



BLM GROUP

TUBE BENDING
ENDFORMING
CUTTING, DEBURRING AND WASHING
CUTTING AND END MACHINING
LASERTUBE
COMBINED LASER CUTTING OF TUBE AND SHEET METAL
HANDLING
3D MEASURING
MANUFACTURING CELLS
NON TOUCH MEASURING SYSTEMS
SOFTWARE FOR PROCESS CONTROL

INSPIRED FOR TUBE

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INSPIRED for **TUBE**

 **BLM GROUP**

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Opinion

A SPRING FULL OF NEW PRODUCTS TO TAKE US CONSTANTLY ONE STEP AHEAD



At the trade fairs being held in the first half of 2008, the BLM GROUP will be exhibiting a whole new range of products that will gradually concern all its product lines.

The first event is the TUBE Fair in Düsseldorf, which is an important showcase for the “tube world” where four new products will be exhibited.

- DYNAMO LR 150: an electric tube bending machine with right and left-hand bending sense for tubes up to 25 mm with a average output rate of 1 bend/sec.
- ELECT: a new range of multi-radius full electric bending machines up to OD 60 and OD80 mm.
- LT722: eighth generation laser tube, a market standard, with enhanced and higher performances.
- TUBIFORM: high-productivity tube-endforming centre handling 2 tubes at a time.

A common feature of all new products is the output rate increase, the main path, together with process innovation to effective cost reduction.

BLM GROUP confirm their strategy, constant investment in innovation to make sure to both our customers and us to be always one step ahead.

2007 ended with a good growth for all Group companies with a total turnover of € 138 millions, an increase of 17 % compared to 2006. This growth is mainly generated by the European markets and developing areas of the Group. Forecasts for 2008 also envisage a slight growth even though some markets are experiencing a slow-down.

Renewal of the product range scheduled for this year will help to support the expected growth and to offer our customers further margins of competitiveness.

We welcome you to visit our stands at the forthcoming trade fairs and to see our new products or visit our permanent showroom at the company's headquarters. It is always best to see and experience the news personally to get a better understanding of them!

Pietro Colombo
President & CEO

Ideas en Metal, Spain, produces metal tubular structures for buildings and sports installations with to innovative and flexible laser tube systems.

From the anvil to the **laser**

Job shop



When talking about entrepreneurship, we often forget the basic principles: vision and risk taking. Ideas en Metal of Gijon in Spain, has the emblem of vision impressed in its corporate name “to turn ideas into metal products” and having the vision to take risks.

Ideas en Metal is the latest company founded by José Antonio Hevia Corte in 2000 to produce metal tubular structures for industrial buildings and

sports installations. Mr. Hevia has been an entrepreneur for many years, starting out with sheet metal working 61 years ago when anvils were still used to bend steel sheets and guillotine hand-operated shears to cut them. Today, Mr. Hevia smiles when he thinks about the considerable changes that he has witnessed throughout his life. But whenever he sees the laser tube cutting systems that have been installed in his workshops he is still amazed: “laser cutting has always been an eye-catcher, even if you already know what it is all about, it’s always like the first time. It has no tools; it is a universal machine that allows us to do whatever we want without being bound to a specific sector or application”.

