

# *eCabinet Systems*

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4

MEMBER MAGAZINE

## **PRODUCTIVITY**

**...A REALLY GOOD THING**

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# eCabinet Systems

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MEMBER MAGAZINE

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# PRODUCTIVITY

BY KEN SUSNJARA

**T**he theme of this issue of the user magazine is productivity. Based on news articles and the talking heads on TV, productivity must be a really good thing. It seems to be key to overall economic prosperity and is something that economists and the government seems to keep fairly close track of, but does it really have anything to do with the woodworking business or custom cabinet shops?

Actually it does. In fact, it can be really important. Productivity is basically a measure of how much you get out versus how much you put in. Normally productivity is measured against labor. It is a measure of the dollar value you get out for each hour of direct labor. Obviously, the more you produce with each hour of labor the more profitable you will be.

It is also obvious that we should try to maximize the amount we produce for each hour of labor in our shops, but exactly how do we do this in a smaller shop?

If we look at the various tasks we perform in our daily work we find that they generally fall into one of two categories. We can call the first category “useful” labor. This is anything you do that increases the value of the product. When you glue two pieces together,

the resulting assembly is worth more than the individual pieces so the gluing process is “useful”.

The second category we can call “useless” because it is labor that doesn’t increase the value of the product. To understand this let’s look at another example. Suppose we want to drill a hole in a board. Bringing the board to the drill is “useless”. Positioning the board in the drill is “useless”. Actually drilling the

hole is “useful”, because it changes the product, making it more valuable. Removing the board is “useless” and stacking it is also “useless”.

Based on this criterion, it appears that the vast majority of our labor is “useless”. If you really examine the character of “useless” labor you will find it is almost al-

ways something we do to try and prepare to do something “useful”. The other characteristic of useless labor is that if you can find a way to eliminate it, you don’t affect the value of the product at all.

There are actually two ways to increase productivity. One way is to eliminate “useless” labor and a second approach is to make “useful” labor do more or do it faster. Of the two, the most promising target is eliminating “useless” labor, just because there is so much of it. So how do we do this?

**Productivity is basically a measure of how much you get out versus how much you put in.**

The easiest and most rewarding starting point for most shops is to do a work flow analysis. This is something that few small shops ever do. Basically what we do is look at the layout of the shop and examine how jobs flow between the various machines and areas of the shop. To do this properly you need an overview diagram of the shop on which you can draw lines denoting the movement of people and material. Try some different layouts and attempt to minimize or eliminate movement. Every step and every movement you save between operations is saved every time you use those operations. Almost any shop can increase productivity 5-10% with this simple effort and most will see even more improvement.

Another approach is to try to combine operations. If you can pick up a part and do two or three things to it instead of just one, you eliminate the useless load, unload and transfer labor associated with the additional operations.

Another technique that works on certain tasks is to convert the task from something that you must become involved with to one in which you don't need to be involved. This needs some explanation.

Generally with custom work, you must become involved with each part. That means in order to process it you must know the part, what it is, perhaps its dimensions and how it is used. Many times you must measure, mark and cut. In volume factory production, the workers are seldom involved with a part. They simply take the blank, place it in a machine which then does it's thing and then they remove it. The machine and its set up determine what happens to the part and there is no need for the operator to either know or understand. They do not have to become involved.

As a general rule, if you don't have to become involved with a part, productivity is three to four times higher. For anything that you might do in volume, it makes sense to set up operations where parts can just

be loaded and processed. This might mean stops for the chop saw or dedicated hinge drills for doors or drill fixtures for mounting drawer slides, or the like. These types of tools dramatically improve productivity provided you don't have to search for them when you need them.

This concept of not becoming involved with the parts is one of the major reasons that CNC routers have proven to be three to four time more productive than manual machining of custom cabinet parts. When a nested based job is sent to the machine, it nests the parts and cuts them without the operator becoming involved with each part. He simply loads the sheet, labels and unloads the finished parts. There is no need to know anything about the parts as they are being processed.

This is also one of the major reasons we have put so much effort into the job level link between the design software and the machine. We send a single job file for the entire job and let the machine control sort things out. The operator doesn't need to get involved with a program file for each and every part. In the older systems every nest and every flip operation was a different program file so the operator had to get involved, and that reduces productivity dramatically.

