





Scaling Automation for ***Medical Device Manufacturers*** in Minnesota



Invotec®

Written by Jen Hocken

Invotec is globally recognized for designing and building custom equipment for the medical device industry. It specializes in complex assembly, testing, and inspection systems for these manufacturers, and within this market, the company is quite versatile. It can produce equipment for any application ranging from the smallest of components to the most complicated production lines.



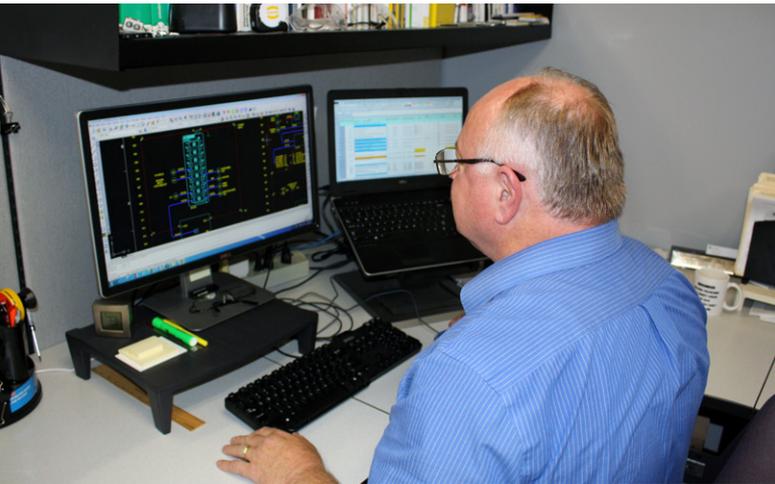
Engineers Daryl Greywitt and John Hanna founded the company in 1993. As a startup, Invotec was a design engineering firm, but over the years, it recognized a need for complete, custom automation systems. As it grew, adding in-house machining and controls skills enabled the company to provide these solutions and services to its customers. Invotec has achieved success by developing a reputation for its technical expertise and its ability to tackle complex projects. After gaining experience in a variety of industries, the company took its natural progression toward the medical device industry, and that is where its focus remains. Invotec's 60,000 square foot headquarters are located in Dayton, Ohio, an area saturated with medical device manufacturers.

In 2017, Invotec was acquired by the Hahn Group, a conglomerate of international companies specializing in industrial automation and robotics; John and Daryl have kept a stake in the company and continue to have an active presence in the business. Backed by the organization, Invotec has further

increased its remote support, buying capabilities, and access to new technology. The Hahn group covers various levels of automation including automotive, consumer goods, and packaging, and Invotec has proudly become its medical device arm.

Then, in 2018, Invotec made the decision to bring its solutions to Minnesota. The decision to expand into the Brooklyn Park, Minnesota region was based on its prime location within the Twin Cities metropolitan area where many of the largest medical device manufacturers are settled.

"We came to Minnesota recognizing there was a need that had opened up in this particular marketplace. Some of the major builders had changed hands, and the landscape had changed, and so it was an opportune time for Invotec to expand, now being part of the Hahn Group," said Business Development Manager Steve Gaustad. The new facility has fifteen thousand square feet, complete with a machine shop, a vision lab, and design capabilities. ▶▶



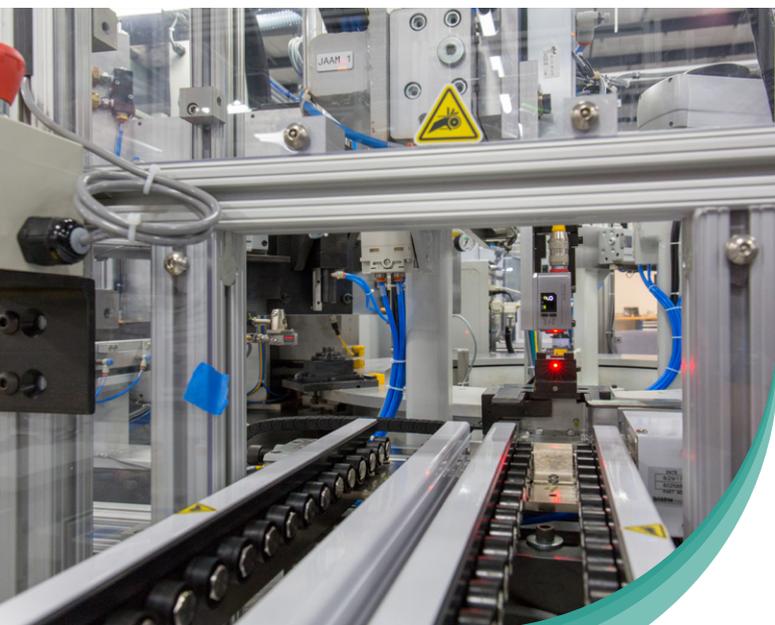
► Invotec aims for locations across the United States that are medical hubs so it can help these area's essential businesses that require very specific automation systems. Within the medical industry, regulations are continually changing and technology is always advancing. Unlike some other realms of manufacturing, builders are held to an exceptionally high-quality standard and are also expected to increase automation and cut costs.

