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## Mighty Girl & Mityboy make a winning combination

*Cantwell Joinery & Window Centre in Blenheim has got two new staff members, and they're already settling in well. First is Wendie Cantwell, aged 18 and just finished school. Wendie's father Ian has worked as a joiner here since 1963, and now owns and operates the company. Also new to this long established Blenheim business is a new, bright yellow CNC machine – a Mityboy. Working together Wendie and Mityboy are causing quite a stir.*

Ian Cantwell was one of the first to invest in W & R Jacks' Mityboy nesting technology package that is tailor-made for small to medium shops such as his. Kitchens had been made at Cantwell Joinery using the traditional panel saw-based method for many years but Ian knew CNC was the next step. It was the package deal from Jacks that appealed to him. “This machine is doing exactly what I envisaged it would do” says Ian. “We've got significant improvements in speed and accuracy, we're able to respond quickly and flexibly to different orders, and our off-cut bins are almost empty. It's also very popular - we even have customers come to watch it working!”

Ian was familiar with the benefits of using software to sell kitchens. But now he doesn't just use software to design a kitchen – he takes these designs directly from the PRO100 design program to the Mityboy for production.

He explains: “My computer skills are not very good, but I've had no problem picking up the software. It's pretty simple, and with the built-in cabinet library it's quick to drag-and-drop the basic kitchen components, then re-size or tweak them if necessary. Wendie's even adjusted a few of the library items to suit the way we like to build kitchens.” Ian is also using the software to provide exact costings and hardware requirements for each job.

Over time Ian expects all the team to master the design and build process, and training has already begun on this. In just a few weeks Wendie Cantwell has reached the stage where she can design, nest, cut and then assemble a kitchen on her own. But work at Cantwells is carried out as a team, so she prints out parts labels, cutting lists and diagrams to help her and the others with assembly. Ian points out that Mityboy has helped his staff work more closely. No longer is the person who cuts the kitchen the one who knows how it should be assembled. Now each nested part has a label so assembly is simple, and anyone can help.

Wendie's also been quick to grasp the opportunities available from CNC technology. As well as kitchens, Cantwell Joinery have already produced some complicated screens for a local Chinese restaurant, and Wendie is currently experimenting with 3D sign-writing. However, with nesting she complains there aren't enough off-cuts for her to practice with!

There have been a few unexpected changes as part of the switch to Mityboy's CNC production. “Dust levels are way down – we're not sneezing or rubbing our eyes like we used to” says Dean Hydes – another of the Mityboy's operators. “And assembly is faster now the components are more consistently accurate than was

possible with a panel saw.” Colleague Allan Holdaway has a one gripe though. “We've had to invest in gloves because the nested parts are so precise they've got razor sharp edges, and we keep cutting ourselves!” But he says this is a minor price to pay for a huge reduction in handling in general. “We used to spend a lot of time carrying and stacking. Carry and stack. But now there's no longer the need, because most of the work is done on just one machine – the Mityboy” he says.

Mityboy has required some adjustments to the way things have been done before. Cantwells now use just one panel thickness for the complete kitchen – in their case 16mm. While this has meant certain elements of the kitchen are now made up of more expensive base material, Ian says panel use has actually dropped because of nesting, and a much more efficient use of each panel.

There's also been a reduction in electricity costs from all the machines now sitting idle, and a reduction in waste disposal costs. But for now, despite Cantwell Joinery's reduction in all sorts of costs, one thing that's certainly not reducing is the ‘proud father’ grin on Ian Cantwell's face as he watches his daughter Wendie work with the Mityboy. Together they certainly make a winning combination.

