



TRUMPF
Customer Report:
Stratford Tools Ltd

Stratford Tools takes UK's first TruMatic 6000 punch laser machine

November 2014 – Buckingham-based Stratford Tools, a specialist in the provision of subcontract precision sheet metalwork, has acquired the UK's first TruMatic 6000 punch/laser combination machine from TRUMPF. The investment by this progressive manufacturing business has led to reduced lead-times and enhanced quality.

Stratford Tools has come a long way since it was established by the current managing director in 1965 using a manual lathe in his spare bedroom. Today, the company occupies a 75,000 sq ft temperature controlled facility filled with a plethora of modern manufacturing technologies that help it serve high profile UK customers in sectors such as audio, broadcasting, defence, retail, security, IT and industrial instrumentation. With 42 employees, Stratford Tools commands an annual turnover in the region of £4.2 million and growing.

One of the common denominators behind its year-on-year success is a planned programme of ongoing investment in the latest machinery, a case in point being the TRUMPF TruMatic 6000 with 2kW TruFlow laser source, which was installed in April 2014.

“Over the past few years sales have grown significantly in products that are suited to this machine configuration, and, we needed to increase our manufacturing capacity and improve production efficiency in-line with this growth,” explains Company Manager, Stephen Cooke. “The TRUMPF TruMatic 6000 outperformed other machines we had considered in terms of quality, scratch-free processing and automation.”

The TruMatic 6000 is a robust punch/laser combination machine that offers a technically mature machine concept with intelligent software functions which provide the highest levels of process reliability. Features include scratch-free processing, automated tool changing, outstanding energy efficiency through ingenious laser technology and universal cooling interface, and a simple operating concept.

The configuration of the TruMatic 6000 at Stratford Tools includes SheetMaster automation and cart system, GripMaster automation, descending die technology and TruTops punch software. This level of automation allows the company to run unmanned, lights-out.



“To see a return on our investment, and to improve production efficiency, one of the main factors in our decision process was the ability to run lights-out,” says Mr Cooke. “The TruMatic 6000 is a very important purchase and complements our extensive range of production machines. As a subcontractor we rely on flexible manufacturing so we can remain competitive and satisfy our customer’s requirements. Typically we are finding that the TruMatic 6000 has improved the quality and reduced the run-time down to one third of the previous methods of production.”

According to Mr Cooke, the machine is being used to process everything from small brackets to large panels in all materials and thicknesses ranging from 0.7 to 3 mm. “We assess the suitability of each product before production, and focus on eliminating further tapping, forming and countersink processes,” he says. “We also try to batch similar materials and products as efficiently as we can so as to increase machine uptime.”

Mr Cooke adds that the TruMatic 6000 has introduced numerous advantages to production operations at Stratford Tools.

“Previously, the type of product that we now manufacture on the TruMatic 6000 would have been produced on two separate production machines: a stand alone laser and a turret punch,” he says. “Although this was effective it had a significant impact on capacity and labour content as sales increased.”

The process of transferring existing products to the new machine at Stratford Tools is well underway, and the company is now looking to open new revenue streams and attract new customers.



Processes offered by Stratford Tools include estimating, planning, designing, programming, laser cutting, punching, folding, welding, finishing, assembly, packing and dispatch.

“First and foremost, quality and service are our key operating factors,” concludes Mr Cooke. “We operate in a competitive industry, so the price is an important factor. To ensure we are delivering value, we work closely with customers and mechanical designers to ensure their product suits our processes.”

stratford tools
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