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No. 289

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New England Lean  
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It's been four years since we acquired The Gateway Magazine from the late, great Bill Bryson and his wife, Sharon. At the time we had some idea of what lay ahead in the working confines of the manufacturing industry, but we had no idea what we were truly in for. A global pandemic met us less than a year later which through the entire industry (and world) into a state of uncertainty. We've navigated closures and supply chain issues head on and worked collaboratively to help figure out new ways of engaging our greater manufacturing network here in the northeast. It was a curious time, but we've come to learn so much.

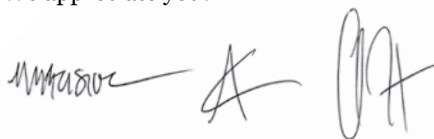
Over the last four years we've met nearly all of our advertisers and beyond. We've shared (and told) many stories together and we're grateful to everyone that has humored us in fielding all of the questions we've asked along the way. Our mission is to place each and every one of your businesses in the spotlight in order for all the readers of The Gateway to learn more about what you do and the capabilities you have at your disposal to help your customers accomplish their unique goals.

With that said, if you've got a story to share, let's discuss it and build out that dialogue within the pages of the magazine. This is your resource and the resource of your current and future customers. Together we're stronger.

This month's issue features an interview with Brian Beland of KV Tooling who have expanded their operation and moved into a new facility up in Maine. KV Tooling was one of the first companies that invited us into their facility when we started with The Gateway and we're so happy for their continued growth.

We've also got Paul Critchley back with his quarterly LEAN manufacturing column. His insights are always extremely interesting to us and we hope you learn a little something from his area of expertise as well. This month he unveils a new venture he's embarked on and we wish him all the best!

Thank you all so much for being a part of these last four years and for all of the years to come. If you've got something to share, share it with The Gateway. We appreciate you!



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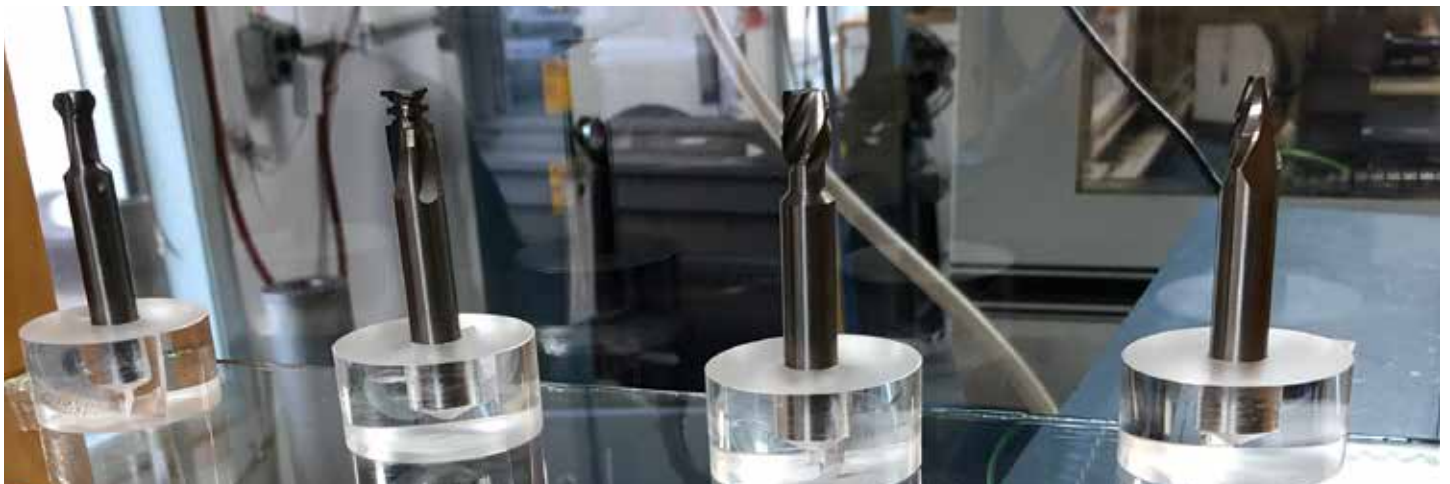
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## KV TOOLINGS