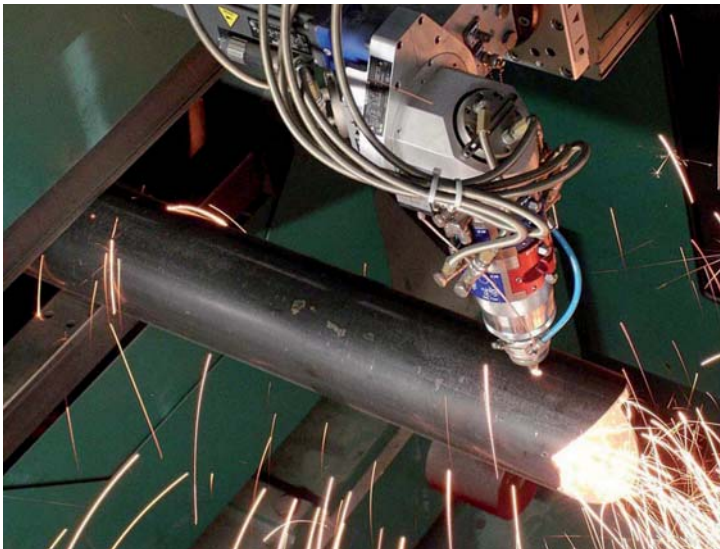
From the idea to the product

“This is the industrial project around which our Ideas en Metal have been conceived” says Mr. Juan José del Campo Gorostidi, Board Member of the company. “We immediately decided to develop a range of completely new products: tubular structures for buildings. For this reason we chose innovative and flexible production systems like the laser tube and robotized welding”. The machines we have are extremely flexible and easily suit any market so that we can capture every opportunity that arises without having to review the production process. This is what happened with solar panel supports. Today’s market does



Juan José del Campo Gorostidi

José Antonio Hevia Corte



not leave any room to specialise in specific product lines because product lifecycles are getting shorter and shorter and changes are so fast that no other strategic choice is left. Besides flexible machines, we have also invested in fully integrated design and engineering so that we can go from the idea to the (metal) product”.

“Our fleet of machines includes three laser tubes (one LT651, one LT712 and a Jumbo) for tubes ranging from 12 to 508 mm, two tube bending machines for up to OD130 mm, welding robot and flat laser systems for flat sheets that cover four areas of activity: structures for construction, as already mentioned, metal components integrating flat sheet and tubular parts, renewable energy and our own products”.

Our show room

This is a truly enviable fleet of machines like very few other companies in Europe. For example, the Jumbo, laser cuts tubes up to 508 mm or open profiles starting from a length of 12 m, a new wide range of applications are available now since laser cutting has only just been introduced. Even the ability to integrate tube elements with flat sheet from the design level is a considerable competitive advantage. The workshop of Ideas en Metal is a showroom by itself.

“The first laser tube that we bought was actually used to produce the elements for the structure where we are at right now” recalls Mr. Hevia. “How could we have put on the market a product that we were not using ourselves? It is solution that offers many advantages, changing the method



of site work. These structures are ideal for large areas that do not require columns. They are easy to assemble on site, because the work is done safely at ground level and then they are raised using hydraulic jacks, as they are both light and resistant at the same time. This is a technical solution that is spreading very quickly”.

“La novia”

In Ideas en Metal there are various signs of special and unusual approach to the factory. Each machine has a “new” name. The DYNAM4 tube bender of BLM, for example, has been renamed “la novia” given to its sinuous movements. The

laser tube machines have been named after a great Asturian businessman Luis Adaro, a personal friend of Mr. Hevia. It may sound a bit strange but it simply recalls Mr. Hevia’s entrepreneurial culture: “people work, create but do not live forever. A factory, on the other hand, is a place that can last much longer by continuously improving and innovating it. That is how it survives peoples’ lives and outlives them”.

At 75 years of age, Mr. Hevia Corte has still not finished with surprises and is already thinking about a new project. Just whisper in our ear. “I’m working on it for 2010”.

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At Swissmex, Mexico, the lasertube has streamlined production of agricultural machinery and has made it more flexible, helping to overcome the seasonal ups and downs of the market.

Lasertube for **agricultural** machinery



Swissmex is a company with 480 employees that exports 40% of its agricultural machinery and tools in thirty countries throughout the world. The remaining 60% is sold to the domestic market. The company started out back in 1962 as a simple importer of farming machinery (soil fumigator and reapers) but after the frontiers for this type of technology started to close, the company became a manufacturer. Today Swissmex produces an extremely vast line of products for any size and requirement, ranging from irrigation devices, fertilizer distributors, manual and powered sprayers, automation of sowing devices and harvesting to motor-spades and millers.

Small and diverse batches

As the area is mostly agricultural (no metal-working industries) and due to the poor reliability of the local sub-suppliers in terms of delivery and product quality Swissmex has always stood out thanks to the vertical integration of its production processes.

“We produce everything we need to make our products in-house – says Mr. Pedro Wirz Luchin-

gen, an engineer and general manager of the company – anything from washers, gears, plastic mouldings, springs and polyester bands. For this reason, in 2005 we purchased our first ADIGE LT120 lasertube cutting system, followed a year later by an automatic BLM DYNAMO tube bender, an ADIGE CM601 saw for bars and a second LT120 lasertube system. Investing in laser solutions has turned out to be a winning strategy as the flexibility needed to respond to the requirements of an extremely demanding





and evolving market like that of agricultural machinery are guaranteed”.

