

Case Study

Based in North Shields in the UK, Ovington Boats is one of the world's most successful small boat building businesses. It specialises in high performance dinghies, producing the Olympic 49er Class, the World Sailing and RYA Youth Asymmetric 29er, Musto Skiff, VX One, OK, Flying Fifteen and International 14.

Why was the project necessary?

Ovington Boats has worked with Allen Brothers for many years, with Allen mainly supplying its catalogue products. Ovington Boats were having issues with their current supplier for numerous fabricated items not meeting their delivery timescales but also supplying substandard products. I'd note that cost isn't the overriding requirement, rather quality, consistency and availability. A combination of factors provided AB with the opportunity to quote for a significant number of other OB custom products. These include an excellent existing supply, high level of expertise available to the customer providing support on design, flexibility in supply, AB have access to a number of different manufacturing processes in house.

When was the timescale for project?

It commenced in October 2016, the final parts were quoted in January 2017, involving 23 products.

Who was involved?

Allen Brothers' Technical Manager Steve Hall worked with Ovington's Nigel Carruthers to agree the project brief. The design processes covered aluminium casting, stainless steel, aluminium and plastic (principally delrin and nylon) milling, stainless steel, aluminium and plastic (principally delrin and nylon) turning, plastic injection moulding and machining of aluminium extrusion.

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Steve Hall, Allen Brothers

How did we address it?

The first step was to agree a clear brief, giving all aspects of the client's requirements. Although Ovington was able to provide working drawings for some of the items, the majority had to be reverse engineered from samples provided. Product drawings were then produced by Allen Brother's design team, for initial approval and

drawing upon a wealth of marine industry experience both personal and in the business. The design package we use provides both full engineering drawings as well as customer friendly rendered PDF's, in both 3D and orthographic projections. Similarly, 3D printing provides initial design evaluation, while machined samples are produced for testing.

There was a large amount of CAD work, confirming critical dimensions. Allen then produced pre-production prototypes of all the items which required the production of machining jigs/fixtures and welding rigs. All these are produced using CNC machinery or physical jigs to ensure a high level of consistency and avoid manual operations where possible.

What was the result?

Allen is now providing Ovington Boats with most of its bespoke items, along with the catalogue products. Ovington Boats have seen an improvement not only in price and quality, compared to their previous supplier, but also in forecasting and planning.

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“Above all else, it is the working relationship which matters. We are in regular contact regarding upcoming demand and are forecasting production 4-5 months in advance to avoid any delays”

Nigel Carruthers, Ovington Boats

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