



FRANCE

Blum-Novotest, partner of Huron

Their first contact was made in laser tool setting. The varied customer needs induced Blum-Novotest also to develop mechanical tool setting systems based on the technical know-how gained in laser systems. Today, Huron is proud to be able to offer these measuring systems in its own machines.

A price war is raging in the world of machine tools. Although 100% convinced of the advantages of laser measuring systems in their machines, Huron offers its customers also mechanical tool setting systems of Blum-Novotest. "Thanks to these cost-efficient probes, we can now offer measuring systems in all machining centres and all areas of application," says Dominique Lutz, Sales Manager at Huron. "The most important functions of the laser systems were adopted by the Blum-Novotest tool setting systems. Moreover, Blum-Novotest is significantly more reliable than other suppliers and their customer service is really fast," comments General Manager Bernard Echevard. The two companies look back on many years of close cooperation world-wide. Guillaume Thenon, Branch Manager of Blum-Novotest France, explains, "Huron has been a partner of Blum from the very onset of our laser technology, particularly in the field of software development." Of course, we benefited from these synergies when introducing the tool setting probes.

Fast and precise

Blum-Novotest offers three different measuring solutions for machine tools: Non-contact laser tool setting systems, of which several hundreds were sold to Huron machining centres in recent years; the TC series probes for workpiece measurement during and after machining; and mechanical tool setting systems. The best-selling probes being the multidirectional TC52 systems (for small processing centres: 40 mm probe diameter with a repetition accuracy of 0.3 microns at a probing speed of 2m/min) and the TC50 universal probe (63 mm probe diameter with a repetition accuracy of 0.3 microns at a probing speed of 2m/min). These systems work with infrared transmission, the technology at the core of the "Duo-Pack" touch probe/tool setting probe. In duo mode, both systems work with a single receiver. The system may be configured to distinguish between the currently

active and inactive probe during measurement. At first sight, workpiece measurement in the machining centre does not seem to make sense due to chips and dirt. Once it has been integrated into the machine, however, most people are surprised at the accuracy achieved as compared to the measuring machine. An additional advantage of machine-integrated measurement is the time factor, since it is no longer necessary to waste any time transporting the parts between the shop floor and the quality control department. Even if users believe to have "bought the machine tool for production, not for measuring," the integration of measuring systems in the machine in combination with a measuring program running during the machining cycle can result in significantly increased productivity. "We improve the quality of produced workpieces," says Michel Kimenau, Technical Director at Huron.

Productivity gains

Nowadays, technical cooperation is nothing out of the ordinary. A company producing parts for the aerospace industry had ordered four new large machines in order to increase its productivity. Technical consultation took several weeks. In the end, it was decided to equip one of the machines with a "Duo-Pack". Together, the three partners developed a 100% reliable and particularly fast solution for tool breakage detection. "To reduce idle times as much as possible, the measuring procedure was to be optimised so the parts would be produced in the desired quality at maximum productivity." The result was clear: The three remaining machines were equipped in the same manner.

Another company, this time from Germany, had to check its parts after processing for dimensional consistency: Sebastian Schmitt, application engineer for the German market spent one day on site to demonstrate how the productivity of the machine could be increased using the "Duo-Pack" equipment of Blum-Novotest. "Machine-integrated measurement takes a lot less time than having to remove the part, conduct measurements on separate measuring machines and subsequently clamp it in again. This process, which is usually only available for our 5-axis machines, was adapted to 3 axes in this particular case. A simple solution that yielded productivity gains."

A mutually beneficial partnership

"Thanks to the continued exchange between our technical departments, we are often the first to hear any news from Blum-Novotest. This often gives us a competitive edge," explains Bernard Echevard. "We are constantly on the lookout for innovations which may be integrated into our machines. This takes time and money for product development, implementation, customer training, etc. ... Ultimately, however, the resulting added value helps us considerably to differentiate us from our competitors!" Guillaume Thenon agrees, "Huron is by far our most important partner in France! This exchange is a not a one-way street and this is why both parties benefit from it. " The coordination between Blum-Novotest and Huron is very important for the machine manufacturer. "We generate 80% of our turnover from exports today. The first questions of our customers always concern customer service and accessories," says Dominique Lutz. "We have to be able to respond to the requests of our Belarus customers within half a day, for instance. And we have to provide next-day delivery of spare parts for our customers in Germany." As we all know: Time is money.

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