At Swissmex, production is just as variable as the quantity (there are years in which sales soar due to certain atmospheric conditions and others in which sales slump) or the time of year; some years sales reach their peak in the period from May to July, in others the peak is reached during the winter months.

“This is why the lasertube technology takes the cutting edge” says Wirz with a rather satisfied tone. “Many small and extremely different batches can be produced quickly; in fact, it only takes a couple of minutes to perform a complete production change.

Nowadays, if an order is received on a Monday, for example, the finished product can quite easily be despatched on Friday, thanks to the reduced production times. Likewise, the reduced stocks of finished product, which were once necessary to fill a customer’s order in the shortest possible time”.

From 9 to 4 operations For the chassis

The increased quality level of the elements produced and the considerable savings in the intermediate processes thanks to the lasertube are certainly worthy of mention. At one time, nine operations were needed to make a chassis: cutting, brushing, boring, milling, bending, washing, spot welding, welding and painting. Whereas today only four operations are required: laser cutting, washing, welding and painting. Moreover, welding robots have also been included in the production process. Each piece coming from the LT120 is the same as the previous one and therefore can be sent directly to the welding jigs without being spot-welded first. “As can be seen, laser systems have not only reduced the number of steps in the process - says Wirz once again – but have also cut down on the cost of machinery and management of semi-finished products, as well as consumables such as millers, drill bits, cutting disks, etc. and even on personnel. We hope that the growth in production continues so that we can buy other ADIGE lasertubes!

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Valsinello Srl, Italy, is part of a Group of four specialised companies, whose core business is flat sheet and tube processing

Group strength

Job shop

INSPIRED FOR TUBE



Mario Di Rocco



It's not easy to describe the variety of know-how and applications that can be seen at Valsinello Srl, a company that is specialised in processing flat sheet and tubes. The numbers, as usual, are much more effective than words and show a clear picture of this important business located in Abruzzo: 180 employees, a turnover of over €30 million, 28,000 sq.m of covered premises, 8 laser systems for large shapes (one for tubes and a combined laser-punching machine), in addition to various guillotine shears up to 6 m in length, 12 bending presses from 1.5 to 18 m with 800t, four welding robots and four milling machines (the latest, which is awaiting delivery, having a working range of up to 30 m).



This important company is located among the hilly area of Gissi in the Province of Chieti where the two founder-partners, Giuseppe D'Annunzio and Mario Di Rocco, while returning from Switzerland to grow up their kids in Italy back in 1976, decided to start produce sheet metal components. They immediately took the opportunity of putting their experience to good use by targeting on production methods that at the time were innovative and not only in Abruzzo. For example, with their first flat laser, they became known as "Valsinello, the laser company".

A sector of four companies

Today, Valsinello Srl is part of a group of four companies that offer different types of products or

processes and has been operating as a "job shop" in the steel sheet-working sector as a quality reference partner for many leading metal-working companies in various sectors. Teknolamiera Srl, on the other hand, is a company dedicated to welding and grinding processes. By listening to many of its customers, who were reorganising their businesses and had an impelling need to outsource increasing steps of their production cycles, the Group decided to invest in precision engineering applied to structural steel-works by upgrading Teknolamiera with robotised welding stations for large structures and large milling machines. To complete the Group are Automotive GM, a company specialised in industri-

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al assembly and Leomar Veicoli, a renowned brand in the production of industrial machinery and vehicles.

The companies are self-sufficient, creating an income in an area in which there is no real manufacturing cluster that is typical of the districts in Northern Italy. And this, too has been a winning strategy in an area that forces industry to search elsewhere for suppliers, customers and, at times, even skilled personnel, although the trend is to recruit local workers and to provide in-house training, because the attachment to the homeland is strong and has conveyed a sense of sacrifice and value of working.

No job is refused

With a large fleet of machines installed, Valsinello processes light and heavy structural steelworks to cover most sectors: truck and container chas-

sis cranes for ports, heavy vehicles, lifting systems, earth moving and agricultural machinery, chassis and frames for cleaning machines, fitness equipment, etc.

