

"Since upgrading to ITW Gema, we use 30% less powder to get the same coverage."



THE COMPANY

Handles, Inc. is a division of the Thomas Monahan Company. Since 1922, the Thomas Monahan Company has been a manufacturer of high quality wood and steel handles for brooms, mops, shovels, and other implements.

THE CHALLENGE

When Handles, Inc. began to receive new contracts for large orders, they knew they would have to install a new system to keep up with the demand for their products. Only the latest in powder coating technology would do for Handles, Inc., so they chose a system from ITW Gema.

THE SOLUTION

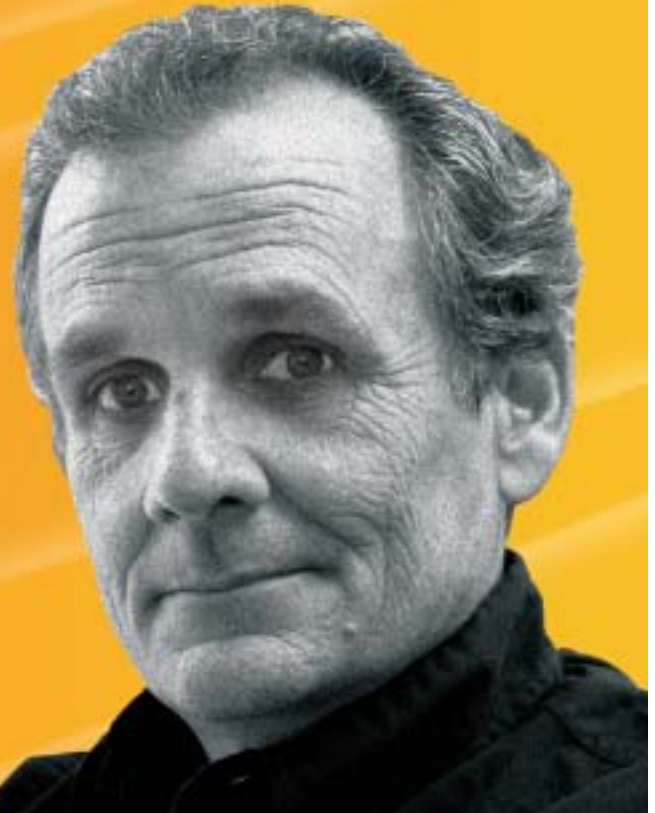
The OptiSystem™ from ITW Gema was the answer for Handles, Inc., featuring OptiGun™ automatic powder guns and OptiTronic™ Control Units. The new system also included two powder booths and two interchangeable recovery systems: one with mini-cyclone separators and one with a cartridge-style filtration system.

THE SAVINGS

Handles, Inc. now has the capability to coat **133% more parts** than they did with the old system. Taking into consideration that they also had a **30% reduction in powder consumption**, upgrading to the OptiSystem truly exceeded their expectations!

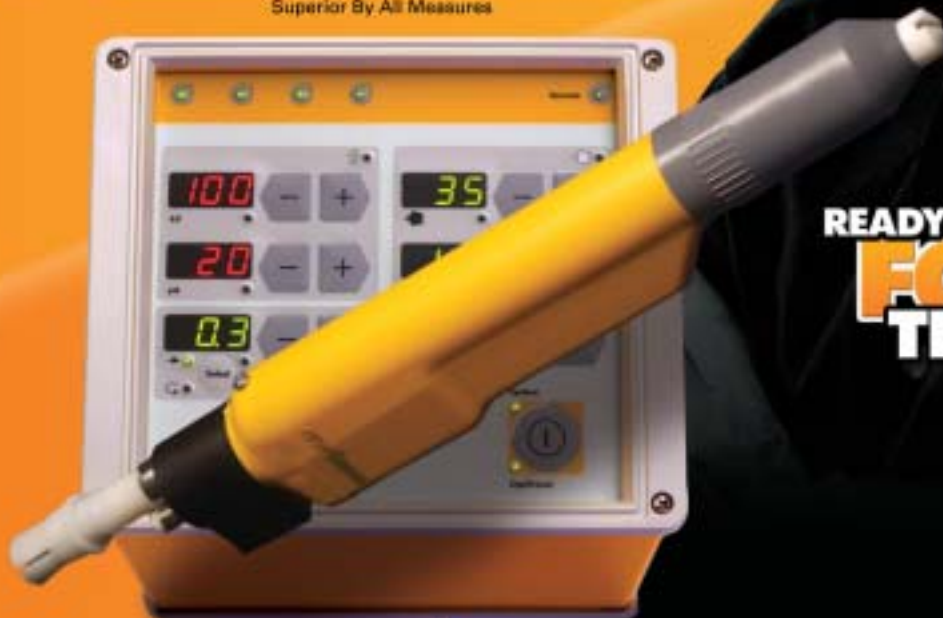
"The 5-year warranty really got our attention. Any company that stands behind their product like that has to be worth doing business with."

