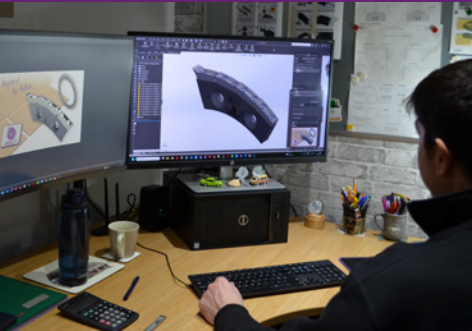


# A COMPANY PROFILE

MANSFIELD BOARD MACHINERY



**M**ansfield Board Machinery Ltd (MBM) is a long-established, UK-based specialist in the design, manufacture, and supply of knives, tooling, and equipment for the global corrugated board industry. Established in 1978 and based in Northampton, the company has grown over more than four decades to become a recognised supplier, serving a worldwide network of converters, agents, and distributors.

For most of its history, MBM was a family-run business, with the Mansfield family at the helm, notably Ian and Paula Mansfield, who served the company for many years. This foundational heritage focused on quality, service, and a deep understanding of the corrugated industry. The company's enduring success has been built on its experience and commitment to providing high-standard products and bespoke solutions.

A significant recent development occurred in March 2024, when the company underwent a Management Buyout, as Ian and Paula's children did not want to join the company and pursue other careers. Ownership therefore transitioned to a new team - Nikki Bratherton, Kevin Dartnell, and Becca Dartnell - all of whom were long-standing employees. This MBO maintained the company's commitment to remaining a family-run business and continuing its focus on precision manufacturing and reacting swiftly to the corrugated industry's evolving demands.

Nikki Bratherton



Kevin Dartnell



Becca Dartnell

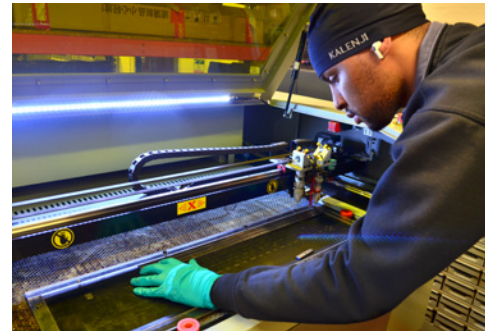


## Product and Service Overview

MBM's core business revolves around providing high-quality tooling and parts used in the manufacturing of corrugated products. Their experienced technical design and engineering team utilises CAD/CAM and CNC equipment to produce components to standard specifications or with enhanced, innovative features to address specific customer or industry challenges.

Key products and services include:

- **Knives and Tooling:** the company supplies a comprehensive range of precision-engineered knives and tooling for various corrugated machinery (feed, slot, print, and die-cut). This includes upper and lower slot knives, slitting knives and bosses, creaser rings and bosses, and chop blades.
- **Specialised Systems:** the company is known for proprietary innovations like the SHOK BLOK® system, a 'fit and forget' tooling solution designed to achieve perfect stitch and glue flap cutting, significantly reducing machine downtime and box rejects.
- **Machine Parts:** MBM manufactures and supplies high-quality components for a vast range of OEM machines from major manufacturers like BOBST, TCY, Emba, BW Papersystems, offering parts such as kicker springs, poly feed wheels, and die-cut blankets.
- **Doctor Blades:** they are a key distributor in the UK and Ireland for advanced material doctor blades, such as the TruPoint corrugated blades, used in flexo printing machinery.



“We are spending more time working with engineering teams in box plants and helping them enhance their own operations by seeing first hand the benefits of using our solutions.”

NIKKI BRATHERTON

■ **Services:** beyond manufacturing, MBM offers services like specialist design and manufacturing for bespoke parts, as well as an effective knife reconditioning process to help customers save money and prolong the life of their tooling.

### Slowly Introducing Change

“A management buy-out can be an exciting time for a company and its new owners, but we wanted to be really careful about how much change we made to the structure of the business and the way we do things,” explains Nikki Bratherton. “MBM had a really great reputation with customers around the world, and we didn’t want to make any radical changes when we took over. But what we have done in the first 18 months or so was to reassure agents, distributors, groups and individual customers that it was business as usual, keeping our focus on quality. We also reintroduced Key Account Managers, helping us get in front of customers more frequently. We are spending more time working with engineering teams in box plants and helping them enhance their own operations by seeing first hand the benefits of using our solutions. It has been really well received by company owners and operators alike.”

“To improve the efficiencies internally, we rolled out changes in our manufacturing and warehousing

set up; we introduced some changes to processes that have resulted in enhanced reaction and delivery times across the portfolio of products. Reaction time is something we knew we could improve and our customers seem to be happy with the enhanced service levels,” adds Beccy Dartnell. “We effectively created two mirror lanes within the warehouse, meaning we could double the output for shipping of components to customers and distributors.”

“We’ve also promoted some of our key people and created a new team of middle management to assist us,” continues Kevin Dartnell. “By empowering our management team, it frees up precious time for the Directors to work on business development and focus on research and development.”

### R&D to the Fore

MBM have always been well known as a solutions-driven business. The company is agile and responds to customer feedback, as well as things their engineers might see in the field. “Each of our products is the result of dialogue with customers,” says Kevin Dartnell. “Over the years, we have designed products like Shok Blok and Piranha, that have pretty much become household names. Development work is in our DNA, and we will be launching a new product called Armadillo to the market in the coming month



– just another example of how we listen to our customers and design solutions to help them improve their productivity and quality.”

Another example of how MBM has worked with customers is the Knife Management System – KMS. “It was during COVID that we had contact with customers who wanted to order lots of stock parts in case of emergency,” says Beccy Dartnell. “We designed a tool cabinet system, equipped with all the components we thought the customer would need, based on which converting machines they had, and we sold several of these KMS to customers in the UK. The feedback was amazing from the pilot installations; so much so, we enhanced the offering and created a replenishing subscription model, meaning that the KMS is kept stocked with the correct amount of tooling. The unit can be kept near the converting line for easy access by operators, helping reduce downtime when maintaining the lines.”



### Next Steps

Investment is ongoing; since the management buy-out, the new owners continue to add new equipment, such as grinding technology and larger format machines that can make more parts in a single pass. “With the latest technology, we can make modifications and changes to items faster than any other supplier out there,” says Kevin Dartnell. “In ramping up our production, we are also able to create new engineering alliances that help the global industry at large.”

The next two years will see MBM enter its 50th year, a landmark anniversary for any company; but this company will be using the

anniversary to launch the next stage of its growth. “It is clear from our current location that we are starting to groan at the seams,” says Nikki Bratherton. “We are landlocked on the two units and there is no scope for increasing our footprint, so to this end, we are now looking to move MBM into a new facility in the coming 18 months or so. This shows our team that we are committed to growth and for our customers and distributors, it shows that we are ready for the next 50 years, as we cement the company as the ‘go-to’ when it comes to knife and tooling consumables for the global corrugated industry. We are all very excited,” she concludes. ■

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