Development and growth have always gone hand in hand with investments. The latest system that has been installed towards the middle of last year was the ADIGE-SYS LT COMBO tube processing system, configured for cutting tubes with diameters of up to 225mm from a 13m length, as well as cutting large steel sheets. The need to install such a system was an important step that originated from the need to increase tube fabrication for sectors using tubular structures, handling medium-large tubes or flats used to make components to be assembled in products that also include tubular pieces.

Valsinello is always on the go. Even if all three shifts are fully covered the principle is: no job is ever turned down.



Ciclo Fapril, Portugal, has renewed its fleet of machines to guarantee maximum flexibility

Flexible machines assure versatility

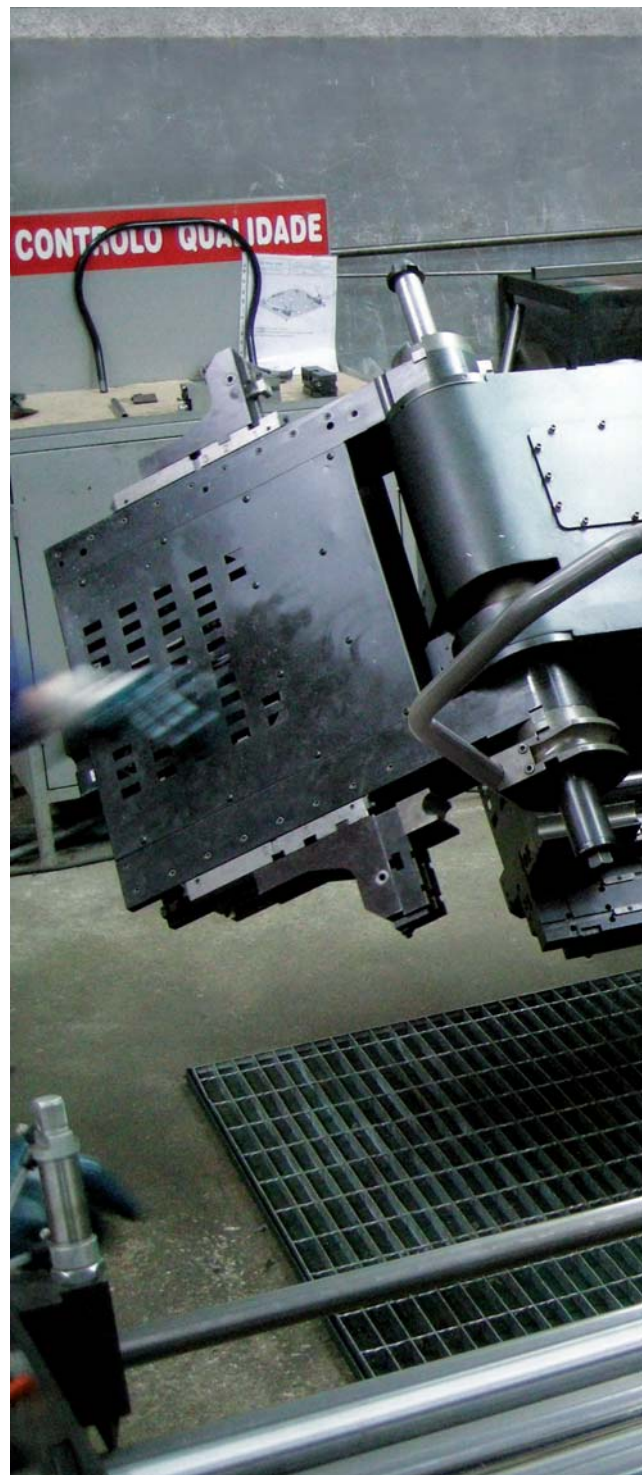
Ciclo Fapril SA in Portugal has undergone many changes over its 46 years of activity that make it stand out. As mentioned in the company name, the business set out as a producer of bicycle components to then move on to the supply of automotive components for Citroen and then the trend that followed over the years.