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Medical businesses in Minnesota have become accustomed to working with equipment builders and automation companies that service medical device manufacturers but do not necessarily specialize in the field. Invotec concentrates exclusively on medical device automation systems and has striven to be as accessible as possible to these manufacturers.

“Brooklyn Park provides really nice proximity to some of the major medical device manufacturers in the world that are in this area, so it seemed only logical for us to open up shop here. And we've experienced some really nice success in a relatively short period of time,” Steve continued.



Steve attributes Invotec's success to its hardworking team of employees as well as the culture of the company. It has hired some of the most skilled engineers, toolmakers, machinists, and machine assembly personnel in the business. The level of experience here is also significant. Approximately sixteen employees have been working with the company for over fifteen years. In Minnesota alone, employees have roughly eighty years of combined experience.

Steve also described the importance of maintaining its position at the forefront of technology and innovation in the field. “In

medical devices, it's ever-changing technologies, and if we're not on the cusp of understanding the most pertinent technological advancements, our competitors are going to be, so we have to continually stay abreast of that. That's where our years of experience combined with youthful exuberance really pays off and helps us kind of rise above our competition."

The medical device industry is unlike manufacturing fields that experience minimal changes from year to year. The annual developments in technology and regulations for medical devices are extensive. Manufacturers are under unique pressure to lower costs while adhering to regulatory standards, and Invotec has the experience and expertise to adapt with its customers in this strict environment.

"We, as a company, have to build strong relationships with our customers and approach solutions understanding that the product may not be final when we began designing equipment. We, more so than most, pride ourselves in remaining flexible when changes to the product affect our solutions," said Business Development Director Noah Smith.

Other automation equipment builders may expect customers to have a completed product before even entertaining the idea of a quote for a possible solution. Invotec, on the other hand, understands that in the medical device industry, it is common for manufacturers to have to think about equipment before the product is finalized. The company strives to be mindful of its customers' operations to help identify potential risks or challenges early in the process of designing.

With new equipment and technology coming out all the time, Invotec often finds itself helping its customers understand what they are hoping to achieve. "Sometimes, customers are asking the wrong question. They'll ask 'How do I automate this?' or 'How do I scale up?' but what they're really wanting to do is improve quality or improve the assembly process to make it more economic, make it more efficient, or reduce defects," said Marketing Coordinator Sarah Speltz.

"We're new in Minnesota, but we're not a start-up. We're here with the full presence of the Invotec team and the Hahn Group. We're here ready to do the work."

The company works with its customers as a trusted partner that pays careful attention to every detail. To help a customer decide what they need, Invotec initially identifies a few key areas to discuss. It inquires about the desired location of the

final equipment, workforce needs, timeframe, budget, and expected return on investment, and it considers the lifecycle of the equipment to see if it will need to change in the next few years.

Invotec is ready to take charge of the medical device manufacturing industry and expand its capacity to serve its customers with growth goals in both sales numbers and personnel. "Sooner is always better in a rapidly-changing industry, so the sooner we can add more people, the better off we'll be," said Steve.

The Brooklyn Park, Minnesota facility is operational and needs more staff as soon as possible. The new operation is already backed by the significant experience of its current employees, its parent company, and over twenty-five years of practice in Dayton, Ohio. Invotec welcomes anyone interested to visit the facility and experience what it has to offer.

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