SendCutSend and the potential of web-first manufacturing

The "Amazonification" of metal fabrication is driving investment in automatedquoting, digital workflows, and AI-assisted manufacturing

By Tim Heston | Updated July 16, 2026 | July 16, 2026

Article | Shop Management



Jim Belosic launched SendCutSend in 2018 as a web-first fabricator, with customers uploading design files, receiving an instant quote, and receiving parts within days. In 2026, the operation has 450 employees and several plants across the country. The business model is taking off, and investors are noticing. *Images: SendCutSend*

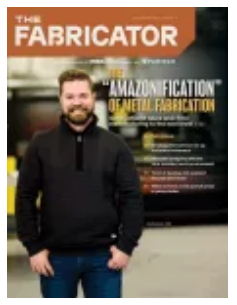
Jim Belosic has big plans for high-volume production. When he launched Reno, Nev.-based SendCutSend, he focused on low-quantity orders, including a fair amount of demand from hobbyists. Now, the operation is getting ready to ramp up high-quantity work in a big way.

In mid-May, SendCutSend raised $110 million in venture capital money backed by Sequoia Capital, Paradigm, and the two brothers who founded fintech company Stripe, Patrick and John Collison. In a late May interview with The Fabricator, Belosic said that SendCutSend's annual revenue is on track to exceed "well over $150 million."

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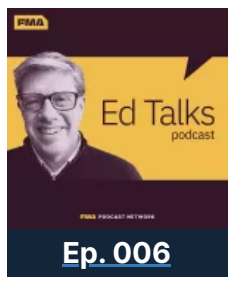
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The Fabricator last spoke with Belosic in 2019, not long after the company launched operations in 2018. Since then, it has expanded far beyond its original plant in Nevada, opening locations in Kentucky, Texas, and Pennsylvania.

"I'm the most impatient person I know, but for eight years we played the long game because I refused to get into bed with the wrong people," Belosic said in a SendCutSend press release. "By waiting [for the right investors], we built real muscle. We held out until the 'reindustrialize' vibe shifted and we found partners who actually understand that hardware is hard. Now, we aren't just building a company; we're providing the engine for American manufacturing, faster than ever before."

Automate the Flow of Information

On the surface, SendCutSend's story doesn't sound unusual. Plenty of small job shops start with low quantities and then work their way up to high-volume production work. Still, most job shops haven't attracted high-profile investors. The founders behind Sequoia invested early in Google and Apple. They turned a $60 million investment in WhatsApp into more than $6 billion when Facebook acquired the company. And now, they're putting their money into what remains (at least to sheet metal outsiders) a relatively little-known custom fabrication operation.

As Andrew Reed, partner at Sequoia, explained in a press release, "Reindustrializing the U.S. will require a hardware ecosystem to emerge, and SendCutSend is at the center of it. I know Jim is excited to use these funds to increase capacity and better serve his customers, as are we."

SendCutSend has already ramped up its cutting and bending capacity in a big way over the past eight years. The operation is also venturing into welding, including hand-held laser welding. To grow its staff, the fabricator instituted an expansive in-house training program—especially critical since most employees arrived with no manufacturing experience.

"We've hired people who used to work at the donut shop, Dollar Tree, and Walmart," Belosic said. "In-house training is something we knew we needed from day one." This training includes significant emphasis on quick setups and job changeovers, both central to the high-product-mix manufacturing environment.

SendCutSend's current state looks counterintuitive. Visit a plant, and you'll see rows of fiber lasers and press brakes, hardware presses, and more—but no lights-out automation. But as Belosic explained, the approach has