Whether you focus on it or not, productivity has a major impact on your profits. You might be surprised at the positive results if you simply stop every once in a while and focus on exactly how you process a job. □

# AMERICAN VISU - THERMWOOD TECHNOLOGY BUILDS FURNITURE



## American Visu Camillia Wall Systems ▲

For some time now, Thermwood has been promoting furniture manufacturing to eCabinet Systems Members using the software and Thermwood's CNC routers. Recently, Thermwood developed a mini factory consisting of two furniture production cells and a small finishing line. The primary purpose for this installation was to conduct furniture training classes. As we reported in earlier editions of the Member Magazine, these cells were initially used to make all the furniture for Thermwood's new office building to prove out and refine the technology.

As sometimes happens, the best laid plans sometimes go awry. When the first two furniture classes were scheduled and advertised, there was not enough interest to conduct either. We have also been unsuccessful in promoting our ideas to the traditional furniture industry. We didn't want all the work we have done over the last ten years to go unused and it was clear that we needed a new direction.

While considering what to do next, a Canadian company that made a line of avant-garde contemporary furniture ceased operations suddenly, leaving an independent marketing organization desperate for product. They contacted Thermwood and asked if they could revive the designs using Thermwood's furniture technology. Perhaps the furniture cells could be used.

To do so meant that at least five collections of furniture and at least thirteen sample pieces needed to be reproduced using eCabinet Systems. This all had to be completed in less than three weeks and all without any working drawings or dimensions. The Thermwood team took on the challenge and when the spring furniture market opened in High Point, NC three and a half weeks later, a new offering, American Visu, was there.

Thermwood plans to build the furniture using the training cells. This operation will provide machine



**American Visu Obi Entertainment Unit ▲**

and software designers with new and in-depth insight into actually using the technology they develop and offers those that visit Thermwood a view of technology they are considering working in actual production. This project will also provide a much more in-depth understanding of the finances and cost comparisons for building furniture the new way.

During the marketing build up to the High Point market, a new term was coined, “Technology Crafted”. This is being used to describe furniture that

is designed and built using software, CNC technology, the most modern techniques and American labor instead of low cost foreign labor and obsolete production methods.

The initial effort seems to have been successful. We were able to maintain the marketing organization pretty much in tact and were able to get orders to replace most of the pieces that were on retail store showrooms. As this is being written we are just starting production. The only real surprise so far is how many new ideas and new techniques we are developing as we ramp up production. We plan to make these available to eCabinet Systems Members and, where practical, incorporate them into the software and equipment we supply. In the end, it looks like everyone may benefit from these efforts. The American Visu sales organization will continue with a strong, viable furniture line, Thermwood will further refine its furniture technology enhancing the products and software we offer based on real-world experience and eCabinet Systems Members will have a source of new and innovative techniques and technology. □

**American Visu Lena Bedroom Unit ▼**



# CABINETSHOP ROUTERS

## BUILD SOME REALLY DIFFERENT PRODUCTS

In the pages of this magazine we have shown some beautiful and elaborate projects that our members have made. The variety of different projects has been wide but they all represented cabinets, furniture and other home furnishings. We thought you might like to see some other products that have been made on Thermwood CabinetShop CNC routers that are decidedly not cabinets or furniture. □

**“Thirty Two Below used a Thermwood CNC router to create, for the Addy Awards, a 4 foot ice bar at Seven-Degrees in Laguna Beach, CA on March 22, 2008” ▶**



**“Thirty Two Below uses Thermwood CNC router specially modified to machine ice inside a large freezer” ▲**



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**“Adirondak Studios has machined the interior foam core for this statue on a Thermwood CS45 with a 5'x10' table. This will be part of Krusty Land in the Simpsons ride at Universal Studios in Orlando.” ◀**

**“This statue was made by machining layer after layer of foam on a three axis Thermwood CNC router and then bonding the layers together and covering them with a fiberglass coating.” ▼**





**"Kingsland Corp uses a Thermwood CNC router to create some truly stunning projects like this elaborate church window." ▲**

**"A view of the installation process shows just how large a project can be created on a Cabinet-Shop router." ►**





**“A truly elaborate project by Kingsland Corp shows what can be done with some imagination and a Thermwood CNC router.” ▲**



**“Kingsland Corp does some truly outstanding work with their Thermwood CNC router.” ◀**

# INCREASED **PRODUCTIVITY**

## Updated Equipment Improves Small Shop's Production Process

**BY CITA SMITH**

With a total of only four employees operating out of a 3000 square foot facility, Penn Laminates is a small shop. But that's no problem for owner Troy Radencic, especially since he has seen what the CNC router and other modernized equipment can do. "We've only had the router for a few months," says Radencic, "and we've already seen a big difference. We're not afraid to take on jobs now that we never would have taken on before."

