



## Protolabs Accelerates Growth and Drone Innovation with On-Demand Manufacturing Capabilities

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- *Serving all Fortune 100 aerospace companies, Protolabs delivers the speed and scale required to meet unprecedented commercial and defense applications*
- *Enhanced CNC machining enables faster iteration and greater precision for customized parts*
- *Partnership with HP Additive expands MJF 3D printing tailored to drone manufacturing*

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jul. 7, 2026-- [Protolabs](#) (NYSE: PRLB), the world's leading provider of digital manufacturing services, has expanded its manufacturing capabilities to support drone manufacturers amid the industry's rapid growth. Expanded capabilities span quick-turn CNC machining for end-use metal and plastic parts with tighter tolerances, greater precision and broader functional and cosmetic finishes alongside advanced 3D printing technologies that give drone engineering teams greater design freedom to produce lightweight components that meet strict performance requirements.

Since 2023, revenue from Protolabs' drone customers has grown more than 90% with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of nearly 40%, highlighting strong and sustained demand from drone manufacturers for rapid, on-demand production. Leading companies are turning to Protolabs for support from prototyping through production across its suite of services.

"In this highly competitive industry, where drone developers are innovating at the speed of software, Protolabs is uniquely positioned to help accelerate that pace, delivering flight-ready parts in a matter of days instead of weeks," said Suresh Krishna, president and CEO of Protolabs. "The advances we're making in CNC machining and additive manufacturing are enabling tighter tolerances and lightweighting of parts for drone applications."

According to [market researchers](#), the global drone industry is currently valued at up to \$69 billion and is expected to reach \$140 billion within the next decade, representing a projected compound annual growth rate of 9.5%. This expansion is being driven by increased investment in aerospace and defense, alongside the rapid growth of commercial drone applications that are accelerating both near- and long-term market momentum.

### High-Mix, Low-Volume Manufacturing Expertise

Protolabs' expertise in high-mix, low-volume manufacturing with quality at speed aligns with the needs of the drone industry, which requires continuous design iteration, customized payloads, and adaptable hardware. To better support these demands and tight production timelines, the company has expanded its quick-turn CNC machining capabilities, enabling end-use metal and plastic parts with tighter tolerances for greater precision, as well as a broader range of functional and cosmetic finishes, delivered within days. These capabilities support advanced hardware and precision components used in the design and operation of high-performance drones.

### Lightweighting with Advanced 3D Printing Technology

Protolabs has expanded its advanced [Multi Jet Fusion](#) (MJF) 3D printing capabilities through a partnership with HP Additive to add production capacity tailored to drone manufacturers. The technology provides engineering teams with greater design freedom while adhering to strict weight requirements, producing thin-walled, near-translucent parts that maintain the required strength and performance. Within the drone industry, MJF is widely used for the rapid production of lightweight, aerodynamic, and highly customized parts such as ducts, housings, brackets, and snap-fit enclosures specifically optimized for avionics cooling, field maintenance, and payload integration.

Lightweighting with MJF uses Nylon PA-12, a material with a high strength-to-weight ratio, impact resistance, and durability suited for demanding environments. It is commonly used in drone applications operating in extreme temperatures, high winds, and rugged terrains.

Protolabs' manufacturing footprint includes the U.S.-based International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR)-registered facilities, as well as AS9100- and ISO9001-certified machining and 3D printing sides designed for high-requirement parts.

### Commercial UAV Expo

Protolabs will showcase its drone manufacturing capabilities at [Commercial UAV Expo](#), taking place Sept. 1–3 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Attendees can visit Protolabs at Booth #1519 to learn how its digital manufacturing services support rapid prototyping, scaled production, and innovation across the defense and commercial drone industry.

### **About Protolabs**

Protolabs is the world's fastest manufacturing service enabling companies across every industry to streamline production of quality parts throughout the entire product life cycle. From custom prototyping to end-use production, we support product developers, engineers, and supply chain teams along every phase of their manufacturing journey. Get started now at [protolabs.com](https://www.protolabs.com).

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