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Anton Cabinetry succeeds with strong teamwork, wide range of services

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By Karen Koenig



Anton Cabinetry manufactures commercial casework and millwork for a wide range of customers including Cook Children's Medical Center in Ft. Worth.

Success for our "Best of the WOOD 100" selection Anton Cabinetry can be summed up by one word: teamwork.

"We all work as a team -- it's definitely not any one person," says John Anton, president of the Arlington, TX-based firm. "It takes a concerted effort by everyone in the division."

The "team player" concept is found throughout all phases of a project, beginning with the estimating and bidding process. "It helps us lock in on a lot of projects," Anton says. "We

get engaged with the owners and contractors right away, which allows us to see any potential problems and issues early on. We then can work early to resolve them," he adds.

"It all stems from relationships," echoes Joey Anton, vice president of operations. "We're constantly trying to build new relationships and maintain existing ones," oftentimes leading to additional business from referrals.

Contractors often will recommend Anton Cabinetry for projects because of its ability to provide full service capabilities to commercial casework and millwork customers. These include: design, manufacturing, finishing, assembly, electrical and installation.



An overview of the assembly area highlights the diverse nature of the jobs running through the shop on any given day.

Steady Growth Chart

Anton Cabinetry's reputation as a full service provider of quality products resulted in a 2008 sales growth of 31 percent over the previous year -- and 2009 looks to have another double-digit increase as well, with projections calling for sales in excess of \$17 million.

What makes this even more remarkable, John says, is that in the company's 35 years of business, only once have sales decreased. "That was when I was strictly doing residential work, back in the 1980s," he says, and was affected by the real estate downturn in the residential market. Soon after, the company transitioned its production to strictly commercial projects.

"The commercial market is less volatile. It also helps that we know what we're doing nine months from now. We know where the voids [in scheduled production] are and we can go find jobs to fill them," John says.

Anton Cabinetry's work history highlights its expertise in projects for high-use areas, such as hospitals, banks, schools and movie theaters. Currently, commercial casework accounts for 40 percent of Anton Cabinetry's production, with architectural millwork and theater projects each at 30 percent.

"Our average job is between \$200,000 and \$300,000-plus," says John. In the past year, projects have ranged from \$20,000 to more than \$1 million.

"We're not a typical casework manufacturer," Joey adds. "We will do whatever the customer wants."

Still, John adds, while many of his competitors are cutting prices and "buying projects," Anton Cabinetry is working hard to maintain high profit margins.

"It comes back to our reputation. We've been very blessed that, in the past few years, we've been able to pick and choose quality jobs," he adds.



A Holzma HPP 350 panel saw cuts panels to size and generates labels detailing the name of the customer as well as all pertinent data for subsequent manufacturing.

Manufacturing Process

At any given time, there may be 20 to 30 diverse jobs in process on the production floor. "You'll never be bored working here," John jokes.

Inside the 60,000-square-foot shop, employees are cross-trained, enabling the company to move them as needed and eliminate any bottlenecks. Quality control is a priority, and is performed at each machining station and during assembly, with a final inspection by the quality control inspector prior to shipping.

The use of technology is integral to Anton Cabinetry's success. The company uses TradeSoft's ProjectPAK software for estimating and bidding, while ShopPAK is utilized for tracking, purchasing, inventory control, shipping and billing. "It has helped provide us with true costing and enables us to order inventory per job," John says.

Cabinet Vision and Cabnetware software from Planit Solutions are used in the design and manufacturing process. "Our cabinets are designed with the integrity of the box in mind and ease of installation," Joey says.

In the cutouts/panel processing area, MDF and particleboard sheets are cut-to-size on a Holzma HPP 350 saw equipped with Cut-Rite software and label-making capabilities. The company works with both laminates and veneer, and will typically lay up its own laminate using an Evans 0256 pinch roller and Midwest Automation glue line.

Edgebanding is performed on a single-sided Homag KAL310. Because of the diverse nature of Anton Cabinetry's work, the company required a machine capable of banding solid wood as well as various widths of plastic edgebanding.

Also in this section are two Northwood CNC routers, an NW-125 Iron Horse and NW-255, for nested-based machining. In addition to maximizing panel usage, the nesting capabilities are critical in projects involving the use of cutouts and inlays.

Adjacent to the cutout area is milling, where Anton Cabinetry manufactures its moulding and solid wood components. The company has a Mikron Multi-Moulder to produce small runs of mouldings, while outsourcing large production runs as needed. Also in this section is the door and drawer area, utilizing a Koch Sprint PTP-2 boring and doweling machine, a Mereen-Johnson 1105-F dovetailer and case clamp, and Dodds dovetail gluer. Sanding is performed on a Bütfering SKO213 sander.

The recently purchased LT-55XL Laser Products laser templator has already had an impact on the company's work and was integral in the manufacture and matching of "miles" of moulding for a recent job.

Anton Cabinetry performs finishing in-house, using a multi-step application system. In addition to hand sprayers, the company recently purchased a Dubois finishing system.

Not content to rest on its laurels, John says the company hopes to add to its capabilities in the near future through the purchase of additional equipment and supplies, along with a possible plant expansion.

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