

Shear-Form Machine Tools Ltd

Unit 3,
Parbrook Industrial Estate,
Torrington Avenue
COVENTRY
West Midlands CV4 9XY

Telephone:02476 695600
Telefax:02476 695601
e-mail:clive@shear-form.co.uk

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

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CORNER FORMER ELIMINATES NEED FOR WELDING AT COLT INTERNATIONAL

When Austrian based ACF Engineering and Automation's UK agent Shear-Form Machine Tools Ltd., the Coventry based sheet metal and plate working machinery supplier sold a Multiflex Cornerformer machine to Colt International Ltd in Havant, Hampshire, it eliminated the need to TIG weld the corners on the products and systems they manufacture for the heating, ventilation, fan cooling and building industries.

Colt's products include ventilators to take smoke away from buildings, louvre cladding such as used in the Canary Wharf Tower in London, louvred vents for warehouses and window vents for shopping centres as well as inflow and powered extract vents and products for the fan coil industry.

Not only has the Multiflex Cornerformer eliminated Colt's welding operations, it has improved product quality and production times; importantly it has allowed Colt International to change the product material being used, producing the largest percentage cost savings.

It also gives Colt a very clean corner and in one particular product with a 9mm radius, this radius is of such high quality, giving improved water flow, because the product is being used as a condensation trough.

The Multiflex Cornerformer is used in panel fabrication being designed for the forming of corners on electrical cabinet doors, computer casings, trays, lids, oven doors, furniture, suitcase covers, cladding, bottom pans for humidifiers as well as traffic and other signs.

The tooling design, gives the operator flexibility unaffected by the material being used or the thickness of the material and there is no panel or door size limitation. There is a maximum flange height of 35mm.

It can form 4 closed corners of a single galvanised door in around 60 seconds after which no manual zinc coating in the corner area is required. The cold formed corner is evenly distributed and is resistant against temperatures in excess of 960° centigrade.

Multiflex can be used with mild steel and aluminium up to 3.00mm in thickness and stainless steel up to 2.00mm, being controlled by a Siemens PLC and operated by footswitch, it is also fully enclosed meeting all CE standards.

Bradley Smith, Manufacturing Engineering Manager at Colt International Ltd said: "At the beginning of last year, our brief was to look at how we could increase our margins on fan coils. I had seen the ACF Cornerformer at MACH 98 in the NEC, Birmingham, but was unable to justify investment on the machine at that time due to the low volume per annum. When we received the brief, the Cornerformer was one of the things we looked at because our volumes had quadrupled over 3 years and we were now able to justify the expenditure. Also our figures showed that the payback time was less than a year and a half.

Three years ago we were using mild steel which was welded and painted, and then we moved to stainless steel. We wanted to get away from stainless steel because of its cost and we wanted to get away from TIG welding as well. It was only a one man operation, but it was slow, the Cornerformer is a much faster operation. The biggest percentage savings we have with the Cornerformer is that we can now use galvanised materials. The current tooling allows us to use 1.0mm and 1.2mm material, but we can go up to 2mm by just changing the blocks and the roller.

We are also looking at producing 45° angle corners as well as 90° corners. Tool changing is very quick.

We are very happy with the machine and we found ACF to be very helpful when we needed it. We have been happy with the service provided by Shear-Form engineers, who were able to install and commission the machine as well as give us some tuition in a couple of days

We purchased the Cornerformer some months ago and already we are seeing the benefits, not only with costs but with a positive improvement in product quality and improved practice. We are still learning and in fact we have found it useful in making trays for use under benches and machines on the shop floor, which is currently being reorganised. It has already shown us in a very short period of time that our unit costs have been reduced, which is just what the Management brief was looking for.”

For further information:
Clive Meir, Director,
Shear-Form Machine Tools Ltd,
Telephone: 02476 695600
e-mail: clive@shear-form.co.uk

Issued by:
Martin H. Clark
Clark Associates Ltd
Telephone: 01952 413253
Mobile: 07976 727703
e-mail: clarkassociates@blueyonder.co.uk