

CASE STUDY

A sound partnership with **GN Audio**

Summary

A leader in communications and sound solutions, GN Audio is part of the Danish company GN Group, which was founded in 1869 and operates in 100 countries. The company's portfolio of high-quality headsets, earbuds and other audio solutions include its Jabra-branded headphones.

We started producing headsets for GN Audio in 2018. Since then, we've launched several products in GN's portfolio. Our production of Jabra headsets and related accessories began in early 2020.

Challenge

As the COVID-19 outbreak led businesses to migrate their teams to remote work environments in the first quarter of 2020, GN Audio saw orders for its headsets skyrocket.

The new demand schedule called for a 50 percent increase in production volume to ship within a six-month period, rather than the standard 12 months. Although our teams in Zhuhai, China adapted very quickly, we experienced every challenge imaginable as we began our ramp.

Solution

As the product launch initiated in January 2020, just before Chinese New Year, we lined up our staffing and materials so production can resume following the long holiday.

As the holiday drew to a close, however, the onset of the pandemic created difficult circumstances. Supplies became constrained as lockdowns were ordered in parts of the country and some team members couldn't return to work due to travel restrictions or quarantine requirements. In anticipation of the increased production targets – and to cover the labor shortfall – we immediately secured additional resources. We also qualified alternative components to swap for parts in short supply.

Through all of this, our deep partnership with GN was key. We worked closely with the company's supply chain team to secure parts and make allocation decisions. The mammoth effort by GN to continuously ensure we had the necessary parts was critical to maintaining production with increasing capacity.

Our lean project team members, who worked remotely, also stepped in, contributing ideas on ways to boost efficiency. Collaborating with GN, they provided pareto analysis and identified the major gating factors that could lead to significant improvements – and ultimately achieve higher productivity and raise yield. Bottleneck stations were expanded and upgraded to find ways to achieve our assumed target units per hour (UPH).

“Our trust and confidence in Flex continue to grow as we partner on launches and programs that accelerate the growth of our expanding audio portfolio. As Flex continues to demonstrate its deep expertise and commitment, its resilience and differentiated value-add are also coming to light. We look forward to growing our partnership in the coming years.”

Stefan Bergfors, VP Global Operations, GN Audio

Results

With GN’s support, we shipped more than one million units between March and December 2020, meeting GN’s increased target production levels.

Throughout the years, we’ve partnered with GN Audio through multiple product generations, providing end-to-end support from design to production and logistics. As our partnership with GN Audio has deepened, we launched multiple new products between 2020 and 2021, expanding our product portfolio from headsets and related accessories to enterprise conferencing solutions and other wearables.

To ensure a successful launch, we proactively delivered a bundle of high-value services including:

- Workstreams to initiate automation
- Exploration of efficiency improvements
- Excellent new product introduction performance despite COVID-19 challenges

- Integration of add-on services designed to increase quality
- Value Analysis and Value Engineering services

We continue to support multiple GN divisions by providing a range of solutions from design to manufacturing to aftermarket services. We help GN Audio not only scale fast through our manufacturing services, but also enhance their global configuration and distribution management through our Global Services and Solutions (GSS) sites.

By delivering forward logistics and postponement services through five of our GSS locations, we enable GN to focus on its core capabilities, including defining and innovating on the next generation of audio solutions. Our capabilities complement GN Audio’s expertise in domains such as design, value analysis, value engineering (VAVE), IT solutions and special projects.

“GN Audio’s vision of a responsive and streamlined supply chain was fulfilled by our world-class capabilities,” said Flex President, Lifestyle, David Moezidis. “Our collaborative partnership empowered us to bring our core strengths to offer an integrated solution from manufacturing to end-to-end logistics in multiple regions. We are proud of our collective accomplishments achieved during a challenging time.”

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