

NEW WORKBENCHES HELP SENTRAL ASSEMBLIES IMPROVE ITS IMAGE

Sentral Assemblies & Components, Inc., located in Lincolnshire, Illinois, is in the business of assembling custom solutions for users with very specific, unique and often complex needs. So when it came time for Sentral to assemble a solution for its own important needs - the creation of a productive workspace for their final assembly areas – the company did not take the problem lightly.

A leading manufacturer of interconnect assemblies and related products (including wiring harnesses, power cords, wire leads and sets, electromechanical assemblies, box builds, and data, signal and interconnect cables), Sentral does whatever it takes to produce custom products on-time. What they refer to as “passionately serving their customers” includes a willingness to invest in new equipment to meet customer application needs and schedules.

According to William Schlitz, Sentral’s former operations manager, “Sentral values the relationships it has with its suppliers. The relationship simply can’t be about who’s giving you the lowest price. The company expects integrity, dependability and quality, at a fair price.”

The same thinking holds true for Sentral’s equipment vendors. Schlitz, whose multiple management functions included engineering, quality, production, and purchasing, was committed to investing in the best people as well as the most advanced technology. He knew that Sentral needed to invest in workbenches for final assembly that were as professional-looking as they were efficient.

“It was essential for Sentral to project a consistently professional, high-quality image, for our customers as well as our employees,” said Schlitz. “Sentral is a modern, high-tech facility, and all of our equipment needs to reflect that.”

To maximize efficiency and employee comfort, as well as aesthetics, Schlitz turned to Pro-Line of Haverhill, Massachusetts. Recognized throughout the industry as a leader in ergonomic workbench design, Pro-Line’s achievements include the production of the first hand-crank, height-adjustable tables in 1987.

Prior to the Pro-Line purchase, Sentral had been relying on a relatively inefficient system of basic tables for final assembly - workbenches that really brought very little “to the table.” Sentral’s dramatic upgrade included the purchase of 12 fully loaded Dimension Next expandable, modular, double-sided workbenches from Pro-Line to create 24 workbenches.

“The Dimension Next workbenches allowed Sentral to achieve its primary goal of providing a clean, well-lit, organized and efficient workspace for each of the operators,” Schlitz explained. “In the final assembly area, technicians were often performing some very complex electronic hand-assembly work. These are not high-volume assembly lines. When operators perform tasks like hand-crimping or hand-soldering, a clean and organized workspace is essential.”

Pro-Line’s Dimension Next expandable modular workbenches, available in both single-sided and double-sided versions, feature a heavy-gauge steel frame for superior strength and support. Their durability and high-tech aesthetic appeal are enhanced by the workbenches’ textured beige powder coat finish with blue accent strips.

Schlitz was particularly pleased with the diverse functionality of the Dimension Next benches. “The workbenches we bought are fully loaded with accessories that make all the needed hand tools, crimping tools, gloves and other equipment readily accessible,” he said.

The optional modular accessories of this series let users configure each bench to meet their needs. With the workbenches' solid, slotted aluminum uprights, work surface or optional accessories can be mounted anywhere along the column without the use of tools. The accessories being utilized at Sentral's final assembly area include height-adjustable, pivoting footrests, eight-outlet power strips, black parts bin holders, overhead light fixtures and frames, and adjustable metal shelves. In addition, each workbench features a lockable, modular drawer, which provides a safe and secure home for an array of operator tools.

Pro-Line's workbenches are renowned for their ergonomic safety, and the Dimension Next series is no exception. All of the work surfaces and accessories on these double-sided workbenches' adjust independently of each other. Schlitz saw this as an important benefit, despite the lack of consistent repetitive motion in the final assembly area.

"There isn't the high risk of injury in this department you'd find in a more high-volume production area," Schlitz explained. "But operator comfort and stress reduction are still of the utmost importance. We have multiple operators using each workbench on different shifts, and it was great to be able to adjust the modular elements of each workbench to suit individual needs.

"Plus, the operators took a great deal of pride in knowing they are working at such professional-looking and attractive workbenches. Sentral's top-of-the-line Pro-Line equipment was definitely good for employee morale."

Sentral's tagline on the homepage of the company's Web site is: "We supply peace of mind, one assembly at a time." Clearly the company is also receiving peace of mind from its workbench investment. By making the interconnection with Pro-Line, Sentral has assembled a smooth-running, attractive and productivity-enhancing final assembly area that's beneficial to customers and employees alike.

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