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## **Support for every project - CastAlum Ltd Relies on Service from MAPAL**

**CastAlum has been working with MAPAL on machining since 2008. Alongside tools and chucks, the tool manufacturer offers CastAlum a range of services that help the customer to achieve extraordinarily cost-effective production results.**

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Initially founded in Welshpool in Wales in 2000, CastAlum has since grown to become one of the United Kingdom's biggest die-cast aluminium businesses. "We work predominantly for the automotive industry," says Peter Radcliffe, chairman of CastAlum. The company specialises in high-volume manufacturing, working 24 hours a day, six days a week. The parts are supplied to customers in the UK, Germany, Poland, Canada and Mexico. "We recently received our first order from a truck manufacturer in the Far East," says Radcliffe, adding, "Today, one in ten vehicles produced in Europe has a steering gear housing manufactured by CastAlum."

In addition to high-pressure casting of parts, the company's 160 employees work on squeeze casting of aluminium alloys. Since 2009, CastAlum has also offered its customers part machining – the complete package, in other words. "We went into machining absolutely from scratch," recalls Radcliffe. That was why in 2008, CastAlum recruited a partner with just the expertise it needed – MAPAL.

"We chose MAPAL as our partner because it became clear that we would be getting comprehensive guidance, not just on the tools, but on all the other issues relating to machining as well. It's something we've never regretted," says Radcliffe. Not only does MAPAL supply tools and chucks to CastAlum, but they are also on hand to provide support and advice. Two employees of the tool manufacturer, service technician Luke Read Groves and sales and application engineer Ted Coyle, visit CastAlum regularly – at least once every week. Describing the process, Peter Radcliffe says, "MAPAL provides concurrent engineering advice for practically every



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RFQ that crosses our table." MAPAL offers services and technical solutions right from the very start of new projects. The tool experts analyse the entire process and try to find the most efficient way to get to the finished part. For example, they provide assistance even with the clamping setup for the parts.

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"I first came across CastAlum many years ago," recalls Ted Coyle from MAPAL UK, "when we delivered PCD tools and matching tool holders for machining a gearbox housing on HELLER machinery." To this day, CastAlum still makes this gearbox housing using MAPAL tools. It is one of six current projects for which MAPAL has taken on the complete tool management. Also alongside this there is a steering housing and a clutch housing for a well-known car manufacturer. "We have worked out a cost-per-part agreement with MAPAL. That means that we pay per part produced," explains Peter Radcliffe. In this way, CastAlum employees do not have to spend time ordering tools, taking stock or setting up repairs or reconditioning processes. "We look after all of that as part of tool management," says Ted Coyle, "and we help with breaking in the tools." CastAlum primarily uses PCD tools for drilling and milling, fine boring tools with guide pads, solid carbide drills and the clamping solutions best suited to the tasks in question, including hydraulic chucks, module adaptors and thermal shrinking chucks.

Peter Radcliffe mentions another benefit of working with MAPAL, noting that "casting material has changed quite substantially over the years. We're probably at the forefront of using additives to improve the material." This means that the cast parts are much cleaner and nicer-looking and give great durability. "We had to consult MAPAL to assure that their machining processes were suitable for the changed properties that we achieve in our castings." Ted Coyle sums up the partnership, saying, "We like to think of ourselves as solution providers and technology partners. Working with CastAlum has been a fantastic

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experience, and we've proved that we can work with customers in a way that provides the best economic production for them."

Captions:

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CastAlum in Welshpool produces castings such as this one.



Richard Blythe (right) from CastAlum and Ted Coyle, MAPAL Sales Engineer, work closely together.

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MAPAL has taken over the complete tool management for six projects at CastAlum.



CastAlum mainly uses PCD tools from MAPAL for drilling and milling.

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