**It's been nearly four years since we last spoke in depth with KV Tooling's Brian Beland. Back in 2019, KV Tooling Systems had been awarded the ANCA Tool of the Year Award, which was a very exciting time for the Maine-based manufacture of carbide and HSS cutting tools (as well as trusted tool sharpening service provider). The operation has recently expanded and, with that, moved into a significantly larger space which has enabled them a greater capacity to serve their customer base. The Gateway sat down with Brian to discuss that expansion and more in the following company showcase.**



**The Gateway:** It's been a while since we last spoke! How'd KV Tooling Systems navigate the pandemic? Was business up, down, or steady?

**KV Tooling:** Navigating the pandemic was challenging to say the least, because sales were down, but we kept in regular contact with customers by email and phone and we focused on delivering for our customers. When you call KV Tooling, you get to speak directly with either the owner, (myself) or one of my sons. With almost 100 years' combined experience, you can be sure that we have the know-how to help you, whatever your needs are. We overcame the adversity and I believe it helped us grow as a company.

**The Gateway:** In general, how have the last few years gone? What have you learned? What new practices have you incorporated into the operation of the business (if anything)?

**KV Tooling:** I learned to take advantage of business assistance programs like PPP, EIDL, and ERTC's. These were great resources for our company because they helped us retain staff and keep capacity up. Banks were more lenient with lending, so we refinanced some of our loans and reduced our interest rates, so we're positioned for future growth.

**The Gateway:** We heard you moved! Tell us about the new space. When did you move out of the old one? Are you still in the old one in some capacity, or did you move the whole operation?

**KV Tooling:** We took advantage of having the slow period to move into our larger new space. We went from 1,480 S/F to 4,200 S/F! Me and two of my sons, which also happen to be employees, worked nights and weekends to renovate and upgrade old warehouse to fit our needs. The new space is only 3 miles from our former site, has 3-phase power, new, white metal interior liner panels to give a clean look, LED lighting, 12 Ton (144K BTU) HVAC for heat and AC, and epoxied floors. We now have a combination break room and conference area with kitchen. The entire plant is temp controlled with a separate mechanical room to house our compressed air, machine oil filtration with oil chillers, and mist & dust collection systems. This allows our HVAC to keep our plant at a



stable, year-round temperature between 72-76° and our shop environment quiet and clean. In addition to the HVAC which exchanges the shop air every 3-4 minutes, we have two air filtration units that scrub the air in the shop and keep it crystal clear. Even with all four machines running full tilt, we never see any mist or smoke, and our shop stays extremely clean. Many have commented that you can eat off the floors!

Disclaimer: Even with the 5-second rule, we don't recommend it!

We sold our old building and moved the entire operation in three days! We were up and running on Friday that week. We celebrated with a full take-out meal from Olive Garden complete with a champagne toast!



**The Gateway:** What new offerings and capabilities are you providing your customers?

**KV Tooling:** With the new, spacious floor space we were able to offer increased manufacturing capacity. Since the move we have added two more machines with auto-load capability. The climate-controlled facility has enabled us to run longer production jobs lights-out while holding very tight tolerances. We never were able to consider that type of work in our former space. We also have added an edge prep machine which gives us the capability to finely hone our product's cutting

edges before they are put in service. This gives our customers a better, more consistent cutting tool.

**The Gateway:** How do these offerings and capabilities help expand KV Tooling Systems network and potential client base?

**KV Tooling:** It absolutely does, and already has! We can react quickly to new opportunities as well as enjoy increased throughput and turnaround times with our current repeat customers.

