

# MILLIPART INC.

## SHOP MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE KEEPS COMPANY ON TRACK

Article by Sean Buur Photos by Sean Buur & Millipart



Above - Millipart is a family affair. Hunter's son Hunter Jamison II, Hunter Jamison, Christine Contreras, Delia Reyes Glick, Scot Jamison, Scot's son Brad and his wife Amanda.  
Right - Eldest brother Terry Jamison is mostly retired but he still plays an vital role in Millipart's manufacturing.

The Jamison family has owned and operated Millipart Inc. since 1954. Jim Jamison and Bill Bowers began machining parts with a Logan lathe and drill press in 1/3 of a garage in Ontario, CA. Jim bought out Bill in 1961 as the company really started to take off. Jim's sons Scot and Hunter joined him in 1969 and 1970. A few years later Jim's eldest son Terry was coaxed from his engineering job at Garrett to join Millipart. With him came a wealth of experience and technical knowhow. That ushered in a new era of machining for Millipart. Although Terry is semi-retired now he still plays a part in the business as the three brothers head up the company their dad began so long ago. Currently the staff of 39 is composed of multiple family members from multiple families. Fathers and sons, mother and daughter, mothers and son, in-laws, brothers, cousins-you name it and Millipart has it as part of their essential work force.

"We've always been involved in aerospace," tells Scot Jamison, president of Millipart Inc. "Ever since my dad moved away from the hardwood flooring business and into machining it was something we did. We started off by making small camera parts for the aerospace industry and now that has escalated to pistons, shafts, and bushings." They manufacture mostly in aluminum and stainless, but also have experience with exotics such as Stellite, Nitronic 60 and A286. Customers include several divisions of Parker, Thales, Lockheed Martin, Woodward, Teledyne Controls, and Crissair. Parts range in size from a BB to a melon with softball being about average. The 12,000sq.foot shop is spread between five buildings and houses a mixture of

milling and turning. "After growing out of four buildings over the years we moved to our current location in 1971," describes Scot. "It was a big jump up in size, but since then we have taken over more and more of the complex and have three times the space we originally had."

Over the years Millipart has never been one to shy away from technology as it pertained to machining. They were early adopters of CNC and continue to manufacture state of the art parts with industry leading manufacturing brands. Milling is accomplished via a Fanuc Robodrill with pallet changer, a pair of Kitamura MyCenter with 5th axis, another Kitamura MyCenter with a 4th axis tombstone and two Mori Seiki verticals. The turning department boasts 8 Femco Durga 25E and two Nakamura-Tome lathes. Millipart's mill-turn centers really set them apart from the crowd. Purchased in the late 90's, their quartette of Tugami twin turret 6 axis machines are still running strong and turning out precision parts. "We have two 45mm spindle machines, a 60mm and one 80mm," describes VP and production oriented Hunter Jamison. "They are true workhorses for us. Set them up and they just go."

Terry had created a home built Helix program used for estimating and purchasing, but in 2002 Millipart realized they

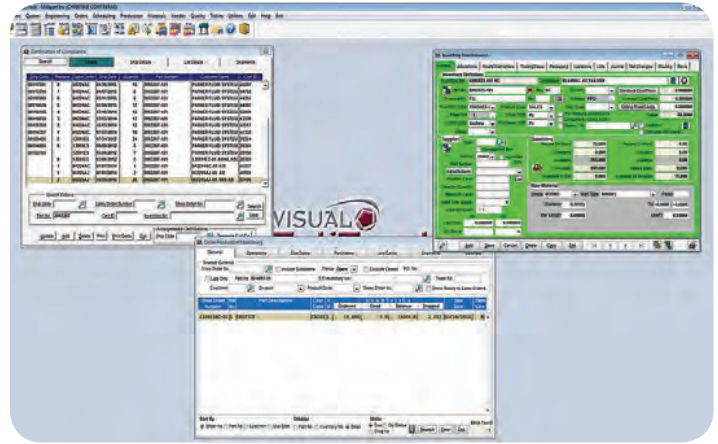




**Top left - General manager Christine Contreras started at Millipart before she was even born. Now she heads up the operation and is a Henning shop management software specialist.**

**Top right - This screen is showing us a cool scheduling feature of the software.**

**Bottom right - Several Henning software modules- Customized CofC's Inventory & production monitoring.**



needed something more substantial to handle the rigor and paperwork involved with aerospace work. What they didn't realize was that their quest for company-wide efficiency would be led by a high school girl, who worked part time, and thought it sounded fun. "I've been part of the family here at Millipart since before I was even born," tells Millipart's general manager Christine Contreras. "My mom, Delia has been with the company for 31 years. My brother and I grew up as shop kids. Our school was a block away and coming here to be gophers and part sorters was our daycare." Years of working for a dime and snacks ended freshmen year in high school when Christine officially went on the payroll. "Christine has always been a go getter and a self starter," praises Scot. "We bought Henning shop management software in 2002, but never used more than 5% of it until she took the reins."