Specializing in office fixtures such as reception desks for businesses, churches, hospitals, and schools, Penn Laminates has done lots of work for Westinghouse, one of their biggest clients. Although they do a few residential kitchens a year, Troy and his staff focus on commercial work. Now in its eighteenth year of business, Penn Laminates did \$450,000 in sales last year. The company has built a solid reputation among its clients.

Like many cabinet shops, Penn Laminates started with a table saw and a couple of hand routers. Eventually they added an automatic panel saw and an edge-bander, which, according to Radencic, "sped things up a lot." But with the purchase of the CNC router last year, the company has truly expanded its capacities. "The router has given us the capability to do new kinds of work and has eliminated the need to sub out some of our work," says Radencic.

Before the router, if a client requested a desk with shaped parts like a curved front, Radencic had to secure the services of a company in another city to

cut that shape. Now Troy and his staff can do all that in-house. "The router has been a tremendous help. It has made things so much easier and allowed us to deliver our products on time," says Radencic, noting that the time factor is a crucial ingredient in customer satisfaction.

The router has also allowed Penn Laminates to branch out into making signs. Having recently purchased new sign software, Troy is now able to cut



**"Westinghouse is one of Penn Laminates largest customers."**

logos in his shop for Westinghouse and other clients as well. “We’re doing work for Giant Eagle, a grocery store chain in the Pittsburg area, and we can now cut their logo right into their store fixtures. We could never do that before.”


One of Penn Laminate’s recent jobs that Troy is particularly proud of is a large executive desk –pictured below– made for State Farm Insurance. “The whole thing,” says Radencic, “was cut on the Thermwood machine, the wood moldings and everything. It came out beautifully.”



“Troy is particularly proud of this executive desk made for State Farm Insurance”

One of the biggest challenges any shop faces today is finding good people who want to work. Radencic considers himself fortunate to have a good staff, but points out that helpful machinery such as the CNC router supplements his work staff. “Even with our small staff, we still do a heck of a lot of work, and the router has allowed the four of us here to really step up production,” states Radencic. “Our involvement with eCabinet Systems has given us the flexibility to do what we couldn’t do before. And we discover new things to do with it everyday.” □

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# THERMWOOD TO MARKET **FRAVOL** EDGE BANDERS IN THE US

That's right, Thermwood is now in the edge bander business.

The folks at Thermwood have been searching for an edge bander line for some time now but each opportunity either didn't work or the Thermwood engineers were not satisfied with the quality or engineering of the product offered. Then, a series of events brought Fraval and Thermwood together.

Fraval is an Italian manufacturer of a high quality, highly reliable line of edge banders. Fraval is also much like Thermwood in that they are technically innovative and have patented a large body of technology around the edge banding process. As a result they offer some important features that are exclusive to their line.

Thermwood's Canadian dealer has handled Fraval in Canada for about a year now and when a series of corporate mergers left them without representation in the US, it was suggested that Fraval and Thermwood might be good partners in the US market. Visits to Thermwood and to Fraval in Italy proved this to be true.

Thermwood will be the exclusive distributor for the entire Fraval line in the US. This line will be sold through Thermwood's existing CNC router distribution network since the customer base for both products is essentially the same. Thermwood will also provide all installation, training and service from its Southern Indiana headquarters. Thermwood technicians are currently being trained in Italy in every aspect of the Fraval design and technology.

Fraval offers a wide range of automatic, single side edge processing machines along with a wide selection of options designed for small to large shops. Fraval edge banders are heavy duty machines engineered to perform in the most hostile environments. They can process thin tape, 3mm PVC, HPL, aluminum and solid wood strips up to 16mm thick, perfectly suited for all edge processing applications. Fraval also offers semi-automatic edgebanders and trimming machines for edging round or curved parts. Custom machines can be ordered to meet exact requirements for manufacturing. □

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# HOW DO **YOU** STAY SUCCESSFUL?



**BY DUANE MARRETT**

Every business wants to be successful. Nobody starts a new venture with the goal of failing miserably and declaring bankruptcy. Yet once established, some companies seem to get stuck in a rut when it comes to their business practices, a rut that can cause them to fall behind their competition, make lower than necessary profits and even run the risk of financial ruin.

Whether it is a lemonade stand or a multi-million dollar corporation, all successful businesses have several things in common. They budget their time, resources and funds. They have the willingness to investigate and embrace new techniques and technology as it is developed, and they usually stay successful by realizing that anything worthwhile takes hard work and persistence.

