Standex Electronics

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Keeping Products Moving

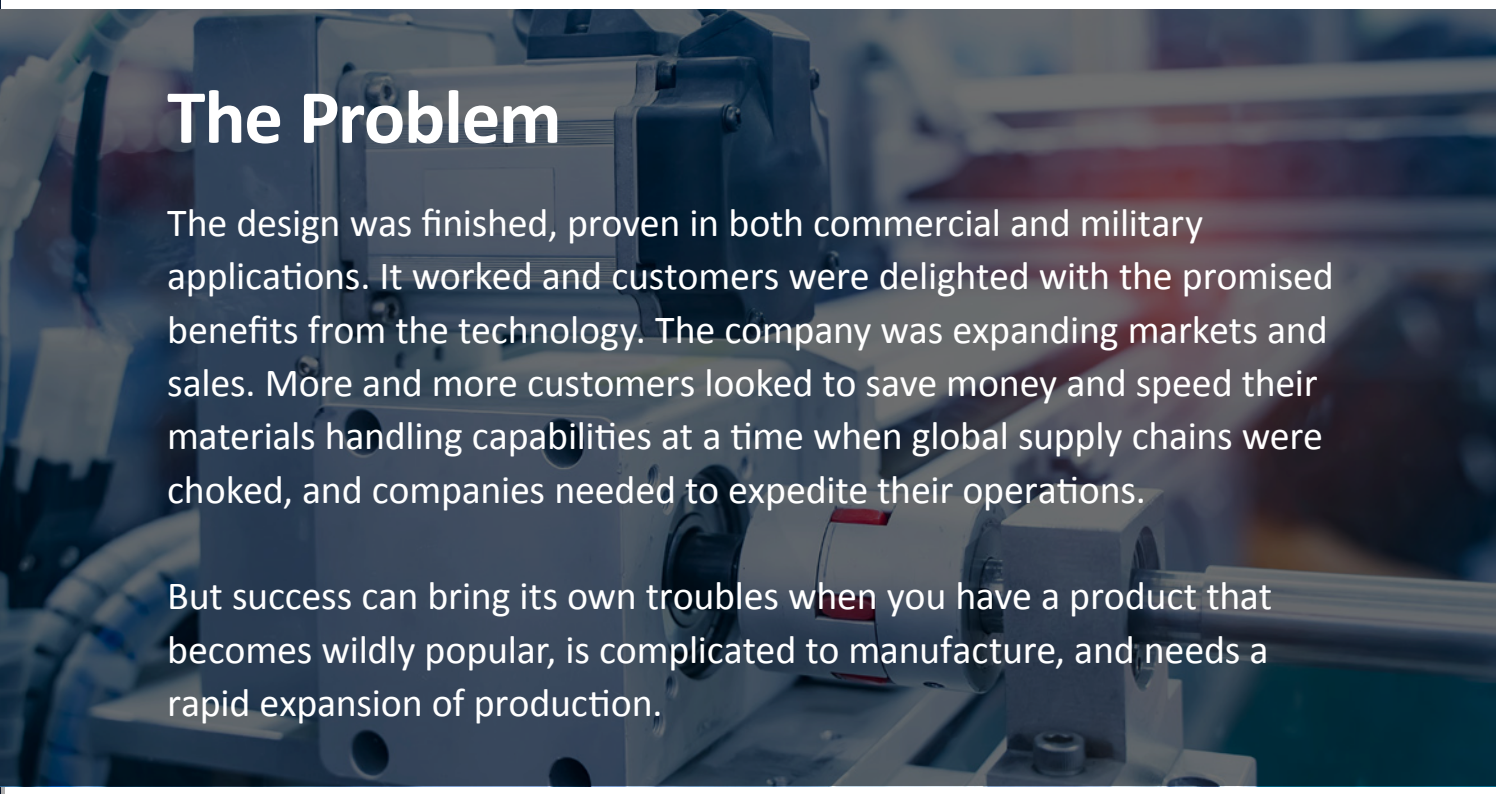
An industrial controls company needed design-for-manufacturing expertise from a trusted vendor that would invest capital for ramp-up and daily deliveries.

The Goal

Keep the production of linear motors for industrial automation systems running in a predictable, consistent, and timely manner while scaling up manufacturing.

An industrial equipment giant needed linear motors to move automation systems. The design, with original engineering done in-house, provided a superior materials handling system and gave the company a competitive advantage in a crowded market.

Growing popularity meant the company needed to gear up for increasing volume. It needed a manufacturing partner that could meet the demand of expanding markets while maintaining top quality and critical deadlines.



The Problem

The design was finished, proven in both commercial and military applications. It worked and customers were delighted with the promised benefits from the technology. The company was expanding markets and sales. More and more customers looked to save money and speed their materials handling capabilities at a time when global supply chains were choked, and companies needed to expedite their operations.

But success can bring its own troubles when you have a product that becomes wildly popular, is complicated to manufacture, and needs a rapid expansion of production.

Gearing up manufacturing for increased sales is typically either a longer-term process or one in which the manufacturing is relatively simple. A business might have more time to grow its in-house or contracted capabilities, working with several manufacturing companies, each of which could get duplicate tooling, set up a factory line, and work multiple shifts.

But this was no simple product. The linear motors were parts of a mission-critical system that had to perform to exacting standards in potentially harsh environments. They had to be hermetically encapsulated and produced at scale. The motors were also heavy and needed special packaging, palletizing, and handling. The manufacturing processes were not within the core competencies of the company, so the company needed resources that could manage the complex production issues, scale with their sales, and ensure that the full supply chains cooperated and delivered as needed.

In other words, this wasn't a project that could be split up among a group of factory operators. The company needed one that could handle the complexities and grow their commitment to the project, delivering dependable quality at higher quantities.

The Answer

In this case, the answer already existed. Standex had long been the primary supplier of the linear motors when demand was much lower. It had a proven track record of delivery and quality extended from manufacturing to the demanding packaging and delivery. Standex already had a manufacturing facility near the company and the ability to provide daily deliveries, both of which were already advantages.

But the biggest advantage was Standex's willingness to work with customers as a partner. Because of the ongoing relationship, Standex was willing to invest the additional capital and other resources needed to ramp up production and delivery to meet the customer's needs.

If other vendors had been in the position of being a primary supplier, they might also have tried to expand to maintain the relationship. What separated Standex was its capability to view the need as an all-hands-on-deck requirement to increase production by multiple times when global supply chains were challenged, and to direct the necessary resources in a timely fashion to accomplish the goal.

The deployment of capital, followed by successful and rapid integration of new equipment and people onto the line, allowed production to scale up smoothly. Also critical was Standex's relationships with vendors of the needed specialty materials. For these trusted partners, Standex was a long-term important client, so they would go out of their way to help the effort succeed.

Because of those relationships, the ability and readiness to scale, and the technical expertise to handle the complex manufacturing and packaging, the customer was able to keep its production lines moving at increasing speeds to keep its customers delighted.

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