

Taking the risk in w

FHL Bjoern, Hungary, is a very interesting producer whose vast knowledge in tube bending and forming techniques has certainly played an important role in the company's success. Given the context, the relationship with the BLM Group is almost that of a total partnership.

FHL started its business in 1995 producing towel radiators and after rapidly acquiring a significant share of the domestic market in the field, seized the opportunity to move to a much larger and interesting market. Mr. Jozsef Geszeler, owner of the Company, explains that initially the radiators, which were mostly exported, were made up almost exclusively of straight tubes. Then the evolution of the market towards a more aesthetically refined product led to the use of curved tubes, and this was a turning point for FHL.

With the purchase of the first tube bending system, a Slovak semi-automatic machine, neighbouring companies started asking for parts. Among these companies was Benteler, who required significant quantities of parts for

the automotive industry. In short, it was therefore necessary to buy a second machine and this time after a careful evaluation, the hydraulic operating BLM 842 was chosen and installed in 2000.

The company decided to buy BLM because of the flexibility of the company from Cantù with which a relationship of mutual trust was established that produced a profitable cooperation that still continues today. In fact, since then, almost every year FHL bought a BLM machine: tube bending machines (NC842VGP, DYNAMO, SMART E-TURN) and end-forming machines (TUBE-FORM and AST), and also measuring systems (TubeInspector) to measure and certify the shapes. The latest machines that have recently been purchased are two benders; an E-TURN and a Smart, both fully electric.

The courage to invest

Today FHL works with companies such as VW, Audi and Suzuki and the automotive industry has become by far the company's core business. The total sale of towel radiators amounts to 160,000 pieces and FHL make 30,000. Their market share has not decreased over time, but it is the automotive industry in which, year after year, they have doubled the market share, acquiring greater importance.

Initially, the turnover was divided equally between the automotive and radiator sectors, with an amount of €300,000 each; now the turnover relating to the production of radiators is 600,000€ but over a total turnover that exceeded €28m in 2012. The impressive growth is confirmed by a few numbers: starting with 11 employees, the head count today is 350; from 400 square me-



hat one believes in

tres at the beginning, the facilities have expanded to 8,000 square metres and will soon become 10,000; and the turnover has increased from €14m in 2011 to over €28m in 2012.

In 2008, in full recession, there was a 40% decline in work. "Incomes have decreased, but expenses have remained the same - explains Mr. Geszler - But right in that period we invested heavily and we were able to acquire new customers that have kept us afloat. We purchased machines from BLM and the relationship of trust that had been established was important in terms of payment, which allowed us to invest without having to turn to banks.

The best machine is always the latest

"Even in the technical field, BLM has accompanied us with continuous development", recalls Mr. Geszler. "On the first machines, tool changing took about an hour and a half, whereas now with the quick changing systems it can be done in about 10 minutes. Moreover, the all-electric technology was also an important step and is now indispensable.

"Working with hydraulic machines is no longer possible because of the requirement for accuracy.

Demand has changed compared to a few years back", says Geszler. "With hydraulic machines, the external temperature and the oil temperature affect the accuracy and repeatability in an inconsistent way with the required tolerances of today."

Considering the large number of systems purchased from BLM and, therefore, their knowledge of the BLM products, it is natural to ask Mr. Geszler which machine has most affected or satisfied them. The answer is dry, "it has always been the latest one we bought.

If BLM comes up with something new, it is likely that soon we will buy it." The philosophy is to remain at the forefront. "Who comes to visit us must find a technologically advanced environment," explains Mr. Geszler.

It's not just a matter of prestige, "to produce the radiators, we bought a welding robot that costs as much as a year's turnover, and soon after that we saw at the trade fair a furnace that was far more efficient than robots. With a lease we bought the furnace and the robots worked for two weeks only. Then we found another job for them too; but had we not done so, we would have missed some interesting opportunities. When an opportunity arises it should always be seized without fear; had we been content with what we had, we would have been wrong. Entrepreneurship is also a matter of taking risks in what you believe in."