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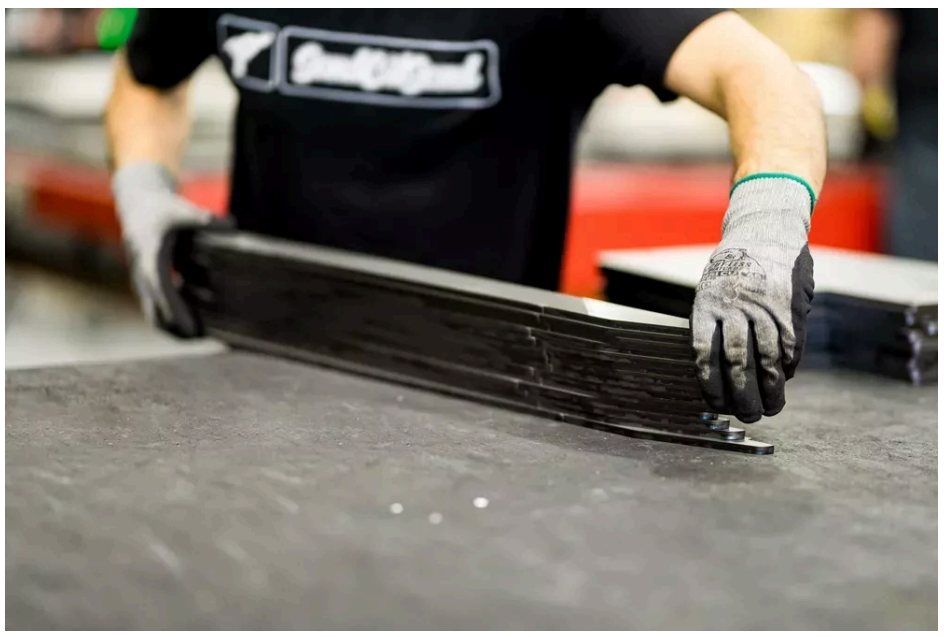


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suited the SendCutSend model. He added that this will soon change (discussed later), but for now, material handling automation is minimal.

The plants do have expansive material handling towers that feed parts to the cutting area, but they stand apart from the machines. Operators still use suction lifts to place raw stock on machine beds and initiate the cutting cycle. Denesting is manual, as is most of the bending department. It's not what you'd expect for an organization exceeding $150 million in revenue that's also attracted the interest of some of the world's best-known VC players.



A SendCutSend employee preps laser-cut blanks for the next downstream process.

Unlike most fabricators, however, SendCutSend launched with custom, in-house software that automated quoting and order processing. Customers upload files and receive an instant quote. Upon acceptance, the orders flow through order processing and nesting automatically. Within seconds, the order is queued up for the manufacturing floor.

The late Dick Kallage, industry consultant, active member of the Fabricators and Manufacturers Association, and former columnist for The Fabricator, had a saying he'd repeat during his seminars: "You're not in the metal fabrication business. You're in the information processing and changeover business."

During presentations at FABTECH and elsewhere, he'd display a Gantt chart of a typical contract fabricator's workflow. On the shop floor, orders spend just minutes or hours actually being fabricated—with the beam cutting and the press brake ram stroking—but they spend *days* in queue.

Rajan Suri, industrial engineering professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and founder of the Quick Response Manufacturing (QRM) Institute, took an even broader view. In his book, "It's About Time," he expanded the chart to include the front office—purchasing, supply chain coordination, and beyond—

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effectively, everything it takes to create something from scratch (what he called “manufacturing critical-path time”).

For low-quantity work, manufacturers spend more time preparing new orders (what Kallage referred to as the “information processing” part of the business) *than actually manufacturing them*. Drawings need to be remade or altered to match the capabilities of available machines and tooling. Emailed questions remain unanswered. Customer approvals stay pending for days.

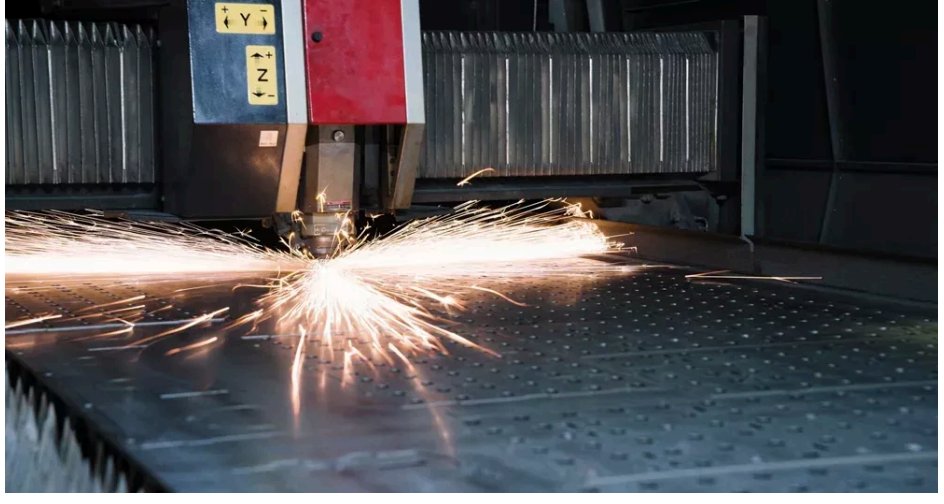
This is what drives so many fabricators toward production work. Aside from supplier audits, contracts, and related tasks that come with long-term customer relationships, prepping a new order for just a few dozen pieces can take just as much time as an order for 10,000.

