

*When JK Molds of Upland, California were being outgunned by competitors, both domestic and overseas, they needed to move fast to regain the initiative. That is where they showed their courage*

*and resilience and made the conscious decision to automate – with System 3R robots at the top of their shopping list.*

*“It was invest or die!” said President, Patrick Elliott. “We jumped in with both feet and spent over \$ 3 million on four WorkMasters with System 3R tooling and palletization, plus other cutting-edge machines.”*



*The WorkMaster serves two Mitsubishi sinkers, operating 24/7*



*An innovative combination of a hole popper, wire EDM machine and WorkMaster*

JK Molds have been making top quality, high-cavitation molds since 1970 and are a sought-after supplier, especially by the medical and healthcare industries, in which they specialise. They pride themselves on their engineering expertise and offer a 'one-stop shop' approach from product design through to mold production, mold trials and test molding. Quality and the ability to deliver high tolerance work has seen them produce molds for surgical devices, implants, syringes, phials and feeding tubes for example, where the assurance of performance is quite literally 'life or death'.

"Reducing costs, maintaining repeatability and increasing speed of delivery were our prime drivers in taking

the automation route," continued Patrick Elliot. This would allow us to compete with all-comers, without needing to take other drastic measures such as cutting our 30-strong workforce."

Palletization now allows their skilled labor to set-up prior to running their production cells, with semi-skilled operators monitoring lights-out production – much being handled remotely via a webcam. Taking much of the 'human factor' out of the equation has been the key, with 24/7 output giving JK Molds the opportunity to double capacity with the same size workforce.

"Armed with our automated cells we are targeting \$8 million sales with our core team of 30 – an amazing turnaround

when you consider that the industry yardstick is around \$ 150,000 per employee!" said Patrick.

The WorkMasters are spread throughout their 25,000 sq. ft. plant with one in a Mitsubishi sinker cell, one on their Brown & Sharpe CMM and one serving two Makino mills. Their innovation has also seen them add a WorkMaster to a cell with a Mitsubishi wire machine and a hole popper – a prelude operation for wire EDM.

"Productivity and competitiveness all round have improved and our position as an industry leader has now been regained. Combining automation with our loyal and skilled team of employees has laid firm foundations for our successful future," concluded Patrick Elliott.



The Brown & Sharp CMM is also benefiting from 3R automation