

With steel wire, ABL Traddetaljer produces some of its own products, even if the core business is related to contract work for third parties in all areas of application. "With the BLM DH2010 VGP BLM wire bending machine ABL is able to adjust quickly to production changes managing to be efficient in the production of both large and small batches.

Imagination is the **only** limit

In the current world economic situation it is heartening to see a European company that has not noticed the crisis, thanks to a far-sighted diversification policy and targeted investments in technology.

We speak with Mr. Juha Karthu owner of ABL Traddetaljer, a company based in Anderstop, Sweden, founded in 1986 by three members whose initials make up the acronym of the company's name (Anders, Bengt and Lennart). Since the beginning, the idea was to produce special wire for third parties.

In 2007, Mr. Karthu joined the company by acquiring 66% of the capital to become owner together with Anders, the only remaining partner of the three founders. "I didn't want to change the name because it was well under way, and because you're always on top no matter what alphabetical order," says Juha Karthu with a smile. The company now has a head count of nine employees and can rely on a turnover of about 25 million Swedish crowns.

Flexibility and full service

As regards wire bending, ABL has extensive experience and before buying the BLM DH2010 VGP system last year, has worked with different wire bending models. "I think this machine has brought us to a different level in wire bending because it can produce parts that could not be achieved with traditional single-head wire bending machines," says Mr Karthu immediately.

ABL produces some of its own products with the steel wire, such as CD wall racks, but the core business is manufacturing for third parties, therefore, covering all areas of application with different needs and different issues. "With the DH2010 VGP we are able to adapt quickly to pro-



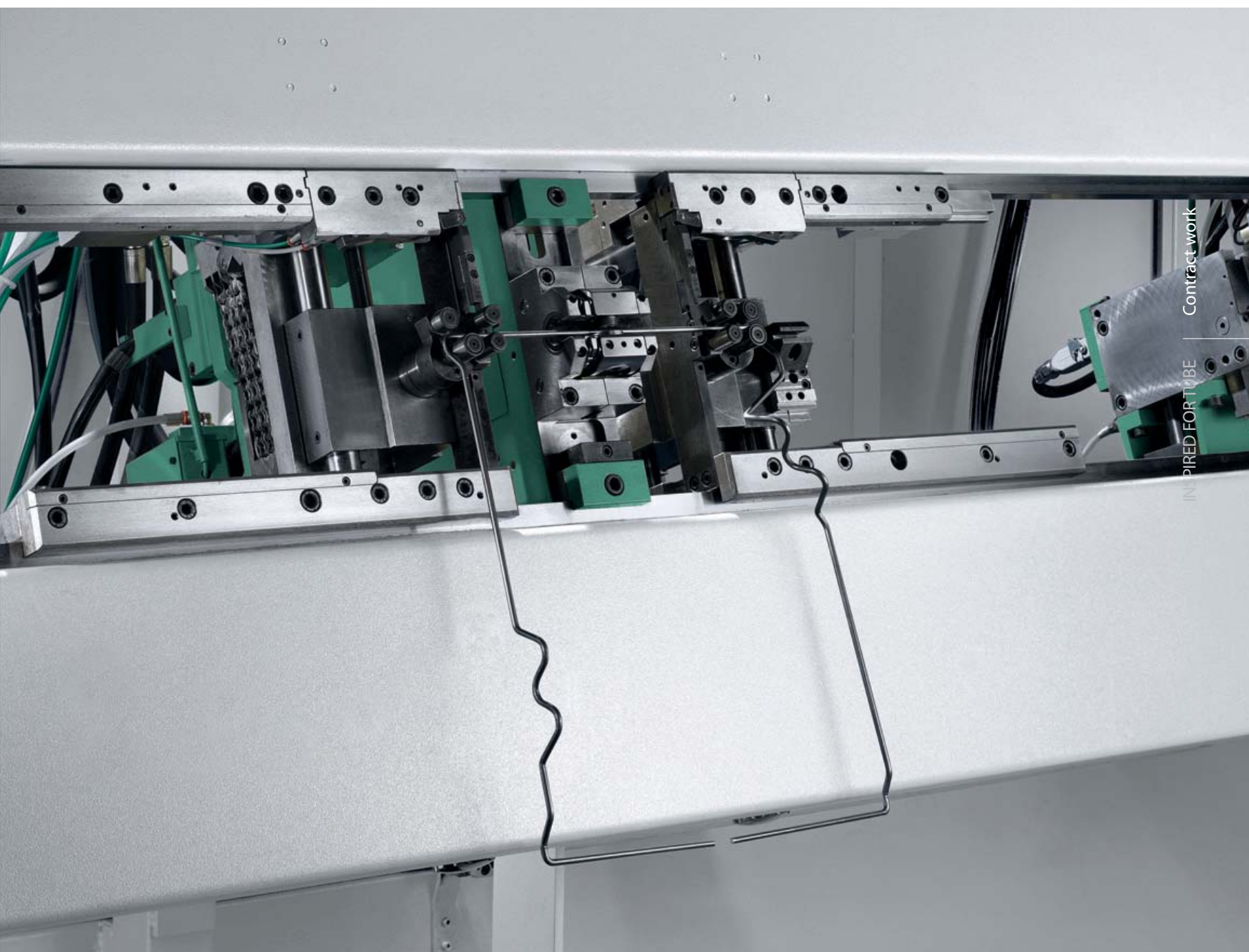
duction changes and yet still maintain efficiency whether we are producing large or small batches" explains Mr. Karthu, who continues: "I think our customers appreciate the flexibility; from when we receive the order up to delivery, we provide a full service that includes a high level of competence throughout the process from the coil to the production of the finished piece."