John Farrar, Handles, Inc.



ITW Gema

Superior By All Measures



READY TO UPGRADE?
**FOLLOW
THE LEADERS**

Leaders Like Handles, Inc.

Call 800-628-0601 and ask for Deborah or visit www.itwgema.com/upgrade for a free assessment of your powder coating operation.

Handles, Inc. Saves Money on Powder With OptiSystem™

"Flexibility is the key to fighting overseas competition!"

ITW Gema works with Handles, Inc. (a division of the Thomas Monahan Company) to demonstrate how the OptiSystem can help them offer flexibility and quality products to their customers.

A case study from Handles, Inc.

Handles, Inc., a world-wide supplier of handles for brooms, brushes and mops, invests in their future by upgrading to the OptiSystem from ITW Gema.

The upgrade has made it possible for Handles, Inc. to increase throughput by approximately 133% and has earned them a 30% savings in powder.

Company Background

Thomas Monahan of Arcola, Illinois,

founded the Thomas Monahan Company in 1922. Originally a domestic broker of broom corn, the bristly material used to make broom heads, this small, family-owned company grew into a worldwide supplier of all the parts needed to put a broom together.

In the 1970's, the company's handle business was escalating, so they formed Handles, Inc. as a division of the original Thomas Monahan Company. As wood and other raw materials became scarce, the metal handle business began to grow. Once some of their customers switched to metal, they simply never went back to wood.

Holding numerous patents for their products, Handles, Inc. strives to remain innovative and in step with the changing times as they move into the future. According to John Farrar, Project Engineer, "Flexibility is the key to fighting overseas competition – fitting what the customer wants; not making the customer fit us."

Existing Equipment and Challenges

Handles, Inc. was using a chain-on-edge system with automatic powder guns. Due to poor transfer efficiency, Handles, Inc. sprayed more powder than necessary and a great deal of powder collected on the booth floor.

Over three shifts each day, their wasted powder and lost production time associated with their recovery system was excessive.

With the new system, Handles, Inc. wanted to achieve the following:

- Increased throughput
- Better powder utilization
- Improved color change time



New Equipment Installed

ITW Gema installed two powder coating booths with roll on/off capability in a chain-on-edge configuration. Each booth contains thirteen OptiGun™ automatic powder guns operated by OptiTronic™ Control Units. These control units enable Handles, Inc. to store voltage, current, powder output, and air volume settings for up to 255 coating programs.

Two interchangeable recovery systems were also included in the new system. One is a mini-cyclone system for fast and efficient multiple-color powder recovery. The mini-cyclones are easy to clean, giving Handles, Inc. more flexibility. The second recovery system is cartridge-style for dedicated colors.



Savings

Once the upgrade was complete, Handles, Inc. began to experience increased throughput capabilities. They achieved **133% more throughput** than their old system was capable of, which was much greater than they anticipated when contemplating the upgrade.

Due to improved transfer efficiency, their powder-recovery issues were eliminated. They also have seen a **30% savings in powder consumption** due to better uniformity and film control.

Additional improvements included:

- Reduction in booth cleaning and maintenance time
- Faster color changes
- Greater flexibility for increased color demands

Future Outlook

Handles, Inc. is well known for offering innovative products to their customers. Their commitment to the spirit of inventiveness continues to drive the corporate philosophy of "...serving the broom, brush and mop industries as the best provider on a worldwide basis." Through their partnership with ITW Gema, Handles, Inc. looks toward the future optimistically, and believes their new system will enable them to produce the highest quality products at competitive prices.

