



Faster setup times and longer tool life help fabricator keep pace with growth

Sean Derivan credits the U.S. Army with his introduction to metalforming. After enlisting, an 18-year-old Derivan learned to weld military tanks before transitioning his skills to the private sector four years later. In 2007, Derivan established Precision Metal Mfg.

"I had been working for a metal roofing company and it wasn't in my wheelhouse," says the owner and general manager of the Mesa, Arizona, job shop. "I've done close-tolerance sheet metal and welding work most of my life and wanted to try it on my own."

In 2015, the company relocated to a 10,000-sq.-ft. facility. "We are continuing

to grow," he affirms, "but it is painful, I can tell you that. Basic training was hard but you knew there was an end in sight. I've been building this business for 11 years. It is probably the most challenging thing I've ever done. It builds character, for certain."

Precision Metal Mfg. performs MIG, TIG and spot welds, bends, cuts and



A Wila storage cabinet protects tooling which is offered in segmented lengths for single operator loading and unloading.

Precision Metal Mfg. Owner and General Manager Sean Derivan makes motorcycle luggage for his sister company Jesse Luggage Systems.

shears aluminum, steel, stainless steel and copper plate, sheet, bar and shapes for any job that comes through the doors. Jobs range from iron gates to food service equipment and parts for bullet casting machinery. The job shop also makes parts for its sister company, Jesse Luggage Systems.

"We make adventure luggage for motorcycles," says Derivan. "Al Jesse, the product line's creator, outsourced fabrication to us. When he asked me to buy the business, I promptly said no. But in the end, I bought it. We have items from the line all over the world, including South Africa."

When he found capacity constricted on an older 6-ft. press brake, Derivan was compelled to consider a new equipment purchase. "We needed a machine that could bend 10-ft. lengths," says Derivan. He found Phoenix-based distributor North South Machinery in his backyard. The supplier helped Precision Metal Mfg. purchase an Accurpress Edge and introduced the job shop to Wila press brake tooling.

Tooling finesse

"We worked closely with Dave Bishop," says Derivan. "We listed our requirements and he came up with a package that made it possible for us to enter the tooling market with our first purchase and save a lot of money by not buying things we didn't need. We form everything from 20 gauge to ¼ in. steel, and the same for aluminum. The Wila New Standard system gives us a bending angle range of 1 degree to 144 degrees, allowing us to perform acute bending. It's very versatile."

Wila New Standard tooling comes in lengths of 515mm; sectionalized choices that consist of eight pieces that equal lengths of 550mm and 200mm as well as sets of two 100mm-long pieces. Punches weighing 28 lbs. or less are equipped with push button Safety-Clicks for vertical loading and unloading.



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Designed for versatility, Wila tooling allows Precision Metal Mfg. to produce a wide range of parts with a minimal number of tools.

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Self-seating, a feature on all Wila punches and dies, allows an operator to clamp, seat, center and align tools with the push of a single button.

Precision Metal Mfg. installed the 10-ft., 120-ton Accurpress Edge press brake with Wila New Standard tooling in 2017. The machine runs six hours a day, five days a week. With part requirements ranging anywhere from one to 100 pieces, tool changes and setups are frequent. Previously, operators were required to perform tooling setups manually. Once placed, tooling had to be tightened by hand and seated by manually stroking the machine.

"We had to origin the backgauge to the tooling each time, then manually correct bend angles for new material thicknesses," Derivan says. "Setup time was a nightmare. The Wila New Standard tooling just snaps into place. With the push of a button on the control, the tooling hydraulically clamps into place and origins itself. We're also able to scroll through our data, find a part number and open it. It saves a job's bend steps and tells us which tools to use. The New Standard system saves us a ton of time."

Press Brake Tooling

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Sean Derivan, PMM



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Wear and tear

Precision Metal Mfg.'s longest Wila punch is 20 in. (515mm). Tooling used to require two or more employees to lift and load. Now the press brake operator can select the punch he or she needs from the storage cabinet and load it without help. “[That] saves a lot of wear and tear on my operators,” Derivan says.

Though light enough to lift, Wila's tooling is able to withstand the harsh environment of a job shop. “This tooling is much more wear resistant than the other tooling we were buying,” he adds. “We've used it for a year and had no broken or worn tooling whatsoever.”

Wear surfaces on the New Standard tooling are CNC-Deephardened to 56-60 HRC at a depth of 0.160 in. (4mm) to support finished part accuracy and maximize durability. “Tooling is no longer a consumable item,” says Wila Business Development Manager Dave Bishop. “Precision ground CNC Deephardened tooling has become a durable good that users can depend on to remain in new, or like-new, condition for 10 years or longer.” Tooling design and finish help Precision Metal Mfg. support tight tolerances and short lead times.

“I took a phone call for a part and practically before I was off the phone had sent the drawing to the press and the parts were being made,” Derivan says. “Wila's tooling in conjunction with the press brake and software has allowed us to reduce operating times from 10 hours a day to six hours a day while boosting our throughput.”

The entrepreneur's attention to detail and dedication to customer service continue to drive an uptick in sales. Derivan is looking for property to build on or an existing structure he can repurpose. “I want to add labor and expand operations over the next three years,” he says, “and double our revenue.”

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