**The Gateway:** Are there any industries you've been trying to break into as a result of the bolstered services and larger space?

**KV Tooling:** We are seeking to do more business with larger firms which use a lot of production-type tooling. With aerospace making a comeback, as well as land and sea-based military, automotive, and energy, we see huge opportunities everywhere. We specialize in custom tool manufacturing as well as tool reconditioning and coatings. With what I described before, we now have the capability to handle larger volumes while maintaining high quality and faster turnaround times. Before the move we were limited in that scope.

**The Gateway:** Where is most of your work focused? (list the industries you've long served as a fresh "intro" to people who might be reading about you for the first time).

**KV Tooling:** First of all, we take pride in being an award-winning Maine company. Most of our work has come from smaller job shops throughout New England and the greater Northeast. Because we stayed small, we sought out smaller accounts that fit our capacities and capabilities. Our main strength is working closely with customers to tailor our services to their needs. Whether creating new, custom tooling to handle a hot project, modifying existing tooling for a one-off repair job, or fixing an "oops"! We are known throughout the region as the "GO-TO" guys in the industry. We are capable and willing to do the odd work that the other shops don't want to deal with. When you call, you get to speak directly with either the owner, (myself) or one of my sons. With almost 100 years' combined experience,

you can be sure that we have the know-how to help you, whatever your needs are.

**The Gateway:** What excites you about the present and the future of KV Tooling Systems?

**KV Tooling:** We are most excited about our new floor space and how it is creating new opportunities for us as a company. Since the move in June of '21 it has already paid off with new accounts and larger orders. What I am most proud of is having my two sons involved with the business and the prospect of them taking over some day!

We are also excited about a new project happening right now. We are already expanding! Later this summer we are preparing to break ground for a 1,440 sq/ft addition! This new addition will create larger space for shipping/receiving and warehousing of products, new front office space with secure entry, and an additional mechanical room to handle future equipment needs. We want to be poised to grow even more!

**The Gateway:** What else do you want folks to know?

**KV Tooling:** With all this new floor space, capacity, and equipment, we are pleased to announce that we are planning a brand-new KV Branded product line of high-performance tooling! In addition to our current custom tool reconditioning, tool design and manufacturing services, we will offer new, high-quality tooling stocked in our facility, and shipped same day direct to our customers! No middleman. Nobody will be able to beat our price/quality combo! We are planning a product launch later this year. We will be sure to let you know when it lands!

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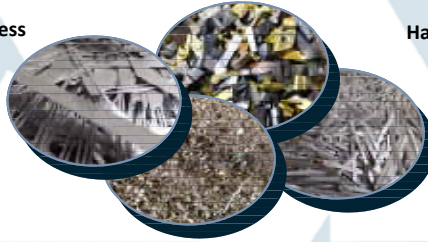
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## SAY HELLO TO THE NEW ENGLAND LEAN COLLABORATIVE (NELC)

The Lean community, like anything else lately, has its share of critics. There are those who vehemently oppose Lean in general (or TOC, or Six Sigma...), whilst lauding some other form of continuous improvement (or TOC, or Six Sigma...). Still others refuse to entertain that maybe, just maybe, TPS and Lean are basically the same thing.

It's exhausting sometimes, and a turn off all of the time.

### **Tune out the Lean critics**

I've (finally!) learned to ignore the people who can't seem to understand that there are more factors to consider than the ones they happen to know about. I'm not exactly sure what their motivation is, to be honest. They never seem to want to learn anything about differing points of view – they just seem to want to endlessly argue over semantics. In fact, I ended up having to block a few people on LinkedIn after the Gateway published an article I wrote about Lean transformation failure rates that (apparently) upset them to a great degree.

