

Spelsberg's next day custom enclosure samples keep projects on schedule

The popularity of Spelsberg UK's unique next day sample service is continuing to grow, 12 months after it was launched. By delivering samples for custom enclosure designs with a 24 hour turnaround, customers are able to compress their project times while also helping ensure optimum designs. Chris Lloyd, Managing Director, explains how Spelsberg is achieving such a fast turnaround.

One of the biggest issues on most engineering projects is time management: keeping the work moving on, avoiding delays and their almost inevitable knock-on effects. Aware that a series of small delays can add up over the course of a project and result in the final deadline being missed, about a year ago we assessed the possibility of offering next day delivery of sample custom electrical enclosures.

Previously we had typically produced such samples at the end of the week – this was probably the fastest service available in the UK at the time, but we could see that with some reorganisation, creative thinking and internal discipline we could improve the service considerably.

Creating a custom enclosure involves several steps. The first is design: generally users know best what they need in terms of sizes, materials of construction, features, IP rating etc and we are happy to produce to their specifications.

However, we are always happy to check over their designs and offer advice if requested. Classic design considerations include positioning and sizing the entry ports; engraving of information, logos, etc; selecting the seal types and lid; installation of the electrical equipment; and adding special features such as emergency stops and control keypads.

Our first decision was to dedicate one of our CNC machining centres to the production of samples. The samples would have priority on this machine, but it could be used for other duties if there were no samples waiting.

When considering how to staff the station we quickly realised that the best solution would be to rotate people through the function, so that everybody became proficient at the process and its special needs. Not only do they have to set up and operate the CNC, they also do the subsequent assembly, where the seals, glands, lid and other parts are added to the enclosure and the electrical components mounted within it.

There is also a special mindset needed, in that the samples absolutely have to be ready for timely dispatch – in reality this isn't very different from our normal procedure, but there is the need to guarantee completion on time.

Having designed a method to produce next day samples we put it into practice and over the coming weeks and months tweaked and honed it until it was running smoothly. We wanted to make sure we could offer the service on all our different ranges and sizes of enclosure and to have experience of a wide range of requirements, even those unusual needs that only pop up very occasionally, so we monitored our efforts until we thought we had handled just about every possible option.

As our confidence grew we rolled out the service to more and more customers. Now we offer it to everyone, and most people are using it. We have a steady workload of samples that we produce to a deadline that allows overnight delivery to engineers and project managers across the UK.

We are able to offer this service because we do all our production work in-house in Telford. We are not dependent upon sub-contractors, nor do we rely upon weekly deliveries from an overseas manufacturing facility. With all materials to hand and under our control, skilled staff and dedicated production capabilities, we have proven we can fulfil any order promptly and accurately.

The service is proving popular, with demand growing steadily. In the early days of the project when we were doing just a few samples a week, there was a worry that actually there was no real market requirement for next day delivery, but that subsided as volumes grew. Now, customers are beginning to think of it as the norm, a valuable service that makes procurement simpler and more reliable and even helps with the design and implementation stages of their projects.

“Space for you”

Spelsberg's company philosophy is based around the idea of providing flexibility and freedom to its customers. The space provided within each junction box; the large distribution and warehousing space; and the freedom to customise almost any product, irrespective of quantity, all equates to “Space for you”.

About Spelsberg

Spelsberg is one of the largest manufacturers of electrical enclosures in the world. With over 4,000 enclosures available as standard and further customisation possible, it offers solutions for almost any application.

With the largest supply of non-metallic enclosures, ex-stock in the UK, its products are often available for delivery within 24 hours; customisation is possible on any product, including bespoke entries, engraved corporate logos or fitted terminals, within 48 hours. Products can be ordered direct from Spelsberg or from most leading supply specialists including RS, Rapid, Farnell and CPC.

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