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P R E S S I N F O R M A T I O N

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CORNERFORMER PRODUCES HIGH QUALITY CORNERS WITHOUT THE NEED FOR WELDING

An ACF Multiflex MF 100 **CORNERFORMER** for cold forming of corners supplied by Shear-Form Machine Tools Ltd, Coventry, the sole UK representative for ACF Engineering & Automation, Austria has proved to be extremely successful both in production and having an influence on product design for Dudley Industries Ltd, the Lytham St Anne's washroom dispensing systems manufacturer.

A member of the Rentokil Initial Group, Dudley Industries original core business was the manufacture of towel dispensers. Today the company designs and manufactures around 150 different products ranging from stainless steel, mild metal, aluminium and plastic paper and soap dispensers, warm air dryers, mirrors as well as towel dispensers to other bespoke solutions for washrooms. 70% of production is supplied to the Group, the rest is delivered to leading paper towel manufacturers and washroom equipment suppliers.

The Company is a UK manufacturing success story with a turnover of £15m, a 8,370m² production plant and 130 employees. Where many UK manufacturers source from low cost countries, their manufacturing plant produces products for both UK and Export markets, mainly into Europe but also to a developing Asian market. Success lies in their ability to be flexible both in design and production –

small production runs of specifically designed products to meet the requirements of individual customers is their hallmark.

Their products are made using 0.7-1.2mm steel coil and sheet as well as 3.0mm aluminium, many designed with panels comprising rounded corners, important in today's safety environment. Until earlier this year their corners on stainless steel and mild steel panels were produced using TIG and MIG welding and then machined to produce a rounded finish that was acceptable to the customer or ready for spray painting.

The Multiflex MF100 **CORNERFORMER** forms 4 closed corners of a single zinc coated mild steel panel in 52 seconds with no manual zinc coating in the corner area required afterwards. Using mild steel with an enamel coating, the cold formed corner is evenly distributed and is resistant against temperatures in excess of 960° centigrade. When using stainless steel there is no material colour change and no pickling is required.

Ian MacFarlane, Production Director, Dudley Industries takes up the story: "I am always looking for new technologies and processes to better our production. We pride ourselves on the ability to talk to our customers and create new product design proposals that satisfy their requirements with short lead times and high levels of flexibility. We don't compete with low cost countries where they make 10,000 units and you can only have it one way.

I first came across the **CORNERFORMER** as editorial in an industrial journal and when I contacted Shear-Form I only had one product in the back of my mind, on which it could be used. The product had both a lot of hand welding and dressing to produce corners with the required design finish and I saw this equipment as the answer plus it was a one man operation as against two."

When Shear-Form went to see Dudley Industries, they had just received enquiries for new designs of washroom mirrors and cabinets. In fact they had 3 design projects going on at the same time and the customer wanted a soft approach to all the corners. When Francois Meillet, the Shear-Form Sales Engineer showed Ian samples of finished corners, he saw immediately that it would take away the high cost of welding and the variability in the skill of the operator.

Ian MacFarlane continued: "We decided to build the Multiflex's capabilities into our customers' design requirements for rounded corners with different radiuses. Soon we had a customer who wanted a product which we could make but would cost significantly more with welded corners than if we went ahead and purchased a CORNERFORMER. The customer wanted a large 100 mm radius, so we purchased the MF100 knowing we also had the capability to produce products with a much smaller radii, in fact our requirement was down to 10 mm. The machine can actually produce corners with a radius of 2mm, so it was well within our specifications.

We know from our production forecasts that the payback is well under 2 years. We also know that we had another piece of equipment which has made us even more flexible, giving us more options when designing new products."

The machine was installed last November and is working up to full production as new products are introduced, Dudley Industries has actually redesigned 2 existing products to fit in with the capabilities of the machine and the corners being produced are just what they were looking for and the customer is very pleased.

The Company use a press brake operator and he has found the equipment easy to operate by just using a footswitch. It has a programmable control unit using ACF designed software and is fully enclosed with safety door to meet all CE standards.

The Multiflex MF100 is largest in a range of 3 CORNERFORMER's for panel fabrication, able to form corners on a multitude of products including; electrical cabinet doors, computer casings, trays, lids, oven doors, bathroom accessories, furniture, suitcase covers, cladding, bottom pans for humidifiers as well as traffic and other signs and can be used on galvanised and cold rolled mild steel and aluminium up to 6.0 mm thick and stainless steel up to 3.0 mm.

All models have universal tooling to give the operator flexibility in individual panel fabrications that are unaffected by the material being used, the thickness of the material or the flange height of the panel and the minimum panel size that the machine can handle is 64 mm x 64 mm, with no limits to the maximum length and width.

952words

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