

PROTOTYPES MADE QUICKLY— AND ECONOMICALLY

“A key lockset may require eight re-designs, all with successively shorter turnaround times,” says Brian Bolton, design manager, Ortech (Kirksville, MS), an automotive lockset manufacturer. The trouble is, whereas the company once had 36 months for a program, that time has been cut in half. Consequently, the need to deliver near-production quality prototypes for design and process evaluation quickly is essential. While stereolithography had been used in the past, Bolton was in need of something more functional. So he’s working with Protomold (Maple Plain, MN; www.protomold.com), which specializes in going from CAD data to machined molds to prototype parts in short order: in the case of prototype transponder key sets for Ortech, the first were done in two weeks. What’s more, Ortech saved \$20,000 with this method.