

# Q&A: Reducing the cost of long-term manufacturing

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MPN spoke with Chris Tellers, Rapid Development Center director, Trelleborg Healthcare & Medical to learn out about the company's recently launched Rapid Development Center in Delano, Minnesota.



Why has Trelleborg just launched its Rapid Development Center?

We created the Rapid Development Center (RDC) to enable customers to accelerate the time to market and reduce the production cost of parts for healthcare and medical devices. The desire to launch products faster is not a huge surprise, but we saw a disconnect between the cost of parts designed by development or design houses and our customers' desire to reduce the cost of long-term manufacturing. Generally, as much as 80–90% of the manufacturing cost is designed into the product. When customers engage the Trelleborg RDC early in the development process, we can minimise the built-in costs, ensure high-quality parts, and deliver a smooth transition from the design phase to long-term, serial production.

### **What exactly does the Trelleborg RDC offer customers?**

For healthcare and medical customers who want to be the first to market with innovative technologies, the team creates samples in as little as 24 hours. This enables multiple design iterations, as well as superior performance and quality, while ensuring effective and rapid scale-up to production.



Trelleborg's primary experience is in high volume manufacturing, which allows us to employ Design for Manufacturing (DfM) principles from previous lessons learned. As a result, we can develop manufacturing processes that are efficient and cost-effective and can be successfully transition from design to full-scale production. We partner with our customers' development teams, creating a relational environment and consulting with them to develop designs and processes to best realise their objectives.

### **What technologies does Trelleborg use to help expedite development?**

Trelleborg has decades of experience in manufacturing silicones, thermoplastics and metals. Our experts leverage their knowledge of processes, materials and tooling to quickly convert complex designs into prototypes that can be manufactured at scale and at the lowest possible cost.

The RDC offers several core competencies critical to medical device and pharmaceutical component development, including design

consultation, toolmaking, high-precision machining, silicone and thermoplastic molding, assembly, and other secondary operations.

When partnering with the Trelleborg RDC, our medical device customers have access to manufacturing facilities with raw material traceability and Class 7 cleanrooms. These facilities are ISO 13485:2016 and ISO 9001-certified and meet requirements from the Food and Drug Administration and European Medical Device Regulation.

### **What's next for Trelleborg?**

As we continue to work with our healthcare and medical customers at the RDC, we will adapt our processes and offerings to best serve their needs. In fact, we are already looking to add additional materials, capabilities and services in the near future.

Since beginning operations in early 2021, the RDC has already completed 11 unique solutions, built nine tools, and shipped 1,259 parts, with some parts being delivered as quickly as within 4 business days.

We were able to achieve this because we are not limited by machine availability, and our processes are streamlined for speed to help our customers receive parts in hand quickly. For example, we invested in two presses for the RDC to aid in our quick turn capability.

Looking to the future, we will continue to support our customers with their rapid development projects, review and invest in new technologies, and train our team to improve the diversity of our skills. We plan to add additional experts to the RDC team in 2022.

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