, and our production abilities allow us to stay flexible for anything that comes our way.” – Bobby Cesanek

“As managers we won’t be around forever, and one day when we retire we know that L&M will be taken care of if we give them the right tools and training to succeed. With our Peddinghaus machines we feel as though we’ve made an investment in the future of our company.” – Keith Ashner
FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Peddinghaus Corporation visit: www.peddinghaus.com

PRODUCT LIST:

- Beam Drill Lines
- Anglemasters
- Plate Processing
- Coping Machines
- Thermal Cutting
- Automated Layout Marking
- Structural Band Saws
- Ironworkers
- Material Handling