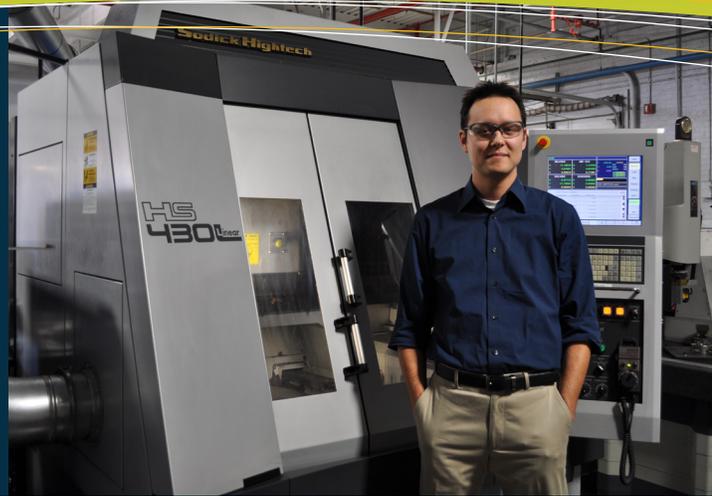


Product Development Solutions



ITW Engineering Manager, Tom King, pictured with HS430L

ITW is consistently testing new ideas and products to better serve their market.

Illinois Tool Works (ITW), a leading supplier of value-add fasteners for the automotive industry, needed a solution for their product development center. ITW is consistently testing new ideas and products to better serve their market.

After determining that they needed a new high speed mill for their facility, they spoke with various manufacturers. After evaluating all their options, they selected the Sodick HS430L High Speed Mill.

ITW needed an ultra-high precision, repetitive, accurate machine. Using their old equipment became a time consuming task, since it only held one part at a time. With the Sodick Mill, ITW can cut four parts at one time; helping them to use their time more efficiently.

ITW was also impressed with the reliability of the support Sodick offers. With their old equipment, it was difficult and expensive to get service. As a result, the equipment would sometimes be down for up to a month. Sodick gave them a sense of comfort with the sustainability of the company and when they needed some modifications to customize the mill for their applications, a Sodick representative was there right away.

When asked what hurdle ITW was trying to overcome with the new machine, Ken LeVey, Director of the Global Product Development Center, stated, “dust collection methodology when cutting carbon” was a major problem in the past. Sodick came in and added one-sided flow of air system in the machine which resulted in cleaner parts and a cleaner shop floor.

ITW didn't want to just add another machine that would be obsolete within a few years. When they compared Sodick's technology, including the linear motor drives, it was the highest technology for the best price; plus, linear motors never wear out since nothing touches when they move back and forth. LeVey had to identify the value of the technology and his willingness to go there. He is happy he did. ITW has owned the machine for a year now and it still looks brand new, even after being used for the entire year, 10 hours a day on average.

When asked how ITW feels about the machine's abilities and ease-of-use a year later, Tom King, Engineering Manager, stated, “the mill is very easy to use, the control is simplified compared to others I have used – I am able to scan projects in and the machine automatically knows which program to run – its simplicity, without restriction”. Sodick makes every effort to make the machine user-friendly so operators can start using the machine right away with minimal training. King added, “the mill is stable, precise, quiet and has a high-tolerance environment with zero vibration. Since installing the (Sodick) mill, we have noticed considerable energy savings”. Sodick prides themselves on having energy-saving designs on all their equipment.

Overall, the machine has made ITW confident that they made the correct choice when they purchased the Sodick. LeVey and King both agree that the machine's high accuracy and repeatability make it the ideal choice for ITW.