As eCabinet Systems Members, you probably aren't afraid of new technology. Just as Rome wasn't built in a day, you can't expect to master complex software like eCabinets in a day or two. There are several ways to learn the software - You can teach yourself using our tutorial videos and learning guide, or you can attend one of our training classes or seminars. No matter which method works best for you, they all require putting in the time and effort to get the most out of the

software. Once you have this working knowledge, you are most likely periodically improving it by taking advantage of new software features and improvements as they are developed.

If you are a Thermwood CNC Router owner (or hope to be someday), you most likely can see the benefit of embracing new technology in order to be more successful in business. Owning a Thermwood CNC Router gives you the advantage of increased productivity, expanded capacity and a host of other rewards. You may be taking advantage of the Production Sharing program to increase your profits and help other Members quickly and efficiently machine parts to increase their profits. You may also participate in the Advanced Support Program to provide a host of benefits. There are numerous advantages.

Whether you are a Thermwood CNC Router owner or not, you may also be purchasing from the online eCabinet Systems Member Store at [www.woodworkerswholesale.com](http://www.woodworkerswholesale.com), where Members receive a discount on cabinet supplies and hardware from our already low prices. We have a wide selection of cabinet supplies, tooling and much more available twenty-four hours a day. We are constantly working to



**Thermwood CabinetShop 45**

enhance this offering with top vendors at very competitive prices.

If you aren't taking advantage of the Member Store, you may be doing your business a disservice. If you have a local supplier that you've been with for a while (whether in the form of a representative, or a local store), you may be losing money not only with increased pricing, but also with the lost time and productivity that it takes to select and purchase your components.

With the Member Store, you can remember your "Favorite" items from past orders, and quickly re-order. And, with Version 6.0 of eCabinet Systems, the online store will be totally integrated with the software, allowing you to quickly add any or all components from a job or assembly to your shopping cart and order right from eCabinet Systems. No forms to fill out, no catalogs to search through, just fast and

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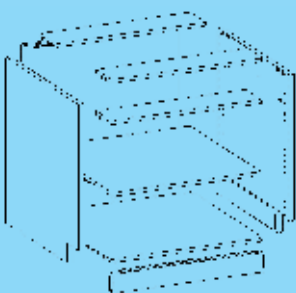
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# New Capabilities, New Business

## Thermwood Equipment Enhances the Art of Cabinet Making

**BY CITA SMITH**

Since 1961, Silhouette Cabinets of Hamilton, Ontario has been providing its clients with custom kitchen and bathroom cabinetry. Over the years the company has developed a good reputation for providing quality products at a reasonable cost. As Vice President Steve Detina puts it, “We’re a small, family-run business looking to continue to please our customers, to be dynamic, and to expand as the market allows.”

During its almost fifty years of business, Silhouette has, of course, undergone changes. Upgrading equipment is a change that has been quite beneficial to the company. Originally using table saws, dado machines, and line boring machines, the Silhouette staff would begin by rough cutting all cabinet components. Then they would fine cut everything, drill it, dado it, and prepare it for assembly. When they bought new machinery, they got rid of the old equipment, which took up floor space, and also required more time to



use.

With its purchase of a Thermwood CNC router, and a new edgebander, the company has been able to go after different types of business. Silhouette now makes not only kitchen and bathroom cabinets, but also component parts for other shops. They make MDF doors as well and have a box program in which they supply shops with either flat pack or assembled boxes.

Steve describes this shift in business as a “win-

win situation for everyone involved.” He explains, “The true craftsmen--the really good cabinet makers--are getting older. They’re tired of lifting up big sheets of plywood and going through the long process. They don’t want to make a huge investment toward the end of their careers. We can provide them with the boxes tailored to their needs and compatible with the way kitchens are currently built.”

Steve also feels that the Thermwood equipment allows his company to be more dynamic than most shops. “There are many people in this industry,” he says, “and the competition is tough. With this modern equipment, we can make changes very quickly, which helps us work more efficiently and more economically.” Steve is also pleased with the eCabinet Systems software. “Pretty much everything we cut on the Thermwood,” he says, “is using eCabinet software.” He finds it to be a good manufacturing as well as marketing tool.