Piece flatness is guaranteed

Quality of the pieces is a key element of the ABL business, which can thus work with major customers such as: BabyBjörn (articles for children), Husqvarna (lawn and garden equipment), Combi Safe (fences) and Klippo, that before being taken over by Husqvarna "was the

Rolls Royce of mowers." For ABL, quality is achieved through the choice of innovative and technologically avant-garde machines that offer tangible benefits. "The great advantage of the DH2010 is that it is equipped with two heads," says Mr. Karthu. "Take, for example a frame which, if it is made on a machine with a single head requires a first bend and already from the second one a quantity of wire is cantilevered and increases at every bend, which disturbs the process. When you get to the end, the result may not be accurate as it is on the DH with two heads working at the same time in a few steps with little cantilever material and the product is made." The flatness of the finished workpiece is guaranteed.

Of course the two heads also involve a high working speed and greater process efficiency. "We produce many frames of different types and this solution ensures a saving in the production cycle. Currently we have an ongoing bid for Husqvarna to produce about one hundred and twenty thousand support structures for mower collecting bags and thanks to the high speed of the BLM machine, we were able to make an offer that I believe will allow us to win the bid," says Mr. Karthu optimistically.



Job changing in only 20 minutes

One of the first wire bending machines purchased was a Montorfano, which in fact is the predecessor of the BLM DH 2010 VGP system and it is therefore natural to make a comparison. "We were very comfortable with the Montorfano machine, but obviously it was from another era. The all-electric technology of the DH 2010 is already a major technological leap. First, we needed a couple of hours to change from one product to another and constant manning by an operator. Now with the all-electric machine, production changes can be performed in 20 minutes and the machine produces". The programming software is also a crucial point. With the experience that the company already

had with other programming software, that of the DH2010 VGP at first seemed to be a little complicated because of the many features offered, but after becoming aware of the various opportunities available, it has become a powerful and easy to use tool. To be borne in mind, however, that some elements that are feasible on the DH 2010 are not easy to make. "The market has changed a lot. When we started, delivery times were around four weeks, and now this has been halved. Flexibility also means this, organisational skills, but also having sufficiently flexible tools to meet the growing needs of the market from every point of view", says Mr. Karthu again. "Today, with the production systems available in the wire and tube bending field,

the only limit to implementing details is the designer's imagination." A careful choice in the machinery and differentiation are therefore the key elements that have helped ABL to grow even during the global downturn, maintaining, among other things, the same number of employees. "Having many customers in different fields that give an important part of the turnover helps us to sail through the troubled waters of this market," says Mr. Karthu and then continues: "For this reason, the next step will be a machine that can bend up to 14 mm wires, which will allow us to expand the market. There are many interesting elements in the furnishing field, such as chairs, for example, that use 10 to 12 mm dia. wires."