

EVERY PIECE HAS ITS OWN STORY

HOW 3D PRINTING HAS PROPELLED MEN'S ACCESSORIES MANUFACTURER VANACCI INTO A MARKET PIONEER

▶ Vanacci, the British design and manufacturer of men's accessories since 2015, has gone from strength to strength following its successful Kickstarter crowdfunding drive.

Recognising the potential of slim wallets and the possibilities afforded by carbon fibre leather, Vanacci set about creating a slim, handmade wallet that focused around a card ejecting mechanism. Within three weeks of conception, it launched on Kickstarter with its minimal profile

and refined aesthetic, generating significant buzz.

Growth has been inevitable. From its initial starting point, Vanacci has added more wallet designs and introduced a whole range of jewellery which can be infused with fragrance. Seasonal lines have been added to the catalogue and the company has explored watches and 3D printing options with its Stealth wallet.

Sean Sykes, Creative Director, says the company's strengths lie in its focus on materials and technique which has witnessed it become a pioneer in the "slim wallet" arena.

"We were the first company to use the carbon leather in such a way and no-one else was making them by hand. By keeping everything handmade in the UK, we've carved out a niche for quality in a sea of mass-produced clones.

"Our ability to use 3D printing as a method of component manufacture, rather than just prototyping, means we can react quickly to changes in tastes and fashion, or alter a product entirely if the market deems it necessary.

"Many companies stick with one method or material as their core focus: we're willing to experiment and create composite products to achieve a vision others might shy away from."

As the company has sort to innovate, it has relied upon its adoption of 3D printing for research and development. For one, it has given Vanacci the ability to react far more quickly to market trends.

Indeed, Stealth, one of Vanacci's major accomplishments may not have been possible without 3D printing. We've "leaned



heavily on 3D printing to bring about new ideas and concepts, which led to us replacing a lot of Carbon's internal framework with a fully SLS printed body, which improved the performance of the product and also massively reduced production time."

The company then took the decision to move away from 3D printing for Stealth 2.0 which Sean concedes may have hindered its potential. That saw the company revert back to 3D.

"After a redesign of our Carbon wallets, we realised we could incorporate the same mechanism in an effectively unlimited range of wallets going forward. Housing the mechanism within Stealth 3.0 was its first real test for adaptability.

"While we're yet to see the long-term financial returns on Stealth 3.0, I can say now that it's probably one of

our greatest achievements in using 3D printing. Without it, we wouldn't have been able to realise the product in anywhere near as little time, nor provide something that looks as good and works as well for the price we can."

Stealth 3.0 is the first composite wallet Vanacci designed to be intentionally composite. Other wallets have incorporated 3D printing and metalwork as solutions to problems that the wallet itself already had. With Stealth 3.0, it has taken those problems out of the design by going straight in with the composite build, circumventing a lot of issues that it has come up against over the past few years.

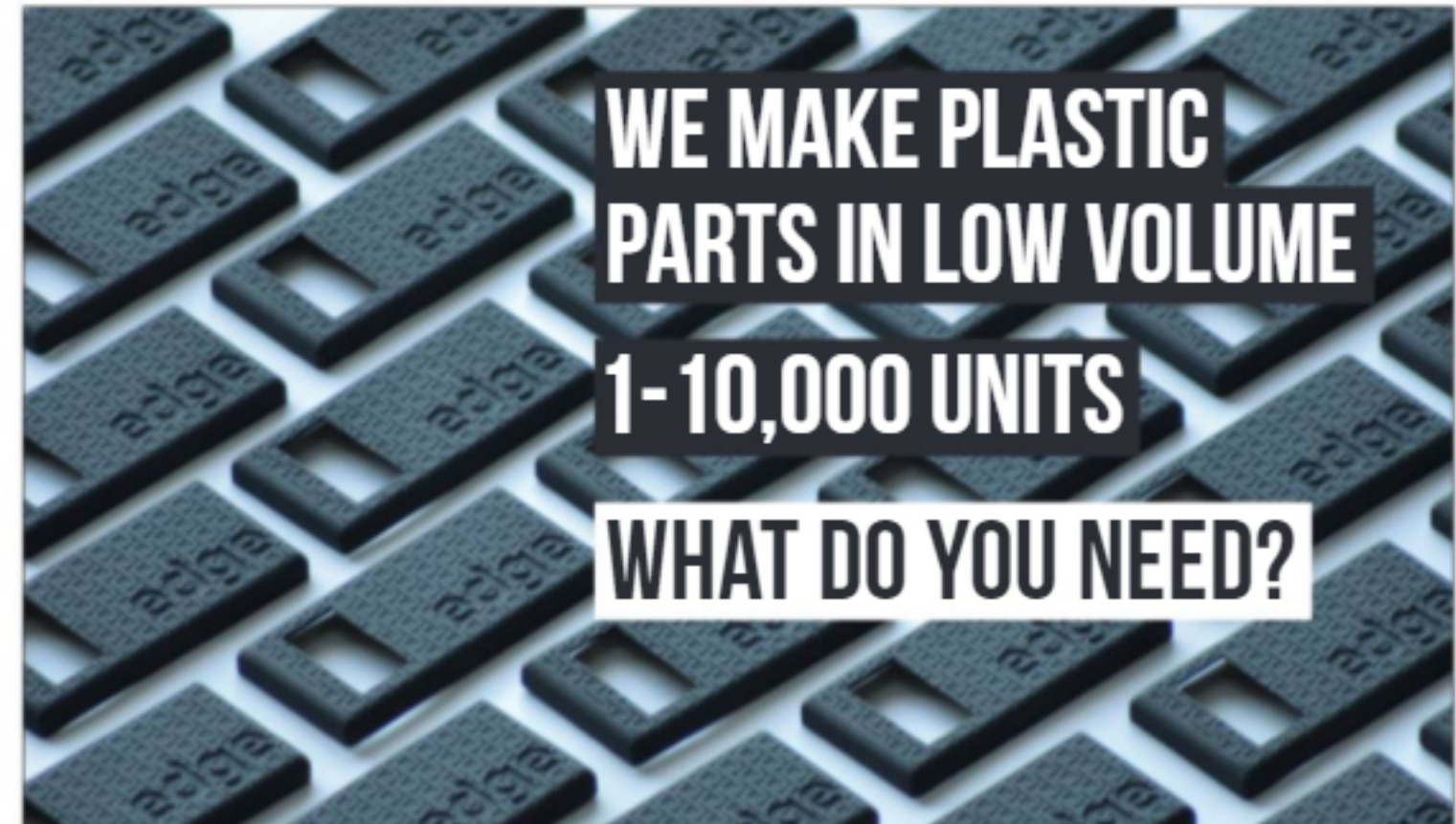
By starting with a solid foundation such as this, the wallet immediately performed better within the first prototypes. By onboarding the mistakes and missteps of



the past, Vanacci had a clearer path to success.

"I think the biggest lesson we've learned is to often ask 'why not?' instead of 'why?' with 3D printing," concludes Sean. "We've a decent level of experience that we can see when a part isn't going to work if made via 3D printing instead of casting or CNC machining but, combining a 'why not?' approach with a 'fail fast' mentality has led to discoveries about the potential of the material applied to other products as well as reinforcing our own instinct when it comes to design.

"That makes design and manufacture very exciting for modern designers: no longer are we beholden to working with foam, painfully long lead times or tooling costs. You can go from concept to product quicker than ever before and I think the best way to make that interesting is to take risks, ask 'why not?'."



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