### **The true meaning of Lean**

I think that the true “secret sauce” of Lean is that there is no set playbook. Maybe that's the juxtaposition of Lean that so many seem to struggle with. Lean methods like Standard Work and Continuous Improvement are based upon finding the “one best way”, and then building upon that to make it better again. Maybe that's where this notion should stop. Kaizen, Kata and PDSA (or PDCA if that's your thing)... all circle around a central idea of “let's try it and see if it works, quickly. If it doesn't – that's okay. We just won't do it that way anymore”.

I'm not sure one can embrace that mentality while also maintaining that there's only a certain path that all must follow along one's Lean journey. There's more to it. For me, that's the fun part of the process. And shouldn't this be fun?

### **Why people struggle and what we are doing about it – ANNOUNCEMENT!**

Lots of discussions over the years have focused on why Lean fails, why it's management's fault, etc. etc. While there are certainly lessons to be learned when things don't go as planned (I don't like the word “failure”, since it's a bit of an absolute), I like to encourage folks to focus on the future. Obsessing over past ills tends not to produce a lot of value. Instead, I encourage people to absorb lessons learned, let go of the rest, and spend their energies on doing better next time. It is “continuous” improvement, after all!

At the end of the day, it comes down to time, and what we spend it on. Yes – we need to add value; to our customers, to our products, and to our employers. BUT – we also have to add value to ourselves, and I'd argue that that should come first, as it will enable all the others. When we feel valued; when we feel like what we are doing matters, that's when we can really do our best work, and deliver the best value – for everybody. There's still work to be done in helping organizations engage with and embrace Lean tenets and principles, so the that end, I'm VERY excited to announce to formation of The New England Lean Collaborative (the NELC)!

### **The New England Lean Collaborative**

The NELC is a regional organization whose mission is to promote collaboration and create awareness of Lean methods and associated competencies by creating and promoting a community that supports Lean adoption throughout the organization.

The NELC will assist organizations in applying Lean thinking to reliably deliver business value, adapt to changing market conditions, improve predictability, increase flexibility and reduce variability, all with the clear goal of improving the overall business operation. We will do this by facilitating several learning opportunities – plant tours, book clubs, workshops and CEO Circles, to name just a few.

Lean, in the context that we speak about it, has been around for just about 30 years. Here in New England,

## SAY HELLO TO THE NEW ENGLAND LEAN COLLABORATIVE (NELC)

we were at the epicenter of the Industrial Revolution 200 years ago, and many of the tenets of Lean either came from or were enhanced during that endeavor. So, in my opinion, at least some of the roots of what we know of Lean today was developed here in New England as companies sought to leverage efficiencies and meet the ever-increasing demand of a growing country and population. I think we should be very proud of that fact!

That said, there is still much we can do better, and that's the mission of the NELC. We want to help build a supportive community that is focused on helping organizations build their Lean knowledge and abilities in an effort to help the business operate better. The way I usually put it is that, when we do Lean correctly, we'll get the business metric results that we so desire (increased on time delivery, lower absenteeism and turnover, better profitability, etc.).



that understanding and application of the practice of Lean will be of great benefit to their organizations.

More information on the consortium be available at: [www.newenglandleanconsulting.com/the-nelc/](http://www.newenglandleanconsulting.com/the-nelc/)

For further information, contact Paul Critchley at [paul@newenglandlean.com](mailto:paul@newenglandlean.com).

### **About Paul Critchley**

*Paul Critchley is a recognized thought leader on employee engagement and continuous improvement and has helped businesses around the world achieve greater levels of success through the application of Lean techniques. A frequent speaker, he has keynoted at numerous corporate events, as well as at international conventions such as AME's annual Lean conference and at OpEx Week. He's also the host of "The New England Lean Podcast," a weekly show that focuses on Lean leadership and New England-based businesses.*

*Paul is a former Board Member of the Northeast Region of AME, holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, a M.S. degree in Management and a M.S. in Organizational Leadership.*

*He is passionate about Lean and creating organizational cultures that are sustainably engaged. He co-authored his first book - *The Whole Professional, A Collection of Essays to Help You Achieve a Full and Satisfying Life* to bring a fresh perspective on Work/Life Balance and how individuals and organizations can work together to achieve greater levels of attainment.*

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**CTMA celebrates 80 years representing the Tooling and Machining Industry in Connecticut.**

CTMA celebrates 80 years representing the Tooling and Machining Industry in Connecticut.

