

A SINGLE ACTOR FOR THE ENTIRE TUBE SUPPLY CHAIN



The company

If upon hearing Croatia your mind is already picturing sunny beaches flowing into the crystal clear sea, stop right there because the company we are talking about, Sobočan d.o.o., is based in Mursko Središće, a small town in the far north, very close to the Slovenia border far from the sea, but abound with beautiful mountain landscapes. Sobočan is a family business that produces furniture for stores, offices, and hotels. Their

industry is highly competitive often catering to demanding customers from major company brands requiring production batches from a few units to several thousand. It is not easy to succeed and continue to grow through customer retention, but Sobočan has done just that as Franjo Sobočan, owner and founder explains: "From the very beginning we have been in the business of making furniture for stores, offices and hotels. We started with 5 people

in a small shed and gradually grew by investing step by step in technology with the mentality that you can learn how to do anything and now the company employs 210 people in about 13,000sqm of factories and a design studio in Zagreb. Over time, people's skills and experience have also grown and we have become capable of doing more and more complex designs until ultimately we created our own line of furniture."



HIGH TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS GUARANTEE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND PRODUCTION CONTROL



Building customer loyalty

Sobočan's market is primarily Europe. "The turning point for the company was when Croatia became a member of the European Union. The company was already doing well, but joining the EU made it easier to work in European countries, and we also started working with some important partners. Now we export 60-65% of our turnover," the owner explains.

Among the customers are many well-known names in retail, chain stores and hotels operating worldwide such as Intersport, DM (Drogerie Markt), Crocs, Valamar, and Bluesun, putting Sobočan's products in stores and hotels in many countries, including America. There are also current plans for new installations in the Middle East including countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Franjo Sobočan explains how Sobočan came to be a supplier to such important companies, "Being reliable in delivering quality products on time. If you do this, over the years, you establish a solid and lasting relationship with customers that endures even when small problems arise which can always happen."

Cutting-edge technologies for processing all materials

In the beginning, Sobočan had limited know-how to work with the different materials that had to be processed to make furniture such as wood and metal. Today the situation is much different, thanks to the increased experience of their people, but also to the company's investments into the latest technology that has made it possible to greatly shorten the supply chain. "Today we have the capacity and experience in-house to process all the materials we need," Franjo explains, "and we can do everything under one roof. This is an achievement that makes us proud of the skills we have acquired and, above all, gives us a competitive advantage that translates into greater control over the cost and time of production."

Investment, as mentioned, has played an essential role in process improvement. "In the last few years, we have come to a rather high level of organization with high earnings and therefore have been able to make a substantial investment in the best technologies to process wood and metal, about 4 million in the last 3 years. Now we

think we are in a prime situation to be more ambitious and tackle more ambitious projects," Franjo Sobočan concludes.

The investments, the organization

For a company that has grown a lot in a few years, the ability to evolve has been essential. "We've invested a lot in digitizing the production process, we've had a new ERP for a couple of years now, and we've hired several junior engineers. Previously, we had one system for finance and one for production, now they are unified, and we use Solid works to design products." The digitization of the production process also naturally passes through the latest production systems. In fact, the upgrade of the production systems was purposely done by investing in the latest generation systems that, in addition to high performance, ensure that they can be integrated into a digitized production process. Regarding metalworking and in particular laser processing on metal tube, the chosen investment was an LT7 from BLM GROUP.

Keeping up with the times with the LT7

The LT7 is the result of BLM GROUP's more than 30 years of experience in manufacturing Lasertube systems and includes all the highest level features available for this type of machine, both in terms of performance and functionality as well as ergonomics and ease of use. Sobočan's primary goal was to speed up processes in a flexible way, that is, to have a machine that is fast and can change machining operations quickly. The results went beyond expectations, "I remember when we commissioned the LT7 and saw the first cuts. Everyone was surprised by the

cleanliness and precision of the cut, things we could not achieve with previous systems," the owner explains and continues, "the speed is not only in the cutting process, but also in the subsequent steps. Thanks to the precision of the system, operations that previously required multiple steps are now completed with laser cutting and welding. At the end of the year, we have a large order of shelves for Crocs requiring 5 or 6 parts for each element, we are talking about processing thousands of pieces and in a shortened time frame that is simply incomparable to before." Until two years ago, Sobočan worked only from customer drawings,

but now they have accumulated a great deal of technical experience and have a large collection of solutions to the point where they are able to offer their own product line.

The final judgment

Franjo Sobočan concludes: "The experience with BLM GROUP is very satisfying. Buying a machine we took a risk, but the experience was positive. The delivery was on time and the technical support reacted promptly when there was a need, this is very important for us. In fact, it was for this reason that we turned to a supplier like BLM GROUP."



**HIGH PERFORMANCE,
ASTONISHING PRECISION
AND INCOMPARABLE
PROCESS SPEED**