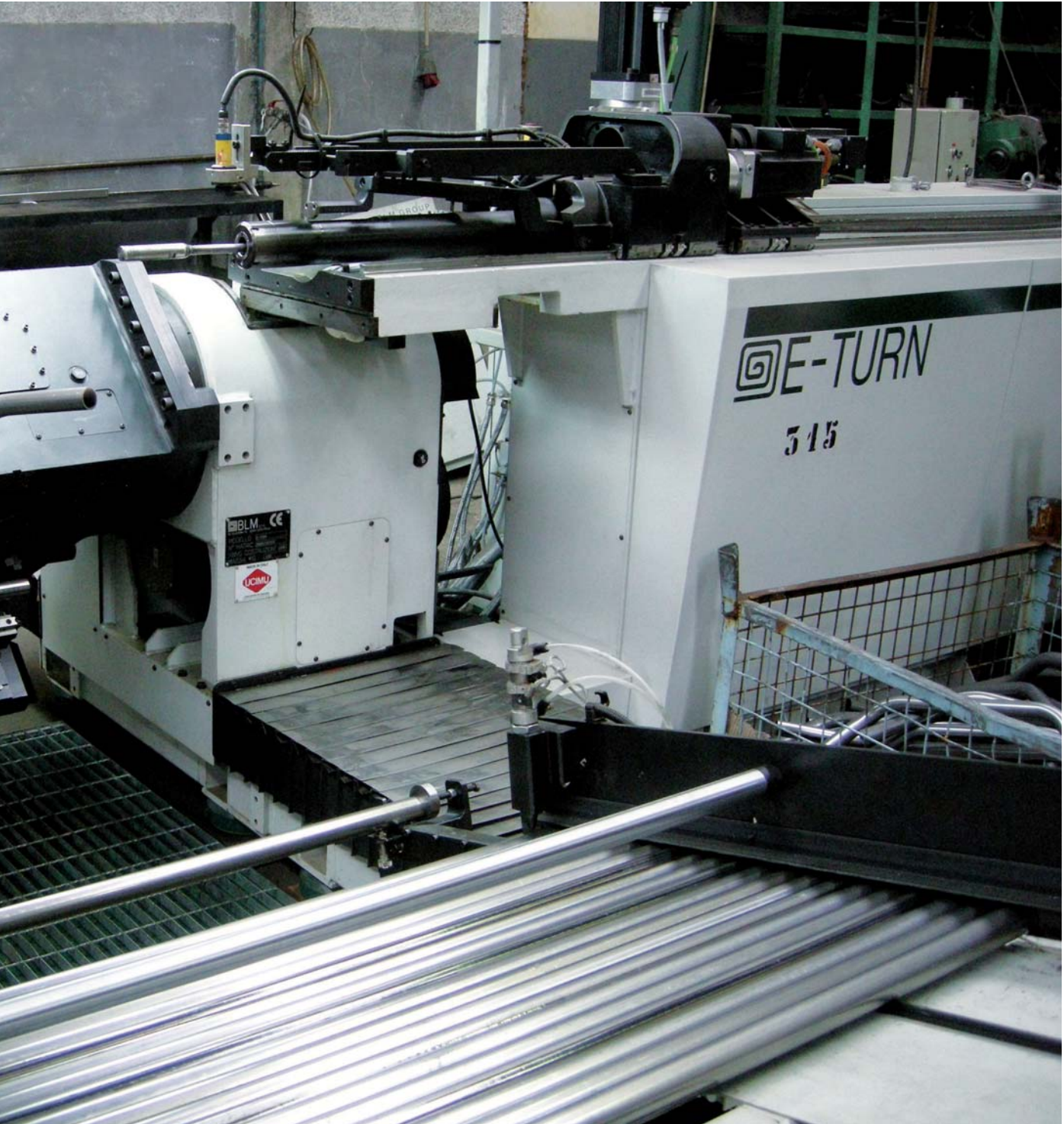
Ciclo Fapril of this decade has completely renovated its corporate shareholding as well as its marketing strategy. With the advent of the second generation, consisting of five brothers, sisters and cousins directly involved in the corporate activity directed by Vital Almeida, General Manager and Nuno Santos, Managing Director.

In-house technological know how

“We have over 160 employees and we are completing renovation of the fleet of machines and the production process to give us a configuration of a job shop based on the maximum flexibility” points out Vital Almeida. “Our market has evolved considerably; we provide tubular components and assemblies for automobiles, motorcycles and scooters, but also parts for eolic towers, products for the hospital sector and sanitary equipment.

We export 90% of our products throughout Europe and even further. To be at the height of our customers’ expectations we have to provide a full service: design, implementation of the equipment and welding jigs, quality control up to robotised welding. This is the type of organisation that we are about to complete”.