Connecticut Tooling & Machining Association (CTMA) celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2023. As one of the first of the 28 chapters of the National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA), the organization represents the custom precision manufacturing industry, locally and nationally. Members of CTMA/NTMA design and manufacture special tools, dies, jibs, fixtures, gages, special machines, and precision machined parts.

Richard Moore from Moore Special Tool Co., in Bridgeport was instrumental in forming both the local and national associations in 1943. From its inception, the organization’s goals have been to represent its members and the industry in government relations. The organization’s focus during World War II was to convince the Federal Government not to draft tool and die makers as a lack of skilled labor could have had devastating effects on the war effort.

“It’s been an honor to carry on the legacy and serve as the fourth President of CTMA (following Alfred E. Motzer, Frank W. Dworak Jr & Donald F. Zak) representing Hobson & Motzer, a founding member of our association. I started on the Board early in my career and found it invaluable to build relationships with great leaders in the industry. The camaraderie and sharing of ideas within our association on both the local and national level is unique”, said CTMA President, Bruce Dworak.

In addition to government advocacy, the objectives of the association are workforce development, information resources along with industry networking events thus expanding relationships with peers and colleagues, promoting growth, and most importantly securing the industry for future generations.

“Being an active member of CTMA and NTMA has been valuable to Sirois Tool and myself personally. Networking, locally and nationally, has provided connections to many companies that we’ve worked with over the years. We’ve also used many other resources provided by CTMA, NTMA and the Associate Member companies”, said Alan Ortner, President, Sirois Tool and 2023 Chairman, National Tooling & Machining Association.

CTMA will celebrate the milestone throughout the year with events focused on programs and events including their 30th annual golf outing July 14th at Tunxis Country Club in Farmington with additional events being added to the calendar for the fall and early winter.



For more information on CTMA to become a member or participate in upcoming events and programs, contact Executive Director, Cathy Savino or call **860-314-2101**. You can also visit CTMA’s website at: [www.ct-ntma.org](http://www.ct-ntma.org)

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**2022 NTMA Safety Award Sirois**

Earlier this year, CTMA’s President, Bryce Dworak and V.P. Cheryl DiPinto-Huck, personally delivered the 2022 NTMA Safety Award to Alan Ortner, CEO of Sirois Tool. After a tour of the Sirois facility which included subsidiary, North American Spring Tool, they traveled to East Hartford, CT to present HORST Engineering’s President & CEO, Scott Livingston with their teams NTMA Safety Award for excellence in safety performance.

Not only did they get a tour of the amazing HORST facility, but they were also able to work out the details for CTMA to host a members only event at HORST Engineering this fall!



**Boston Machinery Announce New Product MicroCut Precision Drill Sharpeners and Grinders**

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For more information visit: [www.bostonmachinery.com](http://www.bostonmachinery.com).



## Mission critical: an elastomeric shock protection solution for the U.S. Navy

Proper functioning of military technology under stressful and dangerous situations can be the difference between a mission's success or failure. So, when a manufacturer asked Hutchinson Aerospace & Industry, Inc., to help develop a shock protection solution for the United States Navy's shipboard "friend or foe" detection electronics box, they were ready to assist.

Through extensive modeling and analyses, Hutchinson demonstrated that its VHC (Very High Capacity)



elastomeric solution was a much safer and more robust choice for shock protection. This allowed the customer to keep their program on schedule and on budget.

