



Getting the Most Out of Your Striker Systems Software

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Would an additional 40-hours of productivity each year make a difference to your organization? What about two weeks? Or three weeks? Absolutely. What if we told you this... improving your use of Striker CAD/CAM software can gain you an additional 10 minutes of programming time each day... or 20 minutes, or 30 minutes. Although gaining 10 minutes of productive time each day might not sound as appealing as an additional 40-hour work week, the numbers are the same. Unlike most other manufacturing tools, software can become increasingly productive. And even small improvements can reap significant benefits over time.

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Our goal is for Striker Systems customers to be as productive as possible. Like many software companies, one of our biggest challenges is insuring that customers are aware of and taking advantage of our product advancements. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. We have visited customer facilities only to be disappointed in their use of Striker software, knowing that with just a little direction they could be much more productive. We inquire of the programmers and find that they are using the software exactly as they were taught by their predecessor... in 2004. Further investigation finds that the predecessor also never received formal training. And often we find that this customer has an active software maintenance contract; they've just never installed any of the updates! There are numerous reasons why customers may not be as productive as they could be.

- **Not Implementing Software Upgrades** – Striker Systems is always improving our products. This includes advancing existing features and adding new functionality. Although most can benefit from these advancements, it is not unusual to see customers go years without upgrading or expanding capability... allowing them to fall further and further behind their competition.
- **Inadequate Training** – This happens frequently when a programming position is filled and the new Striker user is not provided formal training. Bad habits and gaps in knowledge get handed down as “the way to do it” from one user to another. It also occurs over time as new software versions are released but the new or enhanced capability is never investigated.
- **Not Pursuing Technical Support** – Rather than contact Striker customer service to resolve an issue, customers find a “work around”. Unfortunately, this work around can become a permanent solution and continue to cost valuable time.

It is usually some combination of these issues that rob organizations of potential productivity improvements. So why do they fall short in these areas? Although implementing software upgrades, pursuing adequate training, and utilizing technical support can often reap huge benefits, all of these tasks require a commitment and at least minimal planning. In the hectic production environment of today's typical metal fabricator, it is possible for process improvement initiatives to overlook software. At Striker Systems we are aware of the challenges involved in getting the most out of your CAD/CAM and nesting software, and we have implemented numerous programs and product advancements to help streamline this process.

1. Software Review

Striker Systems encourages customers to perform a periodic software review. Most often these are conducted annually through a series of interviews or meetings with the personnel directly involved in or impacted by the programming/nesting process. The goal is to identify bottlenecks or areas in need of possible improvement, as well as to explore new technology and how it might be of benefit.

How can Striker Systems help?

Striker Systems offers a variety of services to assist with your review of software use. We are happy to discuss your current Striker software implementation and provide guidance on best practices and areas for possible improvement. For customers desiring a more thorough analysis we offer an on-site review and audit of your programming and nesting processes. We detail our findings in a report with recommendations for achieving short and long term goals.

Additionally, Striker Systems maintains a "What's New" list along with demonstration and training videos on many of the new Striker Systems features. This information is all accessible in the [Striker Information Center](#). We recommend this information be reviewed from time to time, most importantly after each Striker Systems software upgrade.

2. Software Upgrade / Updates

Historically, the upgrade process of most advanced software did have the potential to be a little messy. The purchase had to be budgeted, but an upgrade price wasn't necessarily determined until the new product was released. Resources had to be allocated to perform the physical upgrade and time had to be allotted to validate the installation. And of course, the upgrade may have included a significant product restructuring that required some level of training. It is no wonder why many organizations try to go an extended period of time before upgrading. In some cases, it is only when they are forced to upgrade because of a change in supporting hardware or software (i.e. operating system), or to remain compatible with other software solutions or file formats. The longer one sits on aging software, the more involved and expensive the upgrade ultimately becomes, and the longer potential productivity gains go unrealized.

How can Striker Systems Help?

Software companies across all industries have moved toward a periodic maintenance or subscription fee. For Striker Systems customers this is our [Technology Assurance Program](#). Participation in the Technology Assurance Program is highly recommended as it is the most cost effective approach to receiving all Striker Systems software updates. Budgeting and timing uncertainties are removed since the Technology Assurance Program is a fixed annual price.

