



hyperMILL

## Success Story

# “Absolutely, we can do that part!”

Interview with Scott Saunders,  
President of ASTec Metalworks Inc., Baltimore MD

**You opened your machine shop in the 2009. What motivated you to start a new company in such a difficult economy?**

We were following a long term business plan that predated the recession. It turns out that the recession provided a perfect time to start a new business.

Without question, the market conditions have presented opportunities for successful growth. The unprepared were the companies that had not kept up with technology and they have unfortunately fallen by the wayside. Our opportunity was the result. Everyone was worried about a bad economy and we have never focused on that.

We are “on strike” from the recession and we have kept our focus on the future. We believe that tough times bring opportunity especially since we were able to implement newer technologies that allow us to compete well.

**Please give us an idea of your results to date.**

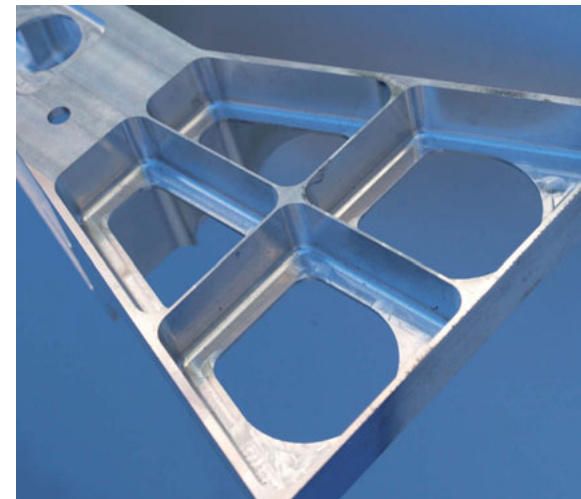
We are growing our customer base as well as we could have dreamed.

Recently, we were awarded the Top Supplier designation by a large defense contractor.

We had delivered our first order to them just 4 months ago. How a company accomplishes this in four short months from the first order is nothing short of remarkable. We all have incredible pride in this accomplishment.

ASTec will provide the most high-level technologies to our clients and exceed their expectations. We service very high-tech manufacturing needs and we provide all

ASTec Metalworks, Inc. “Transforming Hi-Tech Materials into Hi-Tech Components.”



### About ASTec

ASTec Metalworks Inc. is a collection of successful and experienced Engineering, Manufacturing, and Quality Control professionals. With decades of experience in production and prototype manufacturing. They offer the highest quality parts and services available today with an unbeatable on time delivery rating and the ability to meet your most challenging requirements.

› [www.astecmetalworks.com](http://www.astecmetalworks.com)

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of the other bread & butter items that go along with that. Our background has been in all aspects of high-end machined and sheet metal manufacturing stressing quality and sales. Because of that, our company DNA is all about customer service. When we make a commitment to a customer, we are absolutely going to meet it.

**Do you have any advice for other entrepreneurs?**

If you have a “can-do, will-do, definitely going to make it happen attitude” then I say go for it. This is the perfect environment for success.

The best advice I could give an entrepreneur is to really know his business and always look forward. An entrepreneur also needs to commit to the new responsibility of ownership. The characteristics of a successful employee are dramatically different from that of a business owner. You cannot be a “hands on” person anymore and you need to trust in the team and technologies put in place.

**What were your major concerns as you were planning to start the company? In retrospect, were these concerns warranted?**

We had many concerns during startup including: financing, proper choice of technology partners, ability to grow new/ideal customers and of course our ability to capture the training/experience needed to bring new technologies into actual production.

**ASTec Metalworks Group**



This was compounded by general nervousness regarding the state of the economy. One impact of the economic environment was that securing financing for a startup company posed an exceptional challenge. We rose to it. I can’t tell you how many people have commented that they can’t believe that we made it through that.

My proper choice of partners was also crucial, and I am proud to say that we hit on all eight cylinders with every choice as a result of the research that we put in.

Are we sometimes nervous about the economy? Yes, absolutely. But, even in the darkest days of the recession, we found opportunities. We have certainly had our ups and downs, but we have been extremely successful in finding truly ideal customers that find value in what we offer. We see a nice recovery underway at this point.

**Describe your thought process in selecting key technology suppliers and partners.**

Our plan began with a clear definition of company goals based upon who our ideal customers would be. Once these ideas were formulated, we could then go into researching technologies with specific goals in mind. Partner selection is immensely important to any business and we researched software and equipment in depth. Technology and support were weighed equally as those are the key requirements for success especially for a company of our size.