Like many shops, Silhouette Cabinets has sometimes found it difficult to find good workers. But Steve feels that the Thermwood has helped his company face that challenge by simplifying the cabinet maker’s job. He states, “the machine will never replace a good cabinet maker, but it makes his job a lot easier and provides him with several avenues in which to do a lot of different things.” By eliminating some of the mundane and repetitive parts of the process, it makes the job more exciting. Says Steve, “Instead of a guy slugging 4 X 8 sheets of plywood on a table saw for two days to cut all the components for a kitchen, he can now have the kitchen cut, drilled, dadoed, and done in a few hours. Then he can start doing all the fun stuff, which is the assembly and the trim work.” □



# ECABINET SYSTEMS SEMINARS & TRAINING SCHEDULE



## eCabinet Systems Training

<b>July</b>		All eCabinet Systems courses conducted at Thermwood are 5 days and all seminars are 3 days. Sign up online at <a href="http://www.ecabinetsystems.com">www.ecabinetsystems.com</a> by selecting the "Training" tab, then click on the "Following this link" to enroll or review cost and schedule.
21-25	Thermwood Corporation	
<b>August</b>		Those registering 30 days early will merit a substantial discount. Please enter the discount code provided. Classes may be cancelled if there are insufficient registrants.
11-15	Thermwood Corporation	
18-20	Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter NW Atlanta, GA	
<b>October</b>		
7-9	Ayres Suites/Mission Viejo, CA	

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## Product Training

While training is included with the purchase of a Thermwood CNC router, we also provide training for newly hired personnel and ongoing training for upgraded/updated equipment. The training course emphasizes setup and operation of the CNC, familiarization with the machine language and programming methods, and a basic understanding of the capabilities of the Thermwood CNC Control.

While the standard class for Operator/Programmer training is five (5) days, other types of training, such as maintenance and tramping can be arranged on an as needed basis.

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# KERRY'S CORNER

## The Science of Productivity (Or how to “Git-R-Done”)



BY KERRY FULLINGTON

Productivity has been on my mind a lot lately. As a one man shop, I just can't get enough product out of the door fast enough to be truly profitable. To help with this problem I have utilized time tracking software to record and analyze how I spend my time. Because I work alone I must make the most of every minute of every day.

The following is a written record of my thought process throughout a typical day at work for you to see how my studies into productivity have helped me stay focused and disciplined. This is written as me speaking to myself. (Inside my head mostly but sometimes I do mumble the words out loud.)

What! That can't be the alarm already; I just got to sleep after working on bids all night. Never enough sleep. I had better get the computers fired up while I start coffee. You know Kerry, your system of using three computers for bids is pure genius, one for nothing but eCabinets keeps it lean and mean, and having one for the bid spread sheet is a lot better than jumping from window to window and that leaves one always connected to the Internet to purchase hardware and look up product spec sheets. Three screens, three monitors, three keyboards and three mice with no waiting, that's the way to get work done.

I might as well take a look at the headline news and weather while I wait for eCabinets to load my job. Hmm, Clint Eastwood and Spike Lee are feuding again. Ooh, a video of a dog surfing I guess I can

open my email while I wait for that to download. Nothing but a bunch of spam and a note from Ken Susnjara about my Member Magazine article, it has been so hectic at work lately I don't know when I'll find time to get that written, especially with all the questions on the forum today. I don't know what Thermwood would do if I didn't take care of all those problems for them. Boy it's getting late, I need to get to the shop and I guess I won't have any time to work on bids this morning. Better check my email before I go.

I hate it when I get to the shop late. I really need to get this job finished so I can collect. Sure wish I would have had time to work on bids this morning so I could order the materials on that next job. Maybe there will be time tonight. I have to finish cutting out the boxes but darn, I stacked all of the face frame material on top of my lift of plywood last night while I was making room for the order of doors that might come in this week. Sure wish I had checked tracking on that order this morning while I was on the internet. No problem, I can do that at lunch. I have the planer set up for moldings but I had better switch back to the planer knives so I can surface all the face frame stock and get to my plywood. It would be a waste of time putting the lumber in the rack now. Before I start ripping face frames though, I will have to go back to the office and print out my cut list. I didn't plan cutting hardwood today. Oh well, that is the nice thing about

living in a small town, my shop is only a couple of miles from home.

This eCabinets software is great; using it to calculate my cut lists has really boosted my productivity in the shop. I don't know what I would do without it. Since I am here in the office I might as well check my email while I wait for the eCabinets computer to start up. I sure hope the Democrats pick a candidate soon; I'm tired of reading about all of this political stuff. What does it matter anyway, I didn't have time to register. Good Grief! Would you look what that Britney is up to now, she and Paris and Lindsay need a real job like mine and they wouldn't have time to get into trouble. Oh no, my printer is out of ink, I guess I'll have to go to the office supply before I can print my cut list. Better check the forums before I go.

