

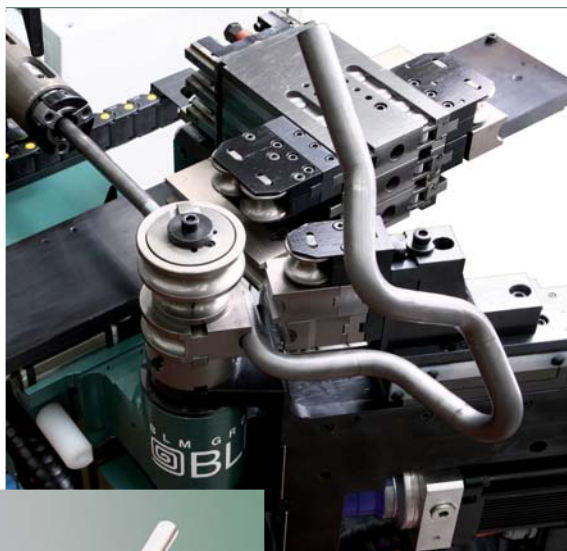
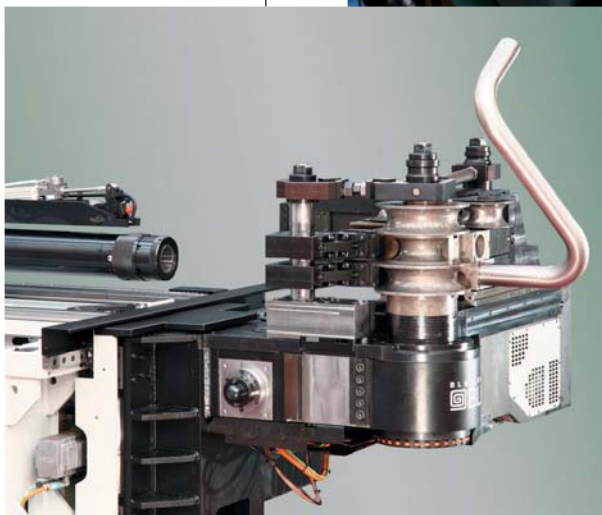


A Spring full of **new** products by the BLM GROUP

The Group

INSPIRED FOR TUBE

LT 722:
eighth generation
of lasertube, a
market reference in
its sector,
with even higher
performances.



DYNAMO LR150:
electric tube bending
machine with right
and left-hand bending
sense for tubes
up to 25 mm with
average output rate
of 1 bend/sec.



TUBEFORM:
high-productive
tube-endforming machine
producing 2 tubes at a time.

ELECT:
a new range of multi-radius electric benders up to OD 60 and OD 80 mm.





Ross Taylor

Duright Engineering's CNC tube laser machines impart significant business benefits

Turnover more than doubled over a three year period

Judging by the experience of Duright Engineering, a West Midlands-based sub-contractor, the decision to move on from the traditional multi-machine approach can be a hard call to make but the rewards from investing in laser technology are far reaching and substantial.

Ross Taylor, Managing Director, does, however, point out that investment in new technology is definitely a chicken and egg situation. "When we first considered installing a CNC tube laser, we found

that without the machine in place customers would not talk in depth about the type of work we could do on it. So we couldn't count on getting the additional work needed to justify the purchase and, on the face of it, we were unwilling to risk an investment on this scale without that guarantee. Eventually, however, we jumped in with both feet, borrowed the money and took the gamble...and it has paid off for Duright and for our customers, who now enjoy the benefits of laser technology without having to worry about the upfront cost."



Turnover increase

Although a well-established business with a 30-year track record, installing its first ADIGE tube laser had an immediate impact on Duright, contributing 30 per cent of turnover in the machine's first year of operation. And by the time a second, more powerful, ADIGE tube laser was installed at the end of 2005 turnover had more than doubled over a three year period, although the number of people employed in the business had not increased. In 2007, with both its existing tube lasers working flat out 24/7, a third, latest generation, ADIGE tube laser was installed in response to the growing demand from UK companies faced with a serious predicament.

"Their production requirements do not justify the purchase of their own tube laser," says Ross Taylor, Duright's Managing Director, "but continuing with traditional multiple machine processes with their high labour costs is making it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to compete against cheap labour economies. A robust pricing policy that reflects the speed, flexibility and productivity of our tube lasers provides an attractive alternative and has significantly ex-





panded our customer base. As well as competing for volume production we can also produce prototypes and re-designs in minutes rather than weeks or months, because it simply involves programming the tube lasers rather than the production of hard tooling. This benefits customers in terms of both development costs and time-to-market for new products."

Within 20 minutes a finished component

Prior to installing its three ADIGE tube lasers BS EN ISO 9001-accredited Duright Engineering was processing 3.5 million tubes a year for suppliers and distributors, mainly free issue material that

was simply cut-to-length. Today it supplies UK and European customers with laser cut and profiled tube of any section in various materials from mild and stainless steels, titanium and exotics to aluminium, brass and copper. Quantities vary from one-offs to 200,000 or more, with Statistical Process Control (SPC) routinely applied to every order.

"We have a standard pricing policy based on the complexity of the work, whether it is 20 components or 20,000 components," says Ross Taylor. "There is very little difference in terms of volume price because changeovers are so quick. A customer can come into the office with a drawing and within 20 minutes a finished component can be on the desk in front of him. This helps with the technical aspects of a design and the actual appearance of the component or assembly. Changes can be made and samples produced before there is any need to commit to volume production."

Ideally, Duright likes to be involved at the design stage because this can





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save customers money. "It is not unusual to visit a company and find that it is carrying out second operation work that could be done on our laser machines at very little additional cost.

A recent example is of a round tube that originally was having a long slot and a hole punched in it. We laser cut samples and then found that the customer was carrying out second and third operation work. At that point we proved that we could easily integrate these additional operations into the initial laser cutting and profiling requirement. In fact, once customers appreciate fully what these

tube lasers can do, they start saying 'here's another part you could do'..."

"For more than half our customer base we now source material and provide full traceability of the machined component with a 100 per cent inspection capability," he says. "Having fully embraced CNC laser cutting and profiling, **our intention is to offer even more value by way of tube bending and robot welding**, because the trend is for OEMs to out-source as many components as possible and to buy in completed sub-assemblies whenever possible."