

# Training and technology go hand in hand

National architectural millwork firm relies on Delmac's training and support as well as its machinery

With a territory that extends from the upper Midwest to the Gulf Coast and as far west as Phoenix, Milwaukee, Wis.-based Lange Bros. says business has been good despite the recent economic slowdown. The architectural millwork firm's biggest issue at the moment is the scarce availability of skilled labor. To offset the labor shortage, the company is partnering with Delmac Machinery Group to invest not only in automated machinery, but the training and support in order to run it.

"We've seen a dramatic change in the last 20 years where we used to give a cabinet maker a set of plans and ask him to go build a cabinet, but now people are specialized in running an edgebander or point-to-point machine or computer programming," says Randy Lange, owner.

Lange Bros.' first CNC addition was a Busellato Optima CNC machining center in 1996 at its plant in Beecher, Wis. That machine is still operating today, and last year the company added an OMAL HBD 1300 CNC glue, bore & dowel through-feed machine and a Bonacin Closer N2500 computerized case clamp to further automate production.

"We had been inserting dowels and glue manually, and we were looking to automate our dowel insertion process," says Lange. "Delmac came in and recommended a solution, and our people are very pleased with the machine. It has allowed us the flexibility to change our drilling patterns and has radically changed the way we manufacture cabinets."

The OMAL also allows Lange Bros. to gain efficiency and accuracy by automating the gluing pro-

cess. "We used to get too much or not enough glue, and now the machine measures exactly how much glue is needed. We may not be saving minutes on each panel with technology changes, but we're saving seconds, and those seconds quickly add up."

At its wood processing plant in Milwaukee, Lange Bros. recently added a Busellato Jet 200

RT CNC nested-based router to update its largely traditional production methods. "We came to realize a need to bore parts, something to shape and cope our doors and cut out templates," says Lange. "The router has meant a complete change in our manufacturing process vs. using the old manual machines, and it allows us to now run small cabinet jobs when the production facility in Beecher is back-logged."

Despite its recent investment in automation, Lange Bros. recognizes that the equipment is only good if its employees know how to operate it effectively.

"Today, people have to interface with the computers and understand the ins and outs of the machinery," says Lange. "That's where our relationship with Delmac has been critical to us, making sure we stay up and running by having the education, the understanding and the support."

"We send our employees down to Delmac's seminars in Greensboro, N.C., to get trained on the machinery, and we do our own in-house training. We recently had a couple guys down for a seminar and we wound up investing in barcoding for our production. That is our next step of automation now that our machinery is up and running."