It is our desire to release product advancements with minimal disruption to your daily use of Striker Systems software. Toward that end, Striker Systems has begun a new approach to releasing software updates to Technology Assurance Program members. Historically we have had one or two major releases annually, each including significant product advancement. We realize these major releases require more implementation planning on the part of our customers, as there are greater upgrade and learning curve considerations. As we continue to roll out new features in the future, our customers will see smaller, more frequent releases. These Service Packs will be released via web update and will introduce new features incrementally. This allows our customers to take advantage of our newest features more quickly. The learning curve is also minimized as there is a more concise feature set to learn with the release of each new Service Pack. This is not to say that we will totally eliminate major releases, as there will still be times when a full product upgrade is required. But, our goal is to reduce these major releases in favor of the more consistent feature and maintenance Service Packs.

3. Product Training

As with any field of technology, ongoing training is crucial to achieving the highest output. This is perhaps the biggest obstacle to maximizing performance. While most organizations begin their Striker software journey with adequate training, for many this initial training investment becomes less and less effective through employee turnover, expanding programming demands within the organization, and advancing Striker Systems software capability.

How can Striker Systems help?

Striker Systems highly recommends formal training for new employees and continuing education for existing programmers. We offer a broad range of training options to fulfill customer training and budget requirements.

- **Striker E-Learning** – Accessible through the [Striker Information Center](#), Striker E-Learning is a series of online, self-paced video tutorials available to all Striker Systems customers. Its purpose is twofold. First, it is useful for introducing new users to the basic functionality of Striker Systems software. It is not designed as a replacement for live training, but rather as a complement to it. Additionally, E-Learning can be helpful for existing Striker software users in learning newly introduced features.

- **Productivity Training** – Once per month Striker Systems holds a two-day best practices training at our Nashville area training facility. It is designed as continuing education for existing Striker customers. This classroom training is available free of charge to Technology Assurance Program members.
- **Remote Internet Training** – Now a standard in the education process, Remote Internet Training is an attractive option for both new user training and continuing education. A Striker Systems instructor broadcasts directly to your computer screen, and with your permission can also see your use of Striker software. Remote Internet Training is fully interactive, as if the instructor is sitting right next to you. And since no travel is involved, this web based training is easy to work into the busiest schedules.
- **Training at Striker Systems** – Custom training at our Nashville area training center offers a couple of unique advantages. First, it allows students to separate from what is often a hectic work environment. This reduces interruptions and allows more material to be covered. Additionally, since this is our headquarters where most of our staff resides, there is immediate access to multiple Striker representatives with different areas of expertise. This can be very advantageous in certain advanced training scenarios.
- **On-Site Training** – Training at the customer facility offers definite advantages since we are working within your production environment. On-site training is very common when there are multiple students to be trained, either during the initial Striker software installation or as a component of continuing education. It is also quite common as new CNC equipment is being brought into service.

4. Technical Support

Access to comprehensive technical support is critical in a production environment. Certainly this is apparent if production is ever interrupted, but when technical support is not utilized to address smaller issues there can be significant productivity loss over time. Sometimes when customers are not familiar with a recommended procedure they find a “work around” to accomplish a task. Although this work around may take significantly longer it can become standard operating procedure. There is a reluctance to contact technical support because the process seems too involved or is unclear. Use of technical support resources should be considered during periodic software reviews.

How can Striker Systems help?

Our technical support program, Striker Advantage Support, is the most responsive customer service in our industry. We have made significant advancements in this program to simplify the user experience and expedite our response. Users now have the ability to open their own support tickets. This can be as simple as sending an email or it can be done from within the Striker CAD/CAM software by selecting the *Request Technical Support* command. This automatically gathers and transfers all of the data required for our customer service department to diagnose an issue. So opening a support ticket now takes only seconds. This support ticket is immediately placed in the support queue, which is monitored by Striker customer service

representatives. We guarantee that our customer service department will respond to new support tickets the same day they are opened for all tickets opened before 3:00PM CT. Our average response time to new support tickets is under two hours.

Getting the most out of your Striker CAD/CAM and nesting software is an ongoing process of applying new technology, continuing education, and taking advantage of technical support. Although it does require some time commitment and planning, the benefit to your bottom line can be substantial. Your success is our business, so Striker Systems wants to be your partner in optimizing your sheet metal programming and nesting process. If you would like to discuss your current use of Striker Systems software please don't hesitate to contact us.

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