

Working in partnership

TH Plastics and Wheatley Plastics



Wheatley Plastics' new factory in Stockport



TH Plastics provided a turnkey solution for their client Wheatley Plastics when they relocated their factory in October 2017.

Staff from TH Plastics relocated 16 existing machines from their old 7,000ft² narrow three-storey mill in Stockport (left image) to their 22,000ft² single-storey building in Hazel Grove (below image).

As well as the ancillary solutions including conveyors, hoists and bespoke fabrication work, TH Plastics went above and beyond, overseeing the complete project and worked closely with their client.



Company profile:



Established for over 60 years, Wheatley Plastics is a leading supplier of plastic injection moulding services with expertise across a wide range of industries including electronics, medical, packaging, construction, retail and plumbing.

In 2011 Operations Director Gary Knight, one of the longest serving employees, purchased the business in a management buy-out from Managing Director of 20 years, Rod Harper.



Company profile



FLEXIBILITY QUALITY PRIDE RELATIONSHIPS

The established contract manufacturer has invested around £500,000 in the move, including £250,000 on machines and chillers to secure the future growth of the business towards their goal of world-class contract manufacturing.

In the last three years their turnover has increased from £1m to £2m this year and Wheatley Plastics is projected to reach £2.5m next year.

The building

Gary had planned to grow the business but was limited due to the size of the building.



“After winning a substantial order, we needed to upsize our manufacturing base to accommodate large machinery necessary to fulfil the order. The equipment we needed wouldn’t fit in our old premises so we leased another unit from TH Plastics in the short term until we found the right site.

“The move to the new factory has now meant it is all under one roof with room to add extra capacity when required.”

Gary Knight, Owner of Wheatley Plastics



The relationship

TH Plastics had previously worked with Wheatley Plastics on a range of smaller projects such as installing hopper loaders. This relationship was the catalyst that led to this large-scale project.

“We approached TH Plastics because we have a strong relationship with the team there. We asked them to help us with the installation and the move itself.

“Lee Thomas from TH Plastics helped us to identify potential new business premises and, in the short term, loaned us a unit to start production.

“After alleviating the time constraint, we found a more modern premises which would allow for future growth and bring our two current sites under one roof.”

Gary Knight, Owner of Wheatley Plastics



The project



“We have been looking for a new facility for the last 18 months due to the growth aspirations of the business. The previous factory layout created huge issues with operational flow since it was spread across 3 storeys.

“To move to the next level it was important to improve our efficiencies and TH Plastics provided us with that solution.”

Gary Knight, Owner of Wheatley Plastics



TH Plastics moved 16 machines, fitted pipework services and other ancillary solutions, hoists, air compressor and conveyors. They also project managed the building contractors on the building alterations.



The project

“We thought it was important to get someone we know and trust to project manage the whole thing. We were concerned about dealing with different people for different things.

“We had several meetings during the move regarding timings and plans as it progressed. They kept in constant contact and kept us up-to-date with the project.

“They do not just provide ancillary solutions, they help with everything. They project managed the move from start to finish. They even based their project manager on site for the duration of the install.

“They provided a one stop solution.”

Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics



The timeframe



“TH Plastics got the keys for the job at the start of September in 2017 with a deadline of mid-October for completion.

“TH Plastics turned the entire factory relocation around in six weeks. They decommissioned the existing site and moved the machines over a couple of days and had them all up and running the week after.”

Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics



The advice

“TH Plastics has installed a variety of ancillary solutions to reduce our labour requirement and make the manufacturing process more automated. They suggested new hoists to expand our capability during tool changes, product conveyors which extended throughput and a centralised material conveying system to reduce labour intensive material handling.

“The XD dryers used for material treatment have improved the quality of the products we are producing.

“We have also invested in a more efficient cooling system – which is already paying off.”



Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics



The benefits



“We have seen dramatic energy savings, even though we are running more machinery.

“Since moving to the new premises in October we have seen a 30-40% reduction in electricity – mainly as a result of the new chiller system TH Plastics have installed.

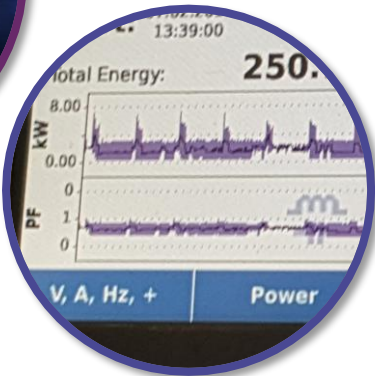
“TH Plastics also converted our hot air dryers to dehumidifier dryers to further reduce energy costs and increase the quality of the products.

“It’s made a massive difference in overheads in terms of energy and labour costs. We have now redirected resources to run additional shifts to further increase production.”

Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics



The benefits



TH Plastics supplied a free cooler integration which provided a year round 70% energy saving compared to the old chiller system. During the winter months, energy savings of 90% were achieved.

The desiccant dryers halved the drying energy consumption when compared to the previous hot air dryers that were used.

TH Plastics also modified the setup of the compressed air system which reduced pressure at the receiver by 1bar.



The benefits



“The move has made a significant impact in reducing non-value added activities, therefore increasing efficiencies and flow throughout manufacture.

“Our new factory is double the size of the old one and we can now be a more aggressive competitor. Having this capacity allows us to quote and tender for bigger jobs and quote for larger contracts with OEMs.”

Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics



The future

“Since moving to the new site, we now operate 24 hours a day. We have increased staff from 22 to 30 staff and now operate three shifts covering round the clock operation. We wouldn’t have been able to do that in the old facility.

“At a little over 20,000 square feet, the new production facility is more than twice the size of the mill site. This extra room will help us accommodate the extra demand from our customers, which is growing every day.

“It has always been our vision to create a world class manufacturing environment for our customers, suppliers and employees. This is a major step forward in achieving our goals.

“Due to the success of this project we are now working with TH Plastics on further automating the plant.”

Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics



**WHEATLEY
PLASTICS**
EXCEPTIONAL INJECTION MOULDING

The future

“We’ve already managed to increase capacity by automating parts of the manufacturing process, and adding a new shift in the evening. This new investment will help us grow even more. In the last 12 months we’ve invested upwards of £250,000 in machinery.

“We have gone through a significant period of growth and we have been able to facilitate additional work. Our turnover has increased from £1.3m to £2m this year and we are projected to reach £2.5m next year.”

Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics





The future

“The relocation to our new facility is a pivotal moment in our journey to world-class contract manufacturing.”

Gary Knight, owner of Wheatley Plastics