

MARCH 2022

NEWSLETTER



THE AUTOMATION PROJECT

Rainhouse recently expanded its capabilities by automating processes with a robotic cell. This project aimed to install a robotic arm to move raw materials into our milling machine and transport finished parts into our new Coordinate Measurement Machine (CMM) for quality inspection.

Installing a robotic arm to work alongside two other manufacturing machines creates a more efficient process that allows us to increase production by running the machines overnight with little to no supervision.

To make our vision a reality, we reached out to Lindsay Harris from Elliott Matsuura with whom we've established a solid working relationship after acquiring our 5-axis mill in 2019.

We experienced their superlative service, and we appreciate having the availability on the West Coast, which allows us to not rely and wait on assistance from the East Coast or outside of Canada.

We presented Lindsay with our requirements and ideals. He contacted various vendors, including Agile Robotic Systems, and gave us different proposals. After further examination, we selected Agile's plan as it fitted our needs best; therefore, we worked with them in this automation process.



Elliott Matsuura Canada supplies quality machine tools and the best service support for the Canadian metal cutting industry from coast to coast.

They represent 13 different manufacturers that provide high-quality products supported by professional staff who can assist with advanced machine technology and automation solutions. As they like to put it, they are a one-stop-shop for machines and in-house service solutions for automation, metal cutting, EDM, fabricating, and methodology.

Their product range includes Matsuura, Nakamura, Breton, Correa, Fanuc, Hurco, SMEC, Takumi, Tornos, Tacchi, Current EDM, Exeron, Excetek, CMS, LVD, Faccin, Hornet, Starrett, and Zeiss.

We interviewed Lindsay Harris, Elliott Matsuura's regional sales manager for the BC region, and he shared more of his role and objective in this position. "My objective is to work with the BC manufacturing sector to increase productivity and global competitiveness."

He also shared his passion for the industry on the west coast, and he defined it as "unique" due to its diversity in disciplines mentioning aircraft, lumber, mining, boating, shipbuilding, medical, and high tech. He believes that highly skilled labor has become a challenge for employees due to the various industries. Thus, they've looked for solutions by investing in new technologies and manufacturing processes that are more productive and can enable them to become more competitive at a local and global scale.

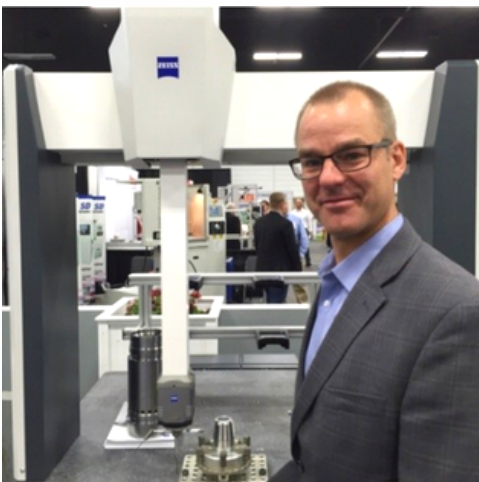
We asked Lindsay why companies like Rainhouse go back to Elliott and, more specifically, to him for advice and to find solutions. He shared it all goes back to Elliot's motivation to assist the manufacturing sector in becoming more productive and competitive. To achieve that, they've built partnerships with like-minded companies such as Rainhouse.

Elliott Matsuura doesn't have an easy task. That is why they have talented sales, service, and application teams that work together with clients to provide the best solutions for their business and follow up on every project until the customer is satisfied and successful. He strongly believes that their exceptional service application and service team in Western Canada sets them apart from the competition.

For the Rainhouse automation project particularly, we wanted to learn more about Agile Robotics and Elliot's Matsuura Canada working relationship.

Lindsay shared that they've been able to work so well together because "Agile shares the same business model. Agile Robotic Systems has a very strong engineering team which shows through its thirty years plus robotics experience."

They appreciate how "Agile has refined their products making it much easier for the machine tool distributor to integrate them into their machines."



