



# A funding injection gives Horizon a machining shop edge

Written by Don Fraser

**S**teady investment in new technology — and pushing digital innovation — has welded a solid base at Horizon Precision Inc.

**The Fort Erie machining firm has used upgraded technologies to push itself into an age of business sustainability as it leverages a reputation in high-end CNC milling, CNC turning, CNC Swiss and specialized contract machining work.**

Most of what Horizon does is CNC custom machining, using materials like aluminum, brass, stainless steel and many others: “What we do is really dependent on what our customers are looking for at that time,” Horizon’s Spencer Sheldon explains.

That steady growth has pushed the company into investing in new technology, partly in a drive to attract fresh talent to the firm. “It can be tough to find people interested in manufacturing — beyond even just CNC machining,” said Sheldon who’s had a career working in heavy-machine shops, before becoming the Horizon business owner in 2017.

**A current push for the firm is going digital in work processes, to assist in business scaling.**

Horizon was recently a Canadian Digital Adoption Program participant, and used about \$25,000 of the funding via the Business Development Bank of Canada to add computers to all workstations and invest in new operational software. The Canada Digital Adoption Program by the Government of Canada helps small and medium-sized enterprises adopt digital technologies to increase their competitiveness.

“It helps us better schedule our work, use the resources we need and gives access to the same current information,” he said. “This takes us away from the old paper-trail and information clog with customers. It’ll have a huge impact on us being able to scale up.”

The ramped-up technology is also appealing to a new influx of employees moving into the industrial trades, Sheldon adds. “The next generation is looking for a career they can grow into, and this kind of technology attracts them.”

“You get them in the door, they see the upgraded CNC machines, robotics and computer technologies — it helps scale up your human resources potential for moving forward,” Sheldon said.

Other scaling measures are in play. This year, Horizon is excited to add a palletized system that will allow their CNC mills to be automatically loaded by a 6-axis robot, to open-up overnight production and minimize machine down time.

With ten employees on staff, more are needed— notably CNC machinists. Taken together, this smart scaling has also meant locational sustainability: Right now, Horizon is OK where they are.

“We’re at the stage where we don’t necessarily need to increase our square footage, to increase our capacity.” Sheldon said. “We’re in a good place.” ▲