

A Tool Engineer's journey to tool mastery

Episode 1:

West Coast Chipmaker Inc. (name changed) is a medium sized manufacturing outfit doing contract manufacturing mainly for the machine tool makers, the aerospace industry and some prototyping. They have 12 CNCs (milling, mill-turn, lathe), lot size range from 10 – 100 pieces. WestCoast competes on time and precision, making changeovers a bottleneck. Short chip-to-chip times are crucial for WestCoast's competitiveness.

Each of West Coast's three manufacturing/CAM engineers have at least one job to set up per day. More often than not, they need tools that are not at hand. Even if the engineer has an idea knows what type of tool she wants to use, e.g. a Ø 0,5 inch solid carbide milling cutter long enough to reach a deep pocket, what would she do? Well, start working: Searching by the dimensions in tool catalogs, both in print and online. Once she finds what might fit her needs, she

- manually compare dimensions, tool types, and manufacturer data
- looks up feeds and speeds from different sources
- types everything into the CAM-system

She's quick, so it only takes her about 20 minutes per item.

That's no fun. But hey: it's the digital age. Let's "google" the item! She gets a first-class hit at ToolsUnited. The item is displayed with a click of the mouse and all properties are clearly displayed. Copy and paste with two more mouse clicks and she's done. It takes less than 5 minutes per item. That's an incredible time saving of 75%! She only needs 8 items today. It still saves 2 hours today! *"My personal time"*, she thinks. *"Quality time I can reinvest into actual engineering work, process optimization, or reducing my engineering backlog"*.

Thank you, ToolsUnited!

But ToolsUnited goes beyond simple tool search. WestCoast became a "registered" user. ToolsUnited provides a personal workspace, the "own tools" section, where WestCoast stores all tools for repetitive use. This personal "tool cloud" became the foundation WestCoast's company-wide tool database. All of WestCoast's CAM engineers now work from the same standardized toolset. Being freed from annoying search and typing task, the fun of working at WestCoast has increased significantly. But does it make the boss happy? The ROI of the ToolsUnited invest (if you call \$3,200 an invest at all) was less than 20 days! What more could you ask for?

[Explore ToolsUnited](#)