Lower quantities also have higher opportunity costs. Engineers working the production plan for a challenging, low-quantity job steal capacity away from higher-quantity orders, and there’s no guarantee that low-quantity job will grow into something larger. Meanwhile, squeezing low-quantity jobs between all the production work complicates scheduling.

With more production work, demand becomes relatively predictable, and operations managers can dial in manufacturing processes. Fabrication shop managers identify the operation’s core strengths, sketch out (formally or informally) an ideal customer profile and customer mix, then work to find customers that the fabricator can grow with.

A small group of fabricators have taken an entirely different approach. They focus on the front end and address the buying friction that most customers experience in this industry. It takes time to process orders, *but what would happen if you automate the ordering process? What if someone could upload a part file, accept a quote, and have that part cut just minutes or hours later?*

One of the first to do this in the sheet metal arena was 247TailorSteel in Europe. Across several plants in the Netherlands and Germany, the company today has more than 60 flatbed lasers; nearly two dozen tube lasers; and more than 50 press brakes, most of them with automated tool changers. According to the company website, 247TailorSteel fabricates more than 70,000 parts per day—and all of it is processed through Sophia, an automated quoting and order processing system developed in-house (and named after the founder’s oldest daughter).



A fiber laser processes a job. The company has 16 AMADA fiber lasers across its four plants.

When I visited 247TailorSteel in 2017, the company was celebrating 10 years in business. It already had 22 lasers, more than a dozen automatic-tool-change press brakes, and more than 250 people on the payroll. The company was gaining about 19 new customers a day, and for every one of those orders, customers uploaded design files, quotes were given, and orders were processed—all automatically. Automated guided vehicles transported raw stock (stored near the point of use) to the lasers, then carried stacks of cut parts to the brakes, then immediately to packaging and shipping. Inventory turned over about once every three days. For the first time, I was witnessing the "Amazonification" of custom sheet metal fabrication.

Since then, several online-first players have entered the custom sheet metal space in the U.S. OSH Cut, based in Spanish Forks, Utah, launched in 2018, and California-based Fabworks launched in 2023 (though its parent company's roots go back to the 1980s). OSH Cut is also about to open another factory near Cincinnati. (For more on the "Amazonification" of the industry, check out Caleb Chamberlain's blog.)

Proto Labs, a major player in quick-response plastic injection molding, entered the sheet metal market in 2017 when it purchased a New Hampshire-based custom sheet metal fabricator called Rapid Manufacturing. The owner of Rapid went on to launch Paperless Parts, a popular platform used by various shops to streamline quoting. Other quoting platforms, including Stella Source, have since entered the fray. Meanwhile, Xometry—a business that offers instant quoting for a wide variety of processes (including sheet metal fabrication) and works with a broad network of shops—remains on the growth path: Q1 2026 revenue jumped 36% year over year.

DFM and the Web-First Model

When 247TailorSteel founder Carel van Sorgen demonstrated Sophia software during a press event in 2017, he showed how the platform kicked back models that couldn't be cut or formed. Since then, various web-first players in the U.S. have demonstrated how they aid and even automate design for manufacturability (DFM) efforts—flagging a blank edge that could experience distortion or a flange too short to bend with available tooling.

The idea is to streamline and perfect DFM so that parts flow through the system as smoothly as possible. As Belosic explained, SendCutSend's approach has been to automate DFM when possible but then rely on one-on-one consultation when necessary. Today, the operation employs more than 20 people who help customers with DFM issues.

He described DFM as a three-legged stool. "The first leg is education before you start designing. We make a big investment in communicating what our capabilities are before customers start designing."

He pointed to SendCutSend's extensive video and document library on its website. The quoting engine itself accepts various file formats, including DXF, DWG, and STEP. (The company accepts PDFs through a custom quote form, but at this writing, instant pricing isn't available.) The platform also offers basic design tools to help customers build parts directly online.

"The second leg involves automatic, instantaneous DFM feedback. So, if you upload a part, the system sees the flange is too short or the hole is too close to the edge. On the machining side, a hole might be too deep or a specific radius might not be possible.

"All this said, it's a massive challenge in the world of computational geometry to identify all DFM issues," Belosic explained. "So, here's where the third leg of the stool comes in. We keep humans in the loop, giving live feedback via chat or a phone call. This is the part of the business we're really scaling up rapidly."



An operator forms a workpiece on an AMADA press brake—one of 23 in the company's facilities.

