



McClarin Plastics, Inc.
SOLUTIONS IN PLASTICS

Design-Build for Industry: A Hybrid Approach

*An intimate look at the benefits of using a Contract
Manufacturer with Industrial Design Capabilities*

Phillip J. Black, IDSA



2010



Similar to a custom builder, with architects and design talent in-house, when Industrial Design is integrated into the culture of a contract manufacturer like McClarin Plastics of Hanover PA, the entire product development paradigm changes.

The field of Industrial Design has gained substantial notoriety with big business for decades, and for good reason. Products that look great, feel right and add real value for the end user are more successful in the market. From consumer products to super-sized industrial equipment, the formula for success is fairly similar, but smaller companies with great product potential struggle to unlock this formula. There have been barriers to entry for these smaller companies looking to compete with the big boys on the design side, but that's changing.

The first barrier is cost. Let's assume that your company has some internal design or engineering resources, and a good value proposition. Like most companies in today's economic climate, you're finding it harder to invest in new product development. You may not be able to maintain a diversified design staff, and you may struggle with manufacturing, outsourcing, logistics and quality control. Finding the right design talent and experience is complicated and costly. You're probably looking for ways to reduce your product cost, but you need to develop and maintain a competitive edge, while reducing your capital expenditures. If this sounds familiar, you are not alone.

Next, there's the barrier of process complexity. Who will manage the process between marketing, product management, design, CAD development and prototyping during product development? How many separate resources will you need to align in order to manage this process effectively? Is your product development staff aligned with purchasing, manufacturing, assembly, quality control and delivery? Is quality being designed into the product, and variation out of it?

Traditionally, larger companies have contracted with an Industrial Design or Engineering firm to fill development gaps as needed, but these firms often become disconnected from the internal product development and manufacturing processes. This can lead any company down a painful and expensive path full of revisions, manufacturing variation and associated quality problems.



When you do arrive with a design that can be manufactured according to specifications, you'll need to contract with a variety of suppliers who will likely suggest even more changes. Many of these suppliers offer value added services like painting or light assembly, but they may not have the structure or quality control in place to reduce variation or deliver on time. Others say they offer design assistance, but check behind the curtain here, as well. There's a significant difference between CAD documentation services and product development assistance driven by Industrial Design.

Enter the hybrid (Design-Build) model. The barriers start to break down because it's more cost effective and easier to manage as a one-stop design and manufacturing resource. Reliability and quality is designed into the product because the people who design it also build it to an agreed upon specification. The hybrid contract manufacturer leverages expertise and resources like industrial design, purchasing and project management. Since many of these resources are shared between clients, with operations under one roof, the overhead costs remain low for all clients. Further, these services are somewhat subsidized by the prospect of potential manufacturing business.

In contrast, design and engineering firms rely entirely on their ability to charge clients for their time. In the end, they don't have to answer to customer feedback or concerns because they don't build anything.

Companies like HydroWorx of Middletown PA, are experiencing the value of Industrial Design by way of McClarin Plastics, a hybrid contract manufacturer. Anson Flake, Cofounder and CEO of HydroWorx had this to say; *"I have found, through my experience with McClarin Plastics, that the Industrial Design component is critical in the overall product development process. You can't understand its significance unless you experience it, and McClarin has done a fabulous job bringing the right talent and expertise to our process."* HydroWorx is expanding their brand with inventive products that revolve around the end user. The company's underwater treadmill products are sold all over the world to sports teams, physical therapy clinics and fitness centers.



McClarin Plastics is a hybrid design-build contract manufacturer with core competencies that revolve around Industrial Design, diversified plastics molding and a full range of assembly services. By embracing the value of design, McClarin is appealing to more OEM's like HydroWorx, who recognize and apprise the total value proposition. While no company can claim to be all things to all people, McClarin recognized early that great design, coupled with their solutions theme, would expand their value proposition as a custom plastics molder and a contract manufacturer.

When the talent and experience of an industrial design firm, and the capabilities of an ISO certified contract manufacturer join forces, the value proposition expands significantly. As you consider the complexities of product development and manufacturing for your business, keep this Design-Build, hybrid model in mind. The formula for success may be closer and more obtainable than you think.

About the Author:

Phil Black is a consultant with McClarin Plastics and is a professional member of the IDSA, (Industrial Designers Society of America), with 19 years of design experience within multiple industries.