

Flying high with prototype engines

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Specialist investment casting foundry Micro Metalsmiths has produced a new engine for model planes using rapid prototyping.

The engine has been developed for Ripmax, the UK's largest wholesale distributor of radio control models. The unique engine which is being tested by Ripmax, will be used in control line speed model aeroplanes which will be flown in the World Championships in 2010.

Micro Metalsmiths has been working with Ripmax and previously Irvine Engines for over 30 years, providing intricate prototypes and production castings for model aircraft engines. The partnership has proven to be extremely successful, with control line model aeroplanes developed by Peter Halman going on to win individual World and European Championships, 14 World and European team championships, plus many UK championships in the FAI F2A class.



Control Line model aeroplane developed by Peter Halman of Ripmax

Once completed the engine will produce 2.5 horsepower at 40,000 rpm, which is the equivalent to 1,000 Brake Horse Power (BHP) per litre. The model aeroplanes will reach 300 km/h.

Peter Halman, technical director, at Ripmax said, "We've been working with Micro Metalsmiths for a number of years and their personalised service has helped us to develop leading edge model engines for many of our radio controlled aeroplanes. Being able to work with Rapid Prototypes will certainly have given us a competitive edge, as it will have allowed us not only to advance the development of our engines, but saved us valuable time and money as well."

Christopher Shaw, chairman and managing director of Micro Metalsmiths added, "We project managed and developed nine hot wax prototypes for Ripmax. A benefit of using this particular process is that it gives customers the flexibility of only having a small number of items developed at any one time. Another is that the end result can often be more refined and delicate, which is ideal for working on intricate solutions like engine parts"

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