Can you believe it is lunch already? I can work on my bids after I eat and right after I set those guys on the forum straight. There goes the phone. I hate it when customers call during lunch. If they had any idea how busy I was they wouldn't bother me. Their bid will be done when it gets done. Gosh! 1:30 already. You know I really should have finished running all of that molding this morning before I switched back to the planer knives. They are supposed to pick those up this evening. I had better re-set the molder knives and get it done. All of this setup time is what is killing me. I need some more equipment. There is only so much one man can get done in a day. Great, only 3:30 and I have all of the molding ready to go. Since it is break time I think I'll run home and print an invoice to give those guys when they pick it up. No sense wasting time with the US Postal Service and I need to check my email anyway. Dang, a low fuel light, I have to stop and fill up with \$4.00 a gallon gas and I haven't made a dime today. I need to get this truck checked out, it really drinks the fuel and I never drive anywhere but to the shop.

Sure glad I got ink for the printer this morning. I can print my invoice and get right back to the shop.

Hey, I wonder if that guy on the forum ever got his pulls to attach to the drawer fronts. I had better check while I look at my email. Being an eCabinets Guru sure can be a burden. Still nothing but spam, maybe I should call my ISP and see if something is wrong with my mail. Oh well, I'll do that tomorrow, I need to get back to the shop before my customer comes to pick up that molding. What is that note on the door?

*"Kerry,  
Came for the moldings and you weren't here, I guess we'll find them somewhere else."*

Can you believe that, you break your back trying to get a job done and that's the thanks you get. What a day, it's almost 5:00 now and I'm too tired to set up the planer again so I think I'll just stack the lumber in the rack where I can get to the plywood in the morning. I've got to get some help. I don't know why everyone thinks a CNC router would boost productivity in a shop like mine. Who would do all of my work while I watched that thing run. I think I'll just call it a day and get an early start tomorrow. I wonder if I could get email on my cell phone. □

# WHAT OUR

# MEMBERS

# ARE DOING

**E**ditor's Note: In this area we showcase some of the jobs that eCabinet Systems Members have built using the software. If you have a job you are particularly proud of please email us some comments and photos and we will try to include it in a future issue ... Thanks

## John Lashuay - Pine Island, NY

John has a great project to share with us. Here is the story in John's words.

"A Doctor wanted to change one of his guest bedrooms into a dressing room/closet for himself, and his wife would keep the master bedroom closet. I got an entire bedroom to work with to make it as functional, yet as elegant as possible."

"All material in this dressing room is 2-sided melamine for the cabinets and Impresa Thermofoil



"The eCabinet Systems images helped sell the job" ▲

for doors, drawer faces, crown and base. We placed frame-only doors in front of all the shelves in order to reduce dust on his cloths, yet still allow him to see them without opening each and every door. The customer has over 200 ties, so I designed a custom tie cabinet which holds 250 ties. There are 12 sliding tie racks on full extension slides so they can be slid out of the cabinet to be viewed."

"eCabinet Systems really sold this job more than I thought possible. I was able to show the tie cabinet open with some of the tie racks slid out, and many other key features of the dressing room. I have found that there is much less explaining to be done as I spend more time designing different jobs. This software has been a tremendous benefit to our company, and I look forward to seeing what else we can do with it."

"Here is the finished job, looks just great!" ►





## John Desmond - Joplin, MO

John is getting ready to start his own shop. Here is a job he did for himself that clearly shows he has what it takes to be successful.

“My wife wanted a cabinet that would house our children’s books. She also wanted to house a computer and be able to shut the cabinet so that the computer would not be seen. The design you see now is the one we went with. The feet and the tambour door were after-thoughts. The venture began each lunch time one at a time. I built it in the shop I work in because at this time, I have no shop of my own. It took about two months to complete. The interior parts are made from 1/2” obechee and the finished ends and lumber are Alder. It is stained SW Rich Mahogany and finished with conversion varnish. It turned out just as I had designed in eCabinet Systems. It looks almost exactly like the presentation view. I am about three months from opening a shop. Furniture is my passion while I will do kitchen cabinets also.”