He added that the company's DFM efforts involve a "very rudimentary" level of machine learning. "I won't call this AI, because [large-language models] aren't going to help us here. But we do see common issues, like a flange length. We use data to determine whether a certain issue is always a problem. Is it our problem or their problem? Is the DFM issue fighting physics of manufacturing, or do we just not have the right tooling or system in place? Often, we can work to change our process so it doesn't cause us headaches."

Process simulations, including common bend simulations, take well-established approaches. For instance, for a forming job on a press brake, the flange is always long enough to sit securely on the die shoulder, and bends have plenty of clearance. SendCutSend's aim is to widen the manufacturability guardrails as much as possible while still maintaining consistent flow on the floor. This represents a big shift from the company's early days in 2019 and 2020.

"During those years, we just didn't have the office support, so we took a 'this is who we are and this is what we can do, take it or leave it' approach. We just didn't have the bandwidth. Now, we've made major investments to handle customer support."

Belosic added that this investment entails a mix of software and human expertise—not just with the customer service team in the office, but with expertise on the floor.

A Virtuous Cycle

Belosic described what SendCutSend employees call "the train." Picture a baggage-cart train used at the airport, only this one carries pallets of cut and formed parts. The driver essentially is the plant water spider (to use "lean" parlance). He drives in a circuit and drops off pallets at various press brakes and other work centers downstream from initial blanking. "The cool thing about that role is that he's the eyes and ears of the shop."

He delivers water bottles if operators need them and notifies maintenance about any machine issues. He also hears about problems that might be occurring and helps close the communication loop between the shop and the data team in the office. Data team members incorporate that information into the fabricator's proprietary data system. They also tap into operator ideas. If, say, a press brake operator finds a way to form a challenging workpiece, that idea is communicated to the data team and spread throughout the organization.

Belosic paused here and emphasized the importance of SendCutSend's data team. "A mistake we made early on was not investing in our data team as much as we should have. We just didn't realize how overwhelmed data personnel can become, because we have so much data and so many orders. We need them to ensure that virtuous cycle keeps rolling. We're probably going to triple the size of our data team within the next year. We've realized that the more problems you can solve upstream, the easier your life becomes downstream and the more capacity you can free."

Good data helps find commonalities and identify true costs. Nesting is a prime example here. Early on, Belosic recalled how the company's nesting practices tried to achieve the absolute maximum material yield out of every sheet. The company processes a wide range of material grades. Most orders range between 0.060 and 0.25 in., but the company does cut thinner and thicker.

Material is a major expense, so getting the absolute most out of each sheet seemed to make sense. But the company realized that pushing the limits could cause process stability issues, raising the potential for tip-ups and head crashes. The chances were small, but the ripple effects—considering the rework and machine downtime involved—could be huge. So today, materials are nested for process reliability. Web sections might be a little thicker, and the yield might be a little lower than what it once was, but it's a small price to pay for optimal cutting reliability.

At present, the company operates 16 AMADA fiber lasers, a collection that includes 12-kW ENSIS models, 4-kW VENTIS models, and 9-kW and 12-kW REGIUS machines. According to Belosic, the company's collective beam-on time has surpassed 88%.

All these lasers feed 23 AMADA press brakes spread across all plants. And as Belosic explained, the fabricator's in-house scheduling system distributes work for optimal flow.

More Production Work

After scaling up dramatically during its short history, SendCutSend has experienced some significant benefits, especially in workflow and nesting. In 2019, Belosic worked with his small team to perfect a remnant management strategy. Since the fabricator offered a wide material selection and was processing mainly low-quantity orders, filling every sheet perfectly just wasn't in the cards.

Today is different. With so many orders, the nesting engine has more jobs to draw from to fill a sheet. Remnants aren't as common as they once were. The company has found it can absorb high-quantity orders extremely effectively.

Early on, when the operation received a high-quantity order, the shop batched the entire order together—something shop managers quickly saw as a mistake. Belosic described processing large batches of work as “waves” lumbering down the value stream.

The first step was to split those large orders into smaller lot sizes, to speed part-flow velocity. The operation next combine the work with different orders, so that one high-quantity job didn’t act like a “bump on the log,” clogging up part flow for the rest of the order mix.

As the operation has scaled, the fabricator now can spread production work out across different plants. “If we’ve got a very high-quantity order that uses a lot of material, instead of wiping out inventory at one facility, we’ll spread it across multiple facilities. That way, we shorten the production time, lessen the inventory hit, and allow the job to flow through the system like a ripple instead of a wave.”