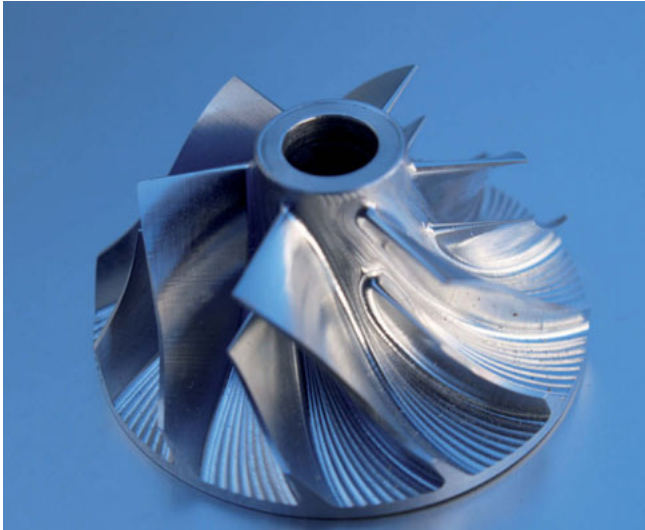
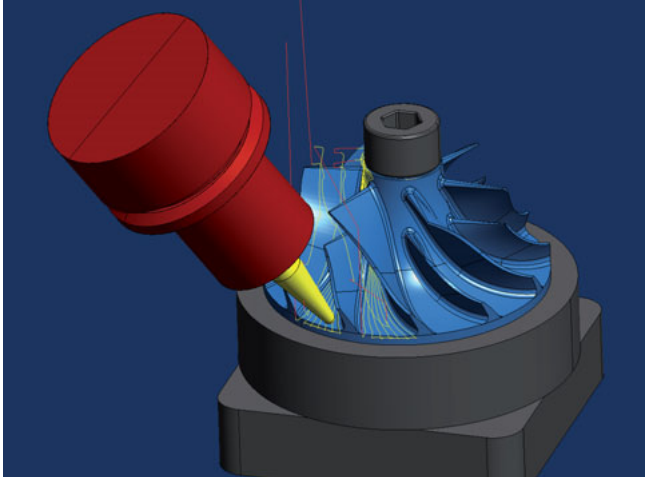
**You mention your research several times as being the foundation for the success you have achieved. Is there advice in the methodology you chose that might help someone that is evaluating new technologies, partners or new business ideas?**

We knew what we wanted to do as a business plan, and we had extensive experience with a lot of technology suppliers. We made a concerted effort to open our thought process to go see what was available in the world and not to just rely on what we had used successfully in the past.

The key is to trust your research instead of just falling back to the “tried and true” and what you used in the past. We are preparing for the future.

**Why OPEN MIND and hyperMILL®?**

We went to IMTS to visit with CAM companies. We spoke with any available source regarding their tools and software to acquire first hand feedback. We later held specific meetings to



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further interview each software supplier, and then we touched base with users for specific references. We chose OPEN MIND because our research indicated it as the absolute top notch caliber software available for 5-axis machining.

As a business owner, I wanted to be able to run simultaneous 5-axis projects immediately after we got the machine and the software but I was realistic enough to understand that would not happen overnight. However, it is happening! Only four months into our process, we proved out the majority of the capabilities on the shop floor. That is just phenomenal.

My machinist now tells me, "Absolutely, we can do that part!" It is so rewarding and reassuring to see his progress at such an early stage. As a team, we are completely satisfied with our choice of *hyperMILL*® and OPEN MIND as a partner.

**Are you planning on continued focus in aerospace and defense? What does the future hold for ASTec?**

We have a very long term plan. Our initial plan due to our extensive experience in aerospace and defense is to excel in those areas first. We are making great strides already, and you don't excel overnight.

In three years, once we have excelled in both our manufacturing technique and our corporate management (AS 9100 certification is fluidly operational and our processes flows from beginning to end), then our next endeavor is to get into medical applications such as orthopedics. We will continue to build on our early successes. ■

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**About OPEN MIND Technologies AG**

OPEN MIND is one of the world's most sought-after developers of powerful CAM solutions for machine and controller-independent programming.

OPEN MIND designs optimized CAM solutions that include a high number of innovative features not available elsewhere to deliver significantly higher performance in both programming and machining. Strategies such as 2D, 3D as well as 5-axis milling/mill turning, and machining operations like HSC and HPC are efficiently built into the *hyperMILL*® CAM system. *hyperMILL*® provides the maximum possible benefits to customers thanks to its full compatibility with all current CAD solutions and extensive programming automation.

OPEN MIND strives to be the best and most innovative CAM/CAD manufacturer in the world, helping it become one of the top five in the CAM/CAD industry according to the NC Market Analysis Report 2015 compiled by CIMdata. The CAM/CAD solutions of OPEN MIND fulfil the highest demands in the automotive, tool and mould manufacturing, production machining, medical, job shops, energy and aerospace industries. OPEN MIND is represented in all key markets in Asia, Europe and America, and is a Mensch und Maschine company.



We push machining to the limit

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