

Case Study

Design and manufacturing firm wholesaling and retailing highly engineered products for customized beer and wine home-brewing sought an outsourced manufacturing partner to prototype, design, engineer and produce a control box integral to their home-brew system.

THE CLIENT

Blichmann Engineering (www.blichmannengineering.com), based in Lafayette, Indiana offers intuitively designed, innovative products with the highest level of quality for brewers who expect the same in their beers and wines. The business philosophy of the company's president and founder is synonymous with the high level of quality and performance of Blichmann-offered products.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2003, after balancing an engineering career at Caterpillar (CAT) with an enthusiasm for the home brewing of wine and beer, the founder of Blichmann Engineering made the decision to focus his career solely on providing an expanding international market with home-brewing equipment and supplies. In 2012, Blichmann was faced with the challenge of providing their customers with an often-requested electronic control for their electronic brewing system.

As a team of mechanical-trained engineers, Blichmann was aware of a need to search for a manufacturing partner with experience in engineering, design and production that could help develop, from the prototype stage, a basic control system for their home-brewing technology. The company, with a strong philosophy of utilizing local and Indiana-based resources, began the search for a collaborator to bring the control portion of their home-brewing product, Tower of Power, to fruition.

As the vetting for a trusted manufacturing partner research began, a longstanding and tested CAT relationship brought ALTEX to the forefront of possible manufacturing partners. It became apparent that ALTEX's previous trusted advisor relationship would catapult them into lead position as their extensive knowledge and experience could not only provide the wire harness skill set required for production of the component, but upon further product concept review had the ability to provide the entire controller.



Client:

Lafayette, Indiana-based wine and beer home-brewing retailer/wholesaler

Challenge:

Securing an outsourced contract manufacturing to partner with to efficiently and timely produce an electronic control box for an electronic brewing system

Solution:

- Accept initial prototype, reverse engineer, secure materials, produce and package an electronic control device as an all-encompassing custom manufacturing solution
- Utilize cross-trained skill sets as a complete manufacturing partner to streamline assembly protocol and time-efficient production
- Successfully design, produce, package and deliver final cost-effective product for customer use

Results:

- Using an initial prototype and employing reverse engineering developed a customized, cross-trained production system
- Streamlined production and cross-trained production staff to optimize assembly production ultimately providing quick production turn-around times
- Successful manufacturing collaboration resulting in a continuation of an ongoing working relationship

THE ALTEX SOLUTION

During the initial meeting with the Blichmann team, and after review of their prototype, ALTEX began an organic engineering process and assessment in order to establish the material components and production time necessary to produce the entire electronic control system based on the original Blichmann prototype design. Based on Blichmann's desire to design and distribute the product, ALTEX was called on to put in place a comprehensive production plan to utilize their resources and physical space for the entire manufacturing process including packaging.

ALTEX was able to provide full-service approved and tested solutions to Blichmann based on their experience in electromechanical assembly and expertise knowledge in maximizing production time and efficiencies. The electronic component, produced in entirety at the ALTEX facility, was then cleaned, polished, bagged and boxed after production and returned to Blichmann for any other additional materials prior to final shipping to end-use consumers or retailers.

THE RESULTS

As the result of a highly successful collaboration, an ongoing relationship with Blichmann and ALTEX continues. The ability of ALTEX to offer a customized solution from prototype stage through production and packaging allowed Blichmann to remain as a distributor and product developer while still maintaining an involved and integral end-result manufacturing partner.

The proactive responsiveness of ALTEX provided a successful working relationship atmosphere and echoed the Blichmann culture focused on high quality and customer satisfaction.



“ Our culture is to establish collaborative partnerships that are successful and profitable for everyone. It is also our philosophy to provide the highest quality products for our customers and utilizing a seasoned manufacturing partner like ALTEX allows us to do just that. ”

John Blichmann, Blichmann Engineering founder & CEO

