

Rapid response gives Bryken the edge

With customers spread across a wide range of industries, including yellow goods, telecoms, power distribution as well as a significant investment to gain approval for manufacture of engine components for one of the UK's prestige car manufacturers, in addition to having ISO 9001:2008 and working towards the worldwide automotive standard: IATF16949:2016, Merseyside-based Bryken has learnt to be precise and responsive.



Behind Bryken's ability to respond quickly to customer demand is an ongoing investment programme in new machine tools, which sees between £500,000 and £1 million of new machinery installed every year. In addition, it works closely with suppliers, such as WNT (UK), to ensure the smooth operation of its business, knowing that the right tools will be available when needed. "We have 46 CNC machines across our 65,000 ft² site and over half them are less than six years old, our investment policy also means that among these machines we have a lot of sister machines that can be set up to produce the same components if the volumes and lead times dictate that we need to do that," says Bryken's Commercial Director, Stewart Taylor. "The number of machines also means that we have a wide variety of machine capacities, we can handle bar from 3 mm diameter on our sliding heads, up to 65 mm diameter on our fixed head lathes, which can also machine billets up to 300 mm diameter. Machining centres range from multi-pallet machines, four axis horizontals and the latest acquisition a Matsuura MAM 72-35V multi pallet, five axis machining centre."

In addition to the number of CNC machines Bryken also operates a 24/7 shift pattern meaning the factory is operating for 168 hours every week. This generates huge demand for tooling and a wide variety of tools as well to suit the range of materials being machined. It is here that Bryken relies on the service it gets from WNT (UK), which supplies around 70 per cent of all the tools used. "We have built our reputation on short lead times and having a tooling supplier that can not only provide the latest cutting tool technology, but also the level of service and support we need is vital. With WNT

we have all of the bases covered with tool vending, next day delivery on anything not in the vendors and also visits from Nigel Walls, our local Technical Sales Engineer twice a week. Nigel spends time with management and the guys on the shopfloor to talk through best practices and helps to reduce cycle times through applying tooling to its optimum.” In addition to the regular visits from Nigel Walls, Bryken can also call on the support of WNT’s back office team to carry out tooling evaluations, such as the ongoing study on new stainless steel carbide grades and solid carbide milling using WNT’s CCR cutters for trochoidal milling, with WNT’s Billy Poore carrying out detailed reports on productivity and performance gains.

In terms of tool vending Bryken has just updated the system it uses from WNT to the recently introduced Tool Supply 24/7 vending system. These new vendors offer much greater tool storage capacity, with space for up to 840 tools. This increased capacity in virtually the same floorspace as the old system has allowed Bryken to halve the number of vendors without compromising its tool stock. Each vendor carries enough tools for more than two weeks of production at Bryken and they are replenished on a fortnightly basis by WNT. The Tool Supply 24/7 system features a PC-based touchscreen interface that is extremely user-friendly and allows detailed control of all tools vended, with users able to monitor tool use by operator or job or both. . The control then reports tool usage back to WNT automatically in order that stock levels are maintained correctly. The reports generated for the customer also allow closer scrutiny of tooling costs. “The daily and weekly reports that we get are valuable in that they can flag up issues where excessive tools are being used either on specific jobs, by specific operators and allows us to keep much tighter control on tooling costs. Not only the consumable element, but also the storage and management of tools as we no longer require a dedicated tools stores and the days of operators hoarding inserts are long gone,” says Stewart Taylor.

A recent example of how Bryken can react to customer demand came when long-established customer Phase 3 Connectors had a requirement for a very quick turnaround of 1000 Source Panel Mount components. From Phase 3 receiving the order the parts were machined from bar and assembled within 13 hours and delivered to Phase 3’s customer in under 21 hours. “This project pulled together everything that makes Bryken stand out from the crowd. Having the machine capacity available along with terrific support from WNT on the tooling requirement meant we could deliver on-time and meet the customer’s expectations. At the end of the day we have to react and be prepared to meet the demands of our customers and we can only do that with the support we receive from our suppliers and partners,” says Stewart Taylor.