

“Absolute Priority”

Edgecam Training Courses “Essential”



Investing the time to learn how to use the very latest software technology to its full potential, is essential for manufacturers to stay efficient and profitable, according to an engineering subcontractor specialising in complex, unusual components.

Derby-based Promach 3D discovered they were missing out on 22 features of Edgecam during a typical scenario of milling just one part. “We always have the latest release, but haven’t had time to attend training courses or user group meetings,” says owner Matt Fazekas. “That’s going to change now. We’ve definitely seen the light when we were shown just how far we’d slipped behind in terms of using Edgecam to its full potential, and what we were missing out on.”

He says it is a tricky balance between running a business day-to-day and keeping up with the fast pace that Edgecam is advancing at, but understanding what the software is capable of, is an ‘absolute priority’ from now on.

The company’s three main areas of expertise are small-batch projects for the motorsport, aerospace and rail industries. They manufacture a range of structural and aerodynamic parts for attaching to the engine or gearbox, or to support wings and carbon-fibre parts, on Formula 1 cars. With Derby being a national centre for the aerospace sector, they are regularly called on to machine full mock-ups of parts such as turbine blades and drums, for development and testing. Derby is also at the hub of the UK rail industry and Promach 3D manufacture fixtures, gauges, calibration equipment and brackets for testing and maintaining track.

Having always used Edgecam they say it has been vital in achieving the success they have. “We just couldn’t produce the parts we do, without it,” says Matt Fazekas. Because a lot of their work are up to five-offs, Edgecam helps them produce what could be perceived as 5-axis jobs on a 3-axis machining centre. “It just means tilting the job one known reference point. We replicate it on Edgecam and program from that. It involves a few more set-ups than we’d have on a full 5-axis machine, but the surface capability that Edgecam provides more than handles that.”

But the fact that they were only utilising part of Edgecam’s extensive capabilities came to light during a site visit from Edgecam engineer Mike O’Neill. “We showed him a typical milling scenario using Edgecam with one of our 3-axis machining centres, and there were so many features we weren’t using properly...or didn’t even know about. Edgecam was doing everything we wanted it to, but there are so many shortcuts and more efficient ways of doing it. We’re always asking ourselves how we can do things better without spending hundreds of thousands of pounds. We’ve

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About The Company :

Name : Promach 3D

Business : Engineering subcontractor specialising in complex components

Website : www.promach3D.com

Benefits Achieved :

- 5-axis-quality components on 3-axis machines
- Training helps achieve full potential
- Couldn’t produce the parts they do, without it

Comments :

“In the past I found it difficult to attend training courses due to time constraints...these courses I now deem as essential, and figure as one of our main priorities”

Matt Fazekas
Owner

got the machines and we've got the software. Now we need to invest some time in fully understanding the software's potential and working smarter with it."

Amongst the 22 items highlighted in the one machining scenario:

- Render by slope, being able to see at a glance whether a surface that appears to be flat has a slight curve
- Update stock. "Where there are a lot of machining instructions and we just want to prove out part of it, we can now do so much, then update the stock, and we don't have to revisit those machining instructions. This saves a lot of time on the simulator."
- Loading IGES to Edgecam as a solid model. "I wasn't previously aware of that. I always loaded it into Part Modeller first and created the solid model there, so that's saving us a lot of time. STEP files go straight into Edgecam, too."
- He says creating geometry from a silhouette is a major enhancement on their previous method of finding geometry on a solid. This has taken on even more importance as they have recently invested in a powerful Sodick wire EDM machine.
- Background processing. "I wasn't aware of that previously. If we've got a lot of machining to do, with a lot of data, we now switch the background processing on before we start, and that saves a lot of time."

Edgecam provides a number of avenues for users to learn about the enhancements and new functionality in the twice-a-year updates, and Matt Fazekas now has firm views on making full use of them.

- When a new release is issued, a series of training courses provides information on 'What's New.' "In the past I found it difficult to attend due to time constraints and intended to read up on what's new in my own time. These courses, I now deem as essential, and figure as one of our main priorities"
- Webinars show best practice of a specific function, and are also held to demonstrate new releases. "These are now in our programme, and we'll be setting time aside to attend webinars. If the subject is something that we're doing, it'll definitely be a number one priority"
- User Group Meetings are one-day seminars comprising presentations for users to gain more product knowledge. "We'll definitely attend these in future. They'll also be good for networking and talking to other manufacturers about how they use Edgecam"
- The support desk/customer portal provides Edgecam knowledge on-demand. "It's very useful to go on the forums, post questions and get answers from other users."

