

Combined forces strengthen production at KMF

KMF (Precision Sheet Metal)'s investment in the latest manufacturing technology has continued with the commissioning of a high-end Trumpf TruMatic 7000 punch laser combination machine. This latest installation enhances the versatility of the Newcastle under Lyme company's sheet metal processing capacity.

The investment policy at KMF is driven by the need to provide customers with a high value-added mix of capacity, speed, flexibility and technical capability. This latest £900,000 installation fits that brief perfectly, with the combination punch/laser offering significant productivity benefits at the company's 120,000 ft² site in North Staffordshire.

The TruMatic 7000 features a 4kW laser combined with a punching rate of 1200/1min, with capacity to process sheet measuring 1250 by 1250 mm and up to 8mm thick. KMF has linked the machine to a twin Stopa, fully automated, sheet handling system with automatic load/unload of the sheet managed by the Trumpf Sheetmaster system. All of this is integrated to KMF's Epicor9 ERP system for material stock control to create a very powerful and cost-effective manufacturing solution.

The added versatility of the TruMatic 7000 is also benefiting customers of KMF's growing aerospace business, located at its Advanced Solutions manufacturing facility. The demands of this aerospace work vary from the company's day-to-day production, in that the requirement is for low volume, highly complex, and highly varied piece parts that generally require more exotic material grades. This leads to a greater emphasis on maximising sheet utilisation, without falling into the trap of manufacturing to stock just to lower the piece part cost.

"This new installation enhances our promise of being able to make just what the customer wants, when they want it, without sacrificing material or processing efficiencies," says Keith Nicholl, KMF's business improvement manager. This is achieved through use of dynamic nesting software under the guidance



of KMF's team of programming/nesting engineers, who are fully exploiting the powerful features of the Trumpf TruMatic 7000 punch/laser combination machine.

These features include Active Die, which reduces the 'clamp edge' to a minimum, the machine's intelligent two axis technology allows common cuts to be achieved with ease, allowing even tighter nesting of components. Active die feature enables KMF to produce much larger and higher forms in combination with an active upward forming stroke. While important to all customers the TruMatic 7000's ability to provide scratch free sheet processing by lowering the active die when positioning or removing the sheet, is of critical importance to its aerospace customers who are looking for a blemish free product to achieve technical or aesthetic specifications.

"The combination of punch and laser in one machine, along with the automation and storage systems that we have integrated, greatly increases the variety of parts and features that can be processed without being limited by tooling. And the added versatility in terms of production will bring significant benefits to workflow and sheet usage," concludes Keith Nicholl.

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The Trumpf TruMatic 7000 punch laser installed at KMF is helping to further enhance the company's manufacturing versatility