“The need to own engineering and manufacturing know-how – explains Almeida – had forced us to become self-sufficient and proactive with customers.

For this reason we are able to industrialise products with our own means, design and implement all welding and control jigs and offer a certified product. Moreover, having robotised the welding process with 26 stations, long-term repeatability of the single pieces is absolutely nec-

essary. A guarantee that is provided by the production systems used upstream for cutting and bending”.

Extremely flexible and versatile

In fact, if you take a walk through the workshop you can see the recently installed ADIGE LT712 lasertube and TS72 sawing machines and a few E-TURN and DYNAMO tube benders by BLM, from which the production process starts and ends in the robot welding cells. “This fleet of ma-



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chines makes us extremely flexible and versatile so that we can adapt to the most diverse applications” continues Vital Almeida.

“In the motorbike and scooter sector we supply, for example, very well known brands such as Peugeot, Malaguti and Piaggio, but at the same time we got jobs for the eolic towers where the internal access ladders are made of tube; we also supply the American office furnishing sector and companies linked to the sanitary equipment sector.

This versatility is our strong point”.

“To supply Europe from Portugal is not like being in France, Italy or in Germany. We feel as if we are at little at the bit at the borders and need to be attractive in terms of cost/quality without depending on others” says once again Vital Almeida.

You can tell when he talks that he wants to continue enhancing the production process and diversifying further the activity, but its still early to talk or even write about it.

A Spring full of **new** products by the BLM GROUP

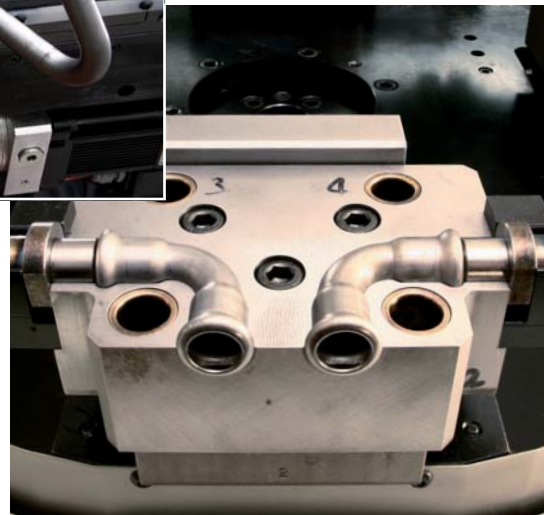
The Group

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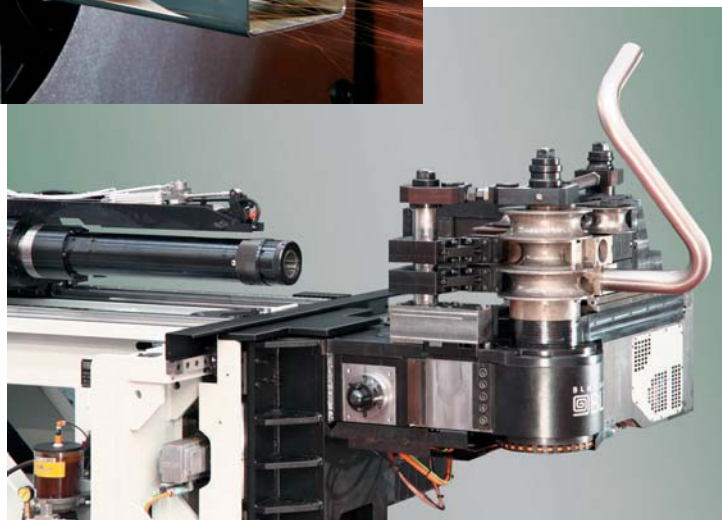
LT 722:
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and OD 80 mm.



Ross Taylor

Duright Engineering's CNC tube laser machines impart significant business benefits

Turnover more than doubled over a three year period

Judging by the experience of Duright Engineering, a West Midlands-based sub-contractor, the decision to move on from the traditional multi-machine approach can be a hard call to make but the rewards from investing in laser technology are far reaching and substantial.