“The eCabinet Systems design shows what the armoire will look like.” ▲



“The finished armoire houses books and a computer and looks just great.” ▲



**"Black sides add visual interest." ▲**

### **Joe Dusel - Vista, CA**

Joe offers us a glimpse of his newest product, a shoe bench that addresses the emerging market for "green" furniture. Joe's company, Woodistry's latest shoe bench design is the Takebako (tah-kay-bah-ko). In Japanese "take" means bamboo and "bako" means box. Joe says, "We are pretty excited about this shoe bench since it is our first one made entirely of environmentally friendly bamboo plywood." The version shown is made using amber bamboo and features black painted sides to give the piece a lot of visual interest.

The shoe bench is constructed using Hafele Rafix RTA hardware so that they can be shipped flat packed. This reduces shipping costs, plus it decreases the likelihood of shipping damage. Joe says that making a piece like this would have been extremely difficult without having it done on Trueline Cabinetry's Thermwood router. Trueline Cabinetry is owned by Production Sharing members Rob and Jamie Glenn in Ramona, California.



**"Dave does great work in a small shop with the help of eCabinet Systems." ▲**



**"The actual piece can be disassembled for shipping." ▲**

### David Coleman - Joplin, MO

“Here’s a job just recently completed. The family was in a fix and tried to go to one of the local Big Box stores. The only thing they came away with was a catalog and a black and white 3-D rendering of their future kitchen. Then in stepped eCabinet Systems! They were under a 3-week deadline in order to get their granite. Someone I had previously done a kitchen for gave them my name. They called me and within one week I gave them a bid that beat the competition by 30-35%. I got the job and they got a nice Cherry kitchen. We’re both happy. Thank you eCabinet Systems! By the way, I’m still in a 20’x20’ Garage.”



“Pretty cabinets on a tight time table, and competitively priced too”. ▲

Beautiful work Dave, and from such a small shop!

## Buy or Rent

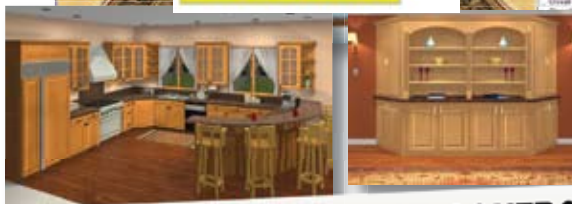
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# eCab World

BY DAN EPPS

## How to Get the Most Out of the Forum

This forum is a great resource for learning about eCabinet Systems software. There are members of all skill levels from beginners that have just received the software and are in the process of installing it to veterans that have used the software from the very first version.

You can make your experience most rewarding by following a few simple guidelines that will help you to get the most out of the forum.

## Get to Know the Community

Take a little time to read several of the threads and get the feel of the forum. Get to know the members and their personalities a little. Some members are pretty quiet and “talk” little but what they say is always on-target. Others like to joke around a little but still provide serious and equally useful information. It is pretty much the same mix of people you would expect to find in a face-to-face shop setting.

One thing you will always find however is someone willing to help you solve a problem. Many times you will get several replies offering different methods of approaching the same issue and you can choose the method that best suits your situation.

## Search for an Answer

Before you post your question, think it out in advance. Just what is your question? What are you having a problem doing? Then use the Search link at the top of the page and see if that question has already been answered.

Keep your search terms simple and as broad as you can. Broad searches yield more results than narrow searches. For example “cabinet AND side AND messed AND up” may not return any results while “cabinet AND side” will return many results. You can

then browse through the results returned by the search to see if any of them answer your question.

Notice the use of the word AND in the search term. This is a keyword that means the search results must contain the words “cabinet AND side”. You can also use OR meaning that results can contain either word; or NOT meaning results must contain the first word but not the second word.

Another way to search is by author. If you remember seeing an article posted by a particular member you can enter that member’s name in the author box, with or without any of the other search terms above.

## I Couldn’t Find the Answer—Now What?

Okay, you’ve searched for your question and can’t find the answer—now what? Post your question in the forum. Many times members will sit on the sidelines with a problem hoping someone else will post their question because they are afraid to post it themselves for any of numerous reasons.

It could be because they don’t have the best spelling or grammar—we don’t care about that. It could be because they think their problem is “too beginner” for the “forum pros”. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, you will see everyone reaching out to newcomers to welcome them into the community and make them feel welcome in a way you have probably never experienced before.

These might be shops that you compete with “on the street” but here we are all part of the same family, dedicated to seeing each other succeed with eCabinet Systems. We aren’t competing; we are helping family members to be successful and productive.