You can read more about this customer success story by going here: <https://hutchinsonai.com/elastomeric-shock-protection-solution/>

*Representatives from Hutchinson are available to discuss this fast-paced project, or we can provide contributed pieces.*

## Tandem Equipment Sales Partners With Daubert Cromwell In New England

Tandem Equipment Sales (Beverly, MA) proudly announces their relationship with Daubert Cromwell and that they will be stocking its VCI (Volatile Corrosion Inhibitors) product line.

When metals are wrapped or packaged in VCI, the chemistry volatilizes in the packaging environment and forms a protective molecular layer on the surface of the metal. This protective layer prevents the oxidation and corrosion of metal surfaces.

As John O'Neill of Tandem notes "simply store or ship metal parts in VCI packaging. When the parts are unwrapped, the protective layer immediately begins to dissipate. The metal parts are clean, corrosion free, and ready to use. No washing, dipping, or cleaning is necessary and absolutely safe!"



## Daubert Cromwell Papers

Paper as a packaging material has its own unique advantages:

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- Sets up VCI protection quickly

Daubert Cromwell papers come in a variety of grades. Larger or irregular shaped products should be protected with heavier grades of paper, while smaller parts can use lighter basis weights. Several Daubert Cromwell products feature special substrates that combine corrosion protection with barrier packaging. Barrier coated papers and films protect against moisture and grease; laminated grades afford heavy duty protection against adverse environmental conditions.

Daubert Cromwell papers are available in standard 36" or 48" rolls, and widths up to 120".

Papers can be converted into bags, envelopes, wrappers for individual parts, shrouds for large pieces or stacks of parts, covers and liners for container storage. The company has several weights of kraft, plain or barrier coated papers to protect against moisture and grease. Laminated grades are available with polyethylene for heavy duty protection against the environment as well.

Daubert Cromwell can custom-print paper with your logo for easy brand identification to your customers. Your logo, instructions or message appears in crisp, clear detail.

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Tandem also distributes the Daubert Cromwell VCI film products which provide proven corrosion protection. Through volatilization and contact, the nitrite-free VCI chemicals protect metal parts against the corrosive effects of moisture, salt, and other contaminants while they are in process, storage or transit.

They also are ready to use immediately after removal from the packaging without additional cleaning.

*Tandem Equipment Sales is located at 35 Tozer Road, Beverly, MA 01915.*

*Please contact Tandem (John O'Neill) at: 978-927-8745*

*or visit their web site at: [www.tandem-esd.net](http://www.tandem-esd.net).*

*To request literature, samples, or pricing of Daubert-Cromwell's complete product line of metal protection solutions.*

## F.M. Callahan Exhibits At Design 2 Part Trade Show in New Jersey

F.M. Callahan & Son, Inc. was once again a recent Exhibitor at the recent Design 2 Part show held in late April at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey.. This annual event exclusively features exhibitors who specialize in design and contract manufacturing services.



This show allows attendees the opportunity to search for anything from design ideas, to custom and stock parts, or through final assembly alternatives. The Show also allows for these Manufacturers from the Northeast and nationwide to have the opportunity to meet high-quality, reliable, American job shops and contract manufacturers who can help build their products better.

The show featured over 200 exhibiting companies and included were F.M. Callahan's key personnel who enthusiastically manned the Callahan booth over two days while talking and meeting with numerous company representatives who were looking to find new suppliers to

improve their quality, reduce their manufacturing costs, and shorten time-to-market for their products.

After the Show; Eric Jacklin commented on his own company's experience at the Show; saying that "Once again; we totally enjoyed the experience of being a participant and enjoying the traffic of key people walking the show's aisles. As was the case in the past; we were able to generate many sales leads with new accounts and talk with longtime customers as well. It is gratifying to see so many of our customers that we have worked with for years and were able to provide a number of these accounts with new ideas for future projects".

