A Tool Engineer's journey to tool mastery

Episode 2:

West Coast Chipmaker Inc. (name changed) with it's 12 CNCs (milling, mill-turn, lathe) and small lot sizes from 10 – 100 pieces has been looking for tools on ToolsUnited for over 2 years now. They liked the "own tools" section that is provided for each registered user. The CAM-engineers copy all the tools they use in the workshop into this special section. That was West Coast's starting point for a tooling database as a single source of truth for all process engineers.

But: *"I like my ToolsUnited so much, if only it had **all** the tools I need",* muses the CAM engineer who discovered ToolsUnited for WestCoast. *1,2 million SKU's on ToolsUnited is impressive, but still: There's always something missing. A property, an item, or the product range of one of our suppliers altogether.* The engineer knows that she can up-load a list of tool item no. to ToolsUnited so as to create a batch download for the required data. ToolsUnited creates a report of what was and what wasn't found. And now what?

"I want to forward that list of missing items to the respective supplier", thinks the engineer. And here is what came back from the ToolsUnited tech support: *"We up-graded your account to include the data gathering and clean up features".*

What a sensation! If I now do the same upload of all the item numbers I need, ToolsUnited not only returns what is readily available in ToolsUnited. But for items that it can't find, it sends a request to the supplier. The request includes access credentials to West Coast's "myToolsUnited" account so that they see exactly what I'm looking for. Each tool and each property clearly spect out. Now I just have to wait for the supplier to reply. And why should the supplier object? All I'm asking for is tool data in a standard format.

The lead time for data collection and cleansing has been reduced by 50%. Reportedly it took the CAM engineer 2 – 8 hours to track an item that was not in ToolsUnited. Now there's no more catalog crawling, no endless emails. Just clean, fast, digital cooperation.

With an average of 4 hours saved per missing item we saved 1,600 hours for the 400 items I needed. That adds up to **$60,000** saved.

Best of all: West Coast' tool database provides 100% of all data! That's what the boss likes.

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