

A PATTERN OF SUCCESS



Bassler/Williamsport Pattern Works Creates Models, Prototypes and Functional Parts with Dimension

"We don't turn down anything—parts for amusement park rides, manufacturing operations, health and safety tools—you name it, we can make it. The Dimension 3D Printer is a big reason why we have such flexibility."

— Louis M. Bassler, owner, Bassler/Williamsport Pattern Works

Bassler/Williamsport Pattern Works project navigator Aaron Bassler removes a completed pattern from the Dimension 3D Printer.

Bassler/Williamsport Pattern Works employs an ever-changing mix of 3D product designers, graphic artists, master patternmakers and modelers. The company creates CAD designs, molds, patterns and functional parts for a variety of products, from playground equipment to in-store displays, scale models to trade show promotions and everything in-between. Bassler delivers a fast and efficient "concept to market" strategy for any type of product, allowing customers to evolve and complete their industrial design projects.

During the '80s and '90s, technology began to change and Bassler customers demanded a greater breadth of services, namely industrial pattern-making for metal foundries and plastic injection molding. Additionally, customers began requesting rapid prototyping services, shaving days or weeks off design implementation timelines.

"Since I started the business, our motto has been 'Don't turn down anything,'" said Louis M. Bassler, founder and chief executive officer. "In some cases, we're the final molder for the part, and in other cases our customers are large manufacturers who simply need us to design and build patterns. But in nearly every situation, our customers use rapid prototyping services."

Bassler began offering rapid prototyping to customers in 1994. In addition to using industrial-sized routers for fabricating prototype models and parts, the company sought a less heavy-duty solution with a quicker turn-around time. Bassler considered several new technologies before deciding to purchase a Dimension 3D Printer in May 2009. Since then, the printer is often running 24/7, saving time and money for Bassler and his customers.

Choosing Dimension

Bassler purchased its Dimension 3D Printer from Cimquest, a longtime Dimension reseller and leading provider of engineering and rapid manufacturing products for business and industry. Tom Farnan, the territory account manager with Cimquest, recalled Bassler's initial reluctance to revisit 3D printing technology after a less-than-positive experience.

“One of the reasons why Lou and his team have been so successful is because they are not shy about embracing new technology,” Farnan said. “But after he purchased a very expensive, early-edition piece of 3D printing technology in the 1990s, he felt like he got burned when the company went out of business and he couldn’t get parts or consumables. It definitely took some convincing to get Lou to look at the Dimension 3D Printer when we first met in 2009.”

Farnan and Bassler eventually came to an understanding about the company’s past experience, with Farnan insisting that Dimension—a pioneer in the 3D printing business—would be a hard-working, reliable choice that could lighten Bassler’s day-to-day workload. Bassler knew the company’s customers were outsourcing hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of additive manufacturing work each year, and he wanted a dependable solution in place.

“Our roots are planted in hand-built, traditional methods of modeling and creating mockups for industry,” Bassler said. “But we needed a new solution that combined our design talents with an inexpensive, yet durable output medium such as FDM. The Dimension 3D Printer gave us an opportunity to produce very exact models, with the added benefit of being able to sand and finish those models to our customers’ specifications.”

One of the first projects Bassler completed using the Dimension 3D Printer was a tabletop holder for e-readers, such as the Amazon Kindle. Bassler and his team analyzed the holder for a new client using a popular computer aided design (CAD) program. The client had redesigned and analyzed the holder using the same CAD program, but Bassler convinced him to try out an FDM model from the Dimension 3D Printer.

“He was so impressed that he could now fully use his sanded and painted model that he took that first piece and used it for advertising photography instead of the actual finished product,” Bassler said. “This product was a brand-new, niche idea from our client – an invention of sorts – and we love inventions because they love rapid prototyping. The Dimension 3D Printer makes it much faster for us to delight our clients by giving them a physical model of their product before we make a pattern or a mold.”

Another example of how the Dimension 3D Printer has been good for Bassler’s business is the company’s work for longtime client Shop-Vac. The wet/dry vacuum manufacturer has been working with Bassler for more than 30 years, beginning with Lou Bassler himself making wooden models for Shop-Vac parts by hand in his workshop. Today, with the Dimension 3D Printer, Bassler can make a functioning part for any Shop-Vac product in a fraction of the time it might take to send the specifications to a service bureau.

“Since we got the Dimension 3D Printer, we have saved Shop-Vac tens of thousands in tooling costs because they can make a part with us before they go to tooling. They don’t have to re-cut their tools if there are slight design changes during the process.”



Bassler/Williamsport Pattern Works has two Dimension 3D Printers to create functional models and mock-ups for customers.

The Dimension 3D Printer has changed the very definition of Bassler's work—what began as a pattern and mold-making shop has transformed into a full-service design firm.

"I always say we are not a service bureau, we're a pattern shop," Bassler said. "But the more our clients hear about how fast we can turn around parts, with such accuracy and reliability, it's changing our business entirely...for the better."

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