## There are So Many Forums, Which One Should I Use?

This is one area that confuses even forum veterans. Thermwood manages many forums dedicated to many subjects. Post your question in the wrong forum and it likely will not get the attention it deserves.

There are three main forum groups, General, eCabinet Systems Cabinetmaker's Forums and Thermwood Forums.

Here are the forums in each group and their uses:

### General

- This group has only one forum, Announcements, and is read-only. It is where Thermwood communicates important news to the community.

### eCabinet Systems Cabinetmaker's Forums

- eCabinet Systems Software
  - o Discussions about eCabinet Systems software go in this forum
- Design Sharing
  - o This forum is for discussions about the eCabinet Systems Design Sharing Program where members can buy and sell design libraries
- Customer Images
  - o This is the member's "brag book" for posting images of their designs or photos of finished work
- Customer 3D Files
  - o You can post or request 3D Display Object files for use in eCabinet Systems designs in this forum
- Customer Tools
  - o This forum is for posting or requesting member-created tool files used for creating profiles on cabinet parts in the eCabinet Systems Part Editor

### Thermwood Forums

- Thermwood
  - o This forum is for discussing all subjects concerning Thermwood's CNC routers

### Be Considerate

There are members from all walks of life using the forum on a daily basis. Please refrain from using language that could be offensive to anyone in any way. References to race, religion, politics, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc should never be made. Likewise any language that could be considered even slightly vulgar should be avoided. Remember, everyone is here to help and be helped, not to offend or be offended.

### DON'T SHOUT or whisper

Don't use all uppercase or lowercase letters in your post. All uppercase is considered shouting and all lowercase is considered whispering. Both make your post difficult to read.

Use normal capitalization, spacing and punctuation, just like you were writing a letter. In fact, the more clearly you write your post the more likely it will be readily understood and answered by others.

### Attach Problem Files

When posting a question about a cabinet, assembly, job, etc, attach the file to the post so that other members can more easily help you. Cabinet files end with .hsf, assemblies with .esa and jobs with .esj. Assemblies will need to be compressed before posting (right-click on the file in Explorer (File Explorer, not Internet Explorer) and choose Send To then Compressed Folder) but all other files can be posted in their original format.

### Be Specific, Give Details

Give as much detail as you can about the problem you are having. Provide specific steps that you took that cause the problem to occur. A problem that can be recreated is one that can be solved. If it is a software bug knowing the steps to recreate the problem is invaluable to the programmers in correcting the problem.

As often as not though, it will be something you did in one area conflicted with something in another area of your design. eCabinet Systems is a complex piece of software and every effort has been made to prevent such conflicts from occurring but they do happen. That is where the experience of forum members really makes for smooth sailing. It's like having a personal tour guide that knows where all of the alligators live in the swamp. You get to see them with being eaten by them.

### Hey, I Know the Answer to That

Great! If you see a question someone has posted and you know the answer, jump right on in and post a reply. That is how it all got started anyway and what makes this community so great. Everyone is just as eligible to answer questions as they are to ask them. Who knows, your answer may provide a new way

of looking at a problem that no one has thought of before.

### Problem Solved!

When your problem is solved be sure to post a reply letting everyone know that it has been solved and what the solution was. Not only is this just good manners, it helps others find solutions in the future.

I suggest that every solution should be a separate reply to the thread and have the subject and first line in the body SOLUTION

Doing this makes it easier to search for solutions in the future.

### Example:

**Subject: SOLUTION**

**Message Body: SOLUTION**

This problem was solved by changing the left end inset....

### What if the Problem is not Solved in the Forum?

As stated earlier, eCabinet Systems is a complex piece of software and no two members use it exactly in the same manner so problems do arise that cannot be solved in the forum or bugs are identified.

When this happens the issue should be sent to eCabinet Systems Technical Support with reference to the forum thread. Send an email to [cabinets@thermwood.com](mailto:cabinets@thermwood.com) with the same subject as the thread and copy the URL from the thread into the email message body as a reference for the technical support staff. To get the URL open the thread and left-click once in the address box in your browser to highlight the address. Hold the control key and press the C key. Back in your email, hold the control key and press the V key to paste the URL into the email.

Be sure to post a reply stating that the issue has been sent to technical support via [cabinets@thermwood.com](mailto:cabinets@thermwood.com).

Once technical support provides a solution please post that solution as provided above in Problem Solved so that others may benefit from the solution.

As usual, please contact me at [depps@eCabWorld.com](mailto:depps@eCabWorld.com) with any questions or comments about this article. □

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