Ross Taylor, Managing Director, does, however, point out that investment in new technology is definitely a chicken and egg situation. "When we first considered installing a CNC tube laser, we found

that without the machine in place customers would not talk in depth about the type of work we could do on it. So we couldn't count on getting the additional work needed to justify the purchase and, on the face of it, we were unwilling to risk an investment on this scale without that guarantee. Eventually, however, we jumped in with both feet, borrowed the money and took the gamble... and it has paid off for Duright and for our customers, who now enjoy the benefits of laser technology without having to worry about the upfront cost."





Turnover increase

Although a well-established business with a 30-year track record, installing its first BLM ADIGE tube laser had an immediate impact on Duright, contributing 30 per cent of turnover in the machine's first year of operation. And by the time a second, more powerful, BLM ADIGE tube laser was installed at the end of 2005 turnover had more than doubled over a three year period, although the number of people employed in the business had not increased. In 2007, with both its existing tube lasers working flat out 24/7, a third, latest generation, BLM ADIGE tube laser was installed in response to the growing demand from UK companies faced with a serious predicament.

"Their production requirements do not justify the purchase of their own tube laser," says Ross Taylor, Duright's Managing Director, "but continuing with traditional multiple machine processes with their high labour costs is making it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to compete against cheap labour economies. A robust pricing policy that reflects the speed, flexibility and productivity of our tube lasers provides an attractive alternative and has significantly ex-





panded our customer base. As well as competing for volume production we can also produce prototypes and re-designs in minutes rather than weeks or months, because it simply involves programming the tube lasers rather than the production of hard tooling. This benefits customers in terms of both development costs and time-to-market for new products.”

Within 20 minutes a finished component

Prior to installing its three BLM ADIGE tube lasers BS EN ISO 9001-accredited Duright Engineering was processing 3.5 million tubes a year for suppliers and distributors, mainly free issue materi-

al that was simply cut-to-length. Today it supplies UK and European customers with laser cut and profiled tube of any section in various materials from mild and stainless steels, titanium and exotics to aluminium, brass and copper. Quantities vary from one-offs to 200,000 or more, with Statistical Process Control (SPC) routinely applied to every order.

“We have a standard pricing policy based on the complexity of the work, whether it is 20 components or 20,000 components,” says Ross Taylor. “There is very little difference in terms of volume price because changeovers are so quick. A customer can come into the office with a drawing and within 20 minutes a finished component can be on the desk in front of him. This helps with the technical aspects of a design and the actual appearance of the component or assembly. Changes can be made and samples produced before there is any need to commit to volume production.”

Ideally, Duright likes to be involved at the design stage because this can



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save customers money. "It is not unusual to visit a company and find that it is carrying out second operation work that could be done on our laser machines at very little additional cost.

A recent example is of a round tube that originally was having a long slot and a hole punched in it. We laser cut samples and then found that the customer was carrying out second and third operation work. At that point we proved that we could easily integrate these additional operations into the initial laser cutting and profiling requirement. In fact, once customers appreciate fully what these

tube lasers can do, they start saying 'here's another part you could do'..."

"For more than half our customer base we now source material and provide full traceability of the machined component with a 100 per cent inspection capability," he says. "Having fully embraced CNC laser cutting and profiling, our intention is to offer even more value by way of tube bending and robot welding, because the trend is for OEMs to out-source as many components as possible and to buy in completed sub-assemblies whenever possible."

BLMGROUP DEUTSCHLAND has redefined its strategy and increased its capacity to meet customer's demands

A renewed strategy

BLM Group Deutschland GmbH, with offices in Unna, was founded in 1990 and since then has been following the Group's German customers. However, the presence of BLM and ADIGE products on the German market dates back to the '70s and already then the products were widely used and appreciated by the clientele.

A reviewed strategy

In 2008 the strategy and BLM GROUP service on the German market, which has always had a great interest in all the product lines, was reviewed to adapt to the needs of the coming years. As a first step, service and customer support has

been enhanced with highly specialised and trained staff to operate on all product lines. This is because most of our customers have bending, end forming and laser tube cutting or sawing machines that require service engineers to have full knowledge of every technical aspect and product line.

The new Service Team is led by Patrik Lorenzon and includes Jan Schmutzler, Andreas Hinz, Carsten Vogel-Habekost, Fabrizio Frigerio and Davide Venturini.

Our team is at the customer's service to guarantee competence, fast response and technological support.



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