Time for Outside Investment

In December 2025, Belosic could see where the data was pointing. Demand for quick-response work was about to increase dramatically. SendCutSend just needed capacity. “We can only grow so fast as our EBITDA grows,” Belosic said. “Our forecasts were showing that we could be growing faster and faster, so how do we deal with this?”

Belosic resisted large outside investment for years, funding the business through loans and a small capital raise. In December, though, he looked at the numbers and decided it was time to reach outward.

He clarified that the company wasn’t at all desperate. The business remained profitable. But the demand for a frictionless, Amazon-like buying experience in metal fabrication wasn’t abating. Fast growth just wouldn’t be possible without outside money.

“So in March, I started putting together a pitch deck.” Belosic paused, then laughed quietly and shook his head. “I had never done a pitch deck. I didn’t know what I was doing. So, I just sent a message to a friend on X, and I asked, ‘How do I do this?’ And instead of answering, he just wrote back, ‘Let me put you in touch with someone who’d be interested in investing.’ That person was Patrick Collison, the co-founder of [fintech company] Stripe.”

Collison saw the operation, heard Belosic’s story, then decided to invest. “He told me, ‘This is great. I can invest a little money. I really can’t write big checks, but I can introduce you to people who can.’ So, he introduced me to Matt Huang at Paradigm and Andrew Reed at Sequoia. After talking with Andrew, he literally got on a plane, and within nine hours he was at our facility. We had him running a press brake! He told us, ‘You guys are really doing something magical here. We’d love to invest.’”

After doing due diligence, the VC groups valued the company at $1.01 billion—an estimate of SendCutSend's value based on its current trajectory and potential earnings. With that, Belosic sold 10% of SendCutSend to the VCs, resulting in $110 million in funding.

"Ten percent was at the upper end, and that's where we landed. This gave us enough money so that we don't have to do this all the time. I don't want to be on a treadmill, out there raising funds every 18 months. For a guy who just likes making parts, that's a nightmare."

The Journey Up the Long Tail

The investment will be well-used in the coming years, especially as SendCutSend delves deeper into production work. The long tail of low-quantity work got the organization to where it is today. Now, it's making its way up the tail, so to speak, tackling higher-quantity production orders. The organization already has created EDI systems tailored for large OEM accounts that use capacity across multiple plants.

But to take production work to the next level, Belosic and his team realized they needed to delve deeper into automation. The company will be expanding into a 150,000-sq.-ft. facility across the street from its main plant in Reno.

"That facility will be dedicated to long runs. We're known as the prototype guys, and we get low quantities all the time. But we also are an OEM provider, and that facility will allow us to serve that market much, much better." He added that investments include an automated powder coat line as well as automated lasers, robotic press brakes, and robotic welding.

"Today, we can produce 1,000 parts a week, but we could never cut 10,000 and put them on a shelf. We just don't have the room," Belosic said. "Now that we have the square footage, we hope to be able to produce large volumes—say, 20,000 pieces—put them on a shelf so that an OEM can draw from it on a kanban replenishment cycle. That's where we're looking to go in the future."

About Time

My most vivid memory of my 2017 visit to 247TailorSteel wasn't the rows of press brakes and lasers, or even the trees planted in large pots (which the owner said gave everyone a "more pleasant place to work"). It was the monitors in the break room showing a map with dots representing 247TailorSteel delivery trucks, each one making its way to customer receiving docks. Once the order reached the customer, it was finally considered "complete." The owner told me that some of those orders had been placed just two or three days before—all starting with the customer clicking "order" on a web page.

Seeing the growth of web-first fabricators over the past decade, I think again of Dick Kallage's lean manufacturing seminars that FMA hosted in the early 2010s. "You're in the information processing and changeover business."

Referring to that quote-to-ship cycle, Belosic said that 24-hour turnaround has been commonplace. In fact, in the case of one low-quantity cut-and-bend order, a customer clicked "accept" online, and minutes later it was nested and on the laser. Just 27 minutes after that, it was in a box, ready for shipping.

How far will automated quoting and order processing go? How many value-adding processes can web-first players provide while still maintaining highly automated order processing? Only time will tell.

Regardless, the Amazonification of metal fabrication continues, and it looks like the business model is here to stay.

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Tim Heston, The Fabricator's senior editor, has covered the metal fabrication industry since 1998, starting his career at the American Welding Society's Welding Journal. Since then he has covered the full range of metal fabrication processes, from stamping, bending, and cutting to grinding and polishing. He joined The Fabricator's staff in October 2007.

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