*F.M. Callahan & Son (Malden, MA) has been plating parts since 1910 and is a NADCAP and ISO 9000 certified electroplater. They are a full service company with a 40,000 square foot state of the art facility and has over 100 years of family ownership.*

*For more information about F.M. Callahan & Son and the services they provide, contact them at 22 Sharon Street, Malden, MA 02148. Tel: 781-324-5101, Fax: 781-324-1674, e-mail: [ejacklin@fmcallahan.com](mailto:ejacklin@fmcallahan.com) , or visit the company web site at: [www.fmcallahan.com](http://www.fmcallahan.com) .*



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## QR CODES AND MANUFACTURING

*Article supplied by QFuse*

A QR code (abbreviated from Quick Response code) is a type of matrix barcode (or two-dimensional barcode) first designed in 1994 for the automotive industry in Japan. A barcode is a machine-readable optical label that contains information about the item to which it is attached. In practice, QR codes often contain data for a locator, identifier, or tracker that points to a website or application. The Quick Response system became popular outside the automotive industry due to its fast readability and greater storage capacity compared to standard UPC barcodes. Applications include product tracking, item identification, time tracking, document management, and general marketing. In this blog post, we will take a look at some applications of QR codes in manufacturing.

### **Inventory management with QR codes**

QR codes were invented specifically for inventory management. By the early 1990s, Toyota Company found out that the barcode system they used to track parts was running out of capacity: the number components the company used was about to exceed the maximum number of items they could encode in a standard barcode. To solve this problem, in 1994 Toyota's subsidiary, Denso Wave invented a two-dimensional graphical code system called Quick Response, or QR code system. It was designed to allow high-speed component scanning during the manufacturing process.

Even if you do not deal with very high number of components, exceeding regular barcode capacity, your inventory management process will benefit from incorporating QR Codes because of smartphones. Instead of using traditional scanners, your employees can use smartphones to track inventory items.

### **Track equipment maintenance**

Keeping track of maintenance for every piece of equipment in your organization can be labor-intensive, particularly if you rely on paper records. Good maintenance tracking can reduce costs, as it allows closer attention to the maintenance and replacement needs of your organization. Convenient, accurate maintenance tracking offered by QR inventory tags makes maintenance tracking feasible and easy for large organizations.

### **Using QR codes in business stationery and invoices**

Mistakes happen and you want to make the correction process as painless as possible for you and the consumer. Include a QR code on items such as your business stationery and invoices that leads directly to your customer service site for such helpful information as contact numbers, user guides, and (if needed) return labels.

### **Work instructions access**

Visual work instruction systems like REWO allow you to create QR codes that you can print out and stick to critical locations around your shop floor. This way any employee can simply scan the code and get direct access to the SOP or WI that he or she needs in that moment. The company also ensures it will always have the latest versions of the work instructions available to their employees, so there's no need to worry that there's an outdated instruction anywhere on the shop floor. Try scanning the bottom QR code to see how it looks like.

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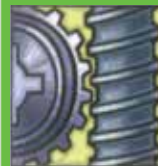


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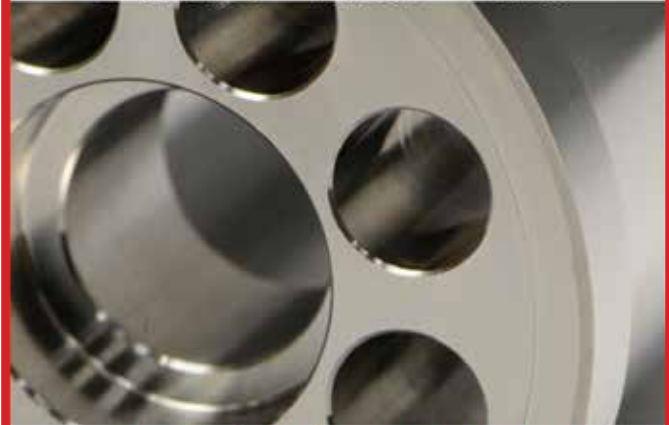
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