After meeting with Billie Henning at the Westec show the Jamisons were sold on the idea of implementing the Henning shop management software into their business. "We looked at a bunch of options and decided on Henning because of their experience in machining. Henning used to be a machine shop

so we trusted their knowledge of the industry. We liked that it was customizable to our specific needs." Due to her school schedule Christine was only able to sit in on one of Billie's training sessions. "It seemed like Billie was here all week," explains Christine. "I wanted to learn, and be a part of the training, but could only make it to the inventory module session." So armed with a pencil and paper Christine diligently took notes. "Next week comes along and Scot says alright lets use this new software, does anyone know how? I said I have notes on inventory function. So my brother and I dug into it for fun." Fun means different things to many people, but you can tell instantly by Christine's facial expressions that sorting through a massive manual and trial and error is something she enjoys. "Our inven-



**Millipart's 12,000sq.ft. manufacturing facility is spread between 5 buildings that house milling, turning and mill-turn machining centers.**



**Elmo Vilchez demonstrates pinch turning which is using two turrets with opposing force to turn close diameters on one of four 6-axis mill turn centers.**

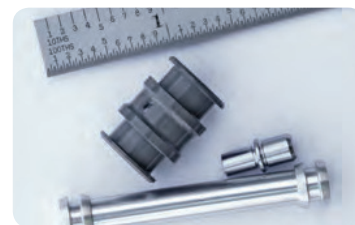
tory before was all on paper, hand written and hand calculated," describes Christine. "It was a nightmare and you had to trust that the counts were right. The Henning system does the math for you, and it tells you the location in the storeroom. What a concept." The new inventory management was especially useful as more and more customers wanted JIT shipping. Millipart went from shipping a customer 2000 parts at a time to 12 per week. "The Henning software makes that so much easier," tells Scot. "Without it we might go more nuts."

After mastering inventory, Christine moved on to invoicing, but then back tracked to shipping so that the billing department could have shippers to go along with the invoices. It went on like this for module after module. Her thirst for knowledge grew as she implemented more and more of the Henning software into day-to-day operations. Henning has an annual user conference. Customers get together to trade tips, tricks and make suggestions for future versions of the shop management software. "I'm a regular now," explains Christine. "It is a fantastic event and a great way to leverage a large knowledge base of users. Every year you vote on the top ten best ideas presented. The winner gets implemented for free. We've had a lot of ideas in the top ten." Christine is very excited about Henning's new Scheduling Board. "We are moving away from our old Excel based system and magnetic boards and into real-time displays for each of the departments," describes Christine. "The Scheduling Board is integrated right into our EstiTrack system and provides a simple concept for presenting important information to each of our departments and employees."

Reliable computing is an issue everywhere and in order for the shop to run smoothly the computers all have to run

smoothly. "Scot has the uncanny ability to kill computers faster than anyone I've ever met," teases Christine. "Getting him to use the Henning software requires all our work stations to function properly, but most importantly his." Prior to 2010, milling lead Tim Begeman handled the company's IT issues, but as the company continued to grow he didn't have time to maintain/fix computers while programing and setting up the mills. "We needed reliable IT support and hired AMC Solutions to do the job," tells Christine. "Not only do they take our calls at 7am on a Sunday morning, but they also keep one step ahead of the old guy who notoriously crushes the system. We are grateful to have them as part of our team."

"Christine learning the modules, and training the people to use them earned her a slight raise," jokes Scot. "Change is difficult, and it took someone young and eager embracing that change to move us forward. She is an enthusiastic learner, and an even better teacher." Christine was office manager for a few years and unknowingly was promoted to general manager when they were getting AS certified. She saw her name on a form and it said general manager. "We change her title as needed," admits Scot. "She embraces each one with determination and vigor. Today, she is head of public relations, but after this interview is over she can go back to being general manager and telling us all what to do." In a small, family run business it is common for people to wear many hats. At Millipart Christine is a hat rack for good reason. She is already a giant among men, but the hats make her seem a little bit taller.



**Left - Millipart is ISO 9001: 2008 and AS9100 C Certified. Tom Valles checks parts on the Mitutoyo brand CMM. Right - Millipart specializes in commercial and military aerospace parts. Parts range in size and material.**

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