“ The team at Rainhouse are well organized and there is a feeling that all departments are working to a common goal ”

Lindsay Harris
BC Technical Sales Manager



Agile Robotic Systems, a subsidiary of John Hart, develops, builds, sells, and supports CNC Machine Tool Loading Systems and Robotic Automation Systems.

John Hart has been supplying the Australian market with general engineering products since 1946. They became exclusive Mazak and Fanuc distributors in Australia in 1963 and 1983, respectively. In 1984 they started their automation and robotics division and in 2009 expanded its automation offerings to America, where they began doing business as Agile Robotic Systems.

With more than 20 years of robot integrated automation experience and over 60 years of machine tool sales, service, and application expertise, Agile was able to penetrate the American market and make a name for themselves as a reputable CNC machine tending supplier.

Focusing on their out-of-the-box Agile Flex range, Agile was able to improve their value proposition by distributing the mechanical design and software development costs amongst a product range.

Agile's primary focus is to make its software and system capacity stand out and ensure customers are self-sufficient once an installation is complete.

Andrew Oliver, Lead sales and Application Engineer from Agile Robotic Systems, shared that from his perspective, Agile's "experience, product range, and skillset allow them to quickly quote cost-effective solutions while remaining flexible enough to handle more complex applications that require careful thought and design."

Their first contact with Elliott Matsuura was in 2019, and in mid-2021, they sold their first system. They've had a steady stream of successful projects in partnership with Elliott Matsuura ever since.

We find it fascinating to have an Australian company with Australian technicians available on the West Coast. Thus, we wanted to know more about Andrew Oliver and his transition to the American market. He shared that he moved from Melbourne to Cincinnati early in 2020 to provide engineering insights behind their concept generation and sale process to help deliver quick turnaround quotes for their Agile Flex, Modular and engineered products.

Andrew has been part of at least ten site installs, although his core focus is sales and application engineering. He is proud to say that Agile has installed over 18 systems in America to date, and they have at least six more installations already scheduled for the rest of 2022.



Andrew Oliver
Lead Sales & Application Engineer

Rainhouse's core values include passion for what you do because it makes people exceptional at their jobs. Andrew certainly enjoys what he does and he mentioned he "loves being able to see a project through from start to finish and be involved every step of the way. That first moment when the robot starts to dance, and everybody in the workshop pulls out their phones to take a video is a great feeling after being so involved in a project."

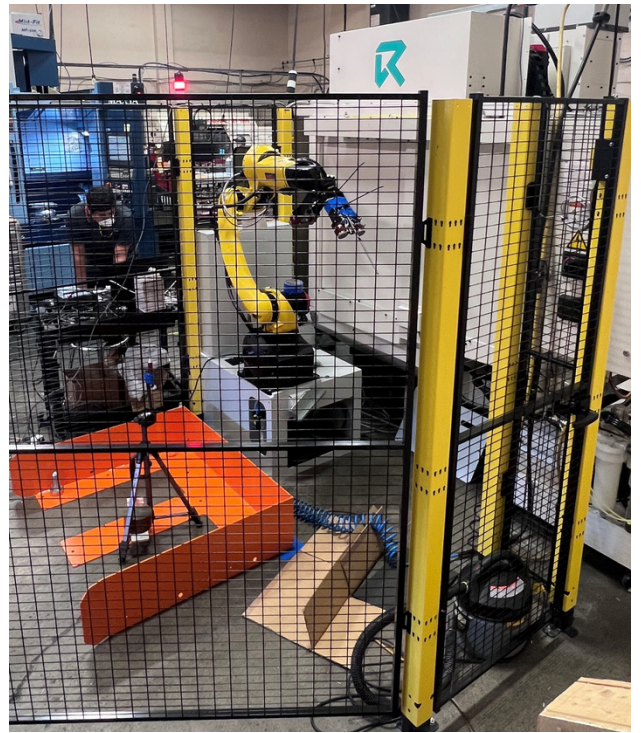
THE OUTCOME & OUR EXPERIENCE

Chris Lichty, VP of manufacturing at Rainhouse Canada, shared his experience of adding new capabilities to the company and working hand in hand with two extraordinary companies.

