

Manufacturing as a Service

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CONTEXT, a market research firm, projects that the worldwide 3D printer market (including printers, materials, and ancillary services) will grow to \$17.8 billion over the next five years. One reason for the rapid expansion is that 2D companies like Ricoh and HP are now releasing 3D machines. We reported on this trend at our April 21 symposium held at Ritz-Carlton Cleveland. We also highlighted HP's fantastic new machine in last week's THINKING IN 3D bulletin.

In other important news, UPS is partnering with technology company SAP to launch an on-demand 3D printing manufacturing network. This network marries UPS's vast logistics business with 3D printers at 60-plus UPS store locations. Besides SAP, UPS's on-demand production platform also leverages a partnership with Fast Radius, a provider of on-demand, 3D-printed parts.

Stan Deans, president of UPS's global distributor and logistics division, stated: "Additive manufacturing technology is still developing rapidly so 'manufacturing as a service' is a smart approach for many companies."

What this means is that orders can be manufactured right up until pick-up time and still delivered by UPS the next day. One can see how this will benefit manufacturers in many ways: (1) it will obviously reduce inventory (and the costs associated with carrying inventory); (2) it will sensibly accommodate short production runs for certain parts where it would otherwise cost too much to make them with traditional manufacturing methods (e.g., molds, tooling); (3) it will more effectively service the highly specialized, personalized, custom goods market; and (4) it will provide a much quicker delivery time for high quality prototypes, which can now be delivered by UPS one day after ordering them.

3D Printing will impact the way we make almost everything. Because the technology will change our clients' businesses, Benesch has formed a 3D Printing Industry Group, a multidisciplinary team led by core members of the firm's Innovations, Information Technology & Intellectual (3iP) Property Group.

For more general information and to learn more (including by viewing more than 20 Benesch-produced videos on 3D printing), click [here](#).

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