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HOMAG invests 2.5 million in transport chain production

For over 30 years, HOMAG has made sure of a consistently high standard of workpiece quality by insisting on in-house production of the chain links it uses in its edge banding machines. Now the company has gone the extra mile by investing 2.5 million in a fully automated production plant for its parent manufacturing location in Schopfloch. For the manufacture of truly premium class furniture, every single machine component has to comply with a stringent standard of quality. With this new investment, HOMAG is reaffirming its undisputed competence and its position as world market leader in the field of edge banding machines.

One customer benefit after another

Quiet running of the transport chains used in single and double-sided edge banding machines, double-end tenoners and double-end tenoners for flooring is a major factor for successful production. Other underlying conditions for the production of top quality workpieces also include reducing vibration to the absolute minimum. This is where the chain link as the basic component of the transport chain plays a central role. As a company whose customers aspire to the highest standard of quality, HOMAG insists on safeguarding production quality by producing its chain links in-house. The benefits are obvious: the special technique used eliminates potentially crucial quality issues such as varying length of chain sections. The result: far greater production accuracy and more precise workpiece machining – even at feed rates of up to 35 metres per minute. The strict quality control system does not tolerate any quality differences between the individual chain links, a factor which is naturally instrumental



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in ensuring the quality of the workpieces. The system also guarantees the fast, low-cost exchangeability of any individual chain links showing signs of wear. The exceptional tensile strength of the material used ensures a long service life for the entire block link chain.

Fully automated production process

At the start of the fully automated production process, a blank made of special high tensile strength material is sawn to length and inserted into an indexing machine by a handling robot. This blank is machined in 4 different work stations using 5 machining units in 42 individual machining steps to produce the finished chain links. With a cycle time of 55 seconds, a variety of milling, drilling, thread tapping, reaming and complete deburring operations are performed on each workpiece. The configuration of this 42 work step sequence and use of precisely the right tools are the factors which form the basis not only for an assured production process but also adherence to the cycle time of 55 seconds stipulated in the target specification. This operating sequence ensures that every slot in the indexing machine is occupied, and that parts are being machined at all the work steps at all times.

Trust is good, control is better

The watchword throughout the process is precision. To guarantee 100% adherence to the stipulated standard, a quality check of all the relevant measurements is performed as the last stage of the process. All the machining dimensions are fully automatically gauged for centre tolerance, and if there is any deviation in the bore diameter the process is brought to a standstill.

Tolerance has its limits

The finished chain links are first assembled to form chain sections of a



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metre in length. This is done using a fully automatic assembly process permitting assembly output levels of up to 20 metres per hour. The production plant joins the chain links and connects them using bolts. The metre sections are then gauged and placed in intermediate storage.

The chain sections are subsequently joined to create the complete chain. By optimum pairing of chain sections, it is possible to manufacture chains for a double-sided machine within a dimensional tolerance of just 3/100 mm. At the end of the assembly process, the chain pads are screwed on and the chain is subjected to a final height gauging process. Here too, a 100% quality check is carried out.

Exchange made easy

Another major benefit of HOMAG transport chains is their facility for simple exchange of all the individual parts due to the exceptional quality standard of the individual components. This keeps plant downtime and costs to an absolute minimum.

HOMAG has been producing its own chain links for around 30 years. Its long years of experience and growing fund of expertise in the field gathered over the decades ensure that this component of focal importance for the production process is manufactured to an exceptionally high standard. Every year, the production plant produces around 150,000 – 200,000 chain links.

This major one-off machine investment by Homag GmbH is yet further proof of the company's commitment to Germany as a producing location. Since 2009, it has invested 8 million Euro in the construction of its HOMAG Center, and in 2008, the production space was extended by an additional hall measuring 8,000 square metres.

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Fig. 1: Fully automated production plant



Fig. 2: Single chain link

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Fig. 3: Transport chain

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