"Working with Agile and Elliot Matsuura has been an effortless experience, and communication with all parties involved has been a top priority throughout the entire project. Bi-weekly meetings led by Riccardo De Rosa of Elliot Matsuura and Jared Anderson of Agile Robotic Systems were instrumental in keeping this project on time. We had a very strict installation deadline from the start of this project, and both Elliot and Agile worked diligently to ensure we could deliver on time.

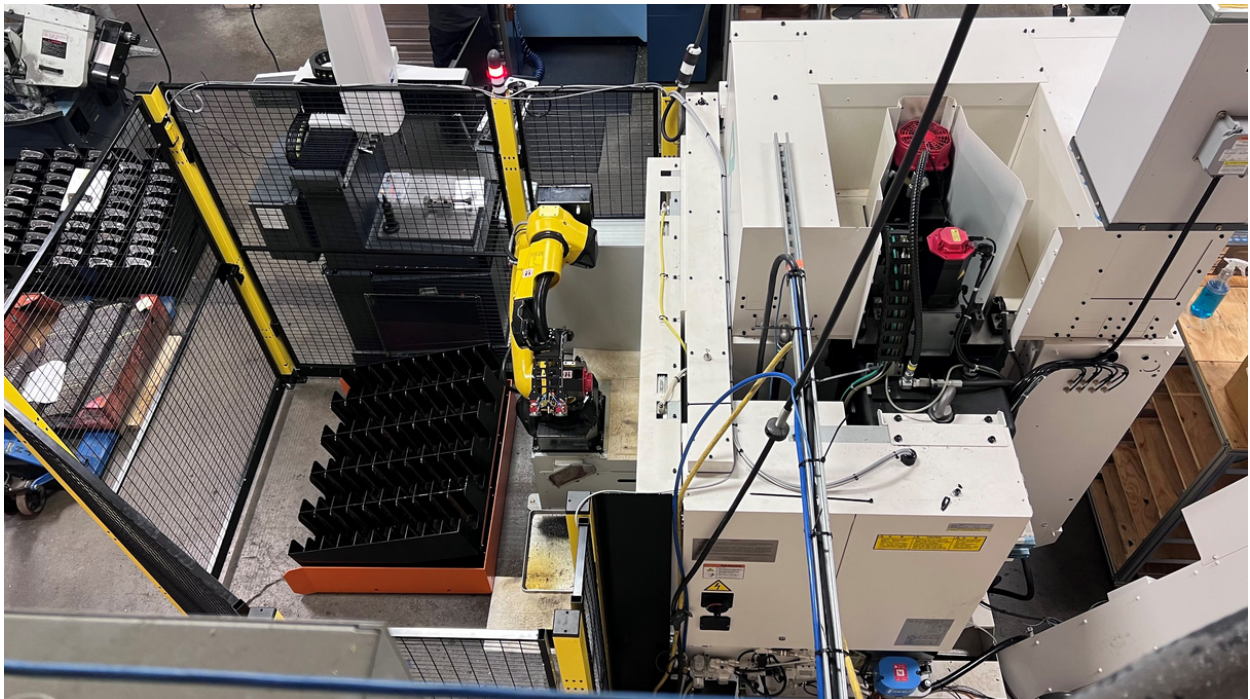
Leading up to installation, members from each team were in regular contact with Rainhouse to ensure that everything needed for a smooth installation was in place and ready to go.

Installation members from both Agile and Elliot were on hand to ensure that any issues that may arise could be dealt with as quickly as possible on both the robotics and machine side of things.



Robot installation in progress.

Thanks to all these combined efforts, we have a perfectly functioning robotics cell that would have not been possible without the attention to detail and hard work at both Elliot Matsuura and Agile Robotic Systems. This being our first experience with robotic automation, it has been very positive, and we cannot wait to see how we can implement this technology in different efficient ways."



Bird's eye view of Fanuc Robodrill, Robotic cell and CMM