



Case study

Homag delivers complete production facility in tight time frame for Decorative Panels Furniture

With origins tracing back to 1907, the still privately owned Decorative Panels Group has evolved from a local cabinet maker and coffin manufacturer into a group that operates three autonomous and yet vertically integrated businesses serving the furniture market. Its mission is to manufacture and supply quality, innovative and cost effective paper foil laminated board and panel products within Europe.

In November 2009 the Decorative Panels Group invested in an additional facility to satisfy increasing demand for its flat packed furniture ranges. With the customer base in place, they had to convert this empty factory into a fully operational, automated production unit inside six months. This was a daunting task because not only did they have to source a supplier to design, manufacture and install all the high tech machinery, but also they had to carry out significant building work on the interior of the factory shell.

Decorative Panels director, Malcolm Forward, takes up the story, "With this new facility we had a very clear idea of what we wanted to create to drive the business forward. Having researched the market we entered preliminary discussions with three manufacturers who we believed could deliver our specification within the tight time frames we faced. Each company was asked to submit a full proposal including technical specification, layout, pricing and timescales.

"Homag UK won the business because they were the company able to provide us with the complete package with the high engineering standards we demanded. Theirs was the most professional and comprehensive presentation and it gave us the confidence to forge forward with them on this exciting project.

"From day one they took ownership of the challenge, appointing a project manager in Germany and a project engineer who would join us onsite once the installation process began. I can't tell you how important these two people were in ensuring the whole operation ran to plan. Along with the team at Homag UK, their input was immense and it gave us real peace of mind at the critical times."

"We are delighted with the finished result. Homag's solution has met all our business objectives. It delivers everything we specified and has met every single performance target we set at the outset."

Malcolm Forward
Managing director
The Decorative Panels Group





The Holzma saw cuts the panels to size

Sized panels are loaded onto the first production line

Panels being drilled on production line

Two production lines process the panels

Robot stacks finished panels at end of production line

“I cannot speak too highly of the team work between Homag in Germany and the UK that has enabled us to plan, install and get this facility up and running on time.”

Malcolm Forward

Managing director
The Decorative Panels Group

“One of the challenges was the building itself,” explains Geoff Rossiter, production manager. “Space was at a premium, and we had to place very specific restrictions on Homag as to how the plant needed to be configured. Yet, now it is all up and running, it is hard to imagine there was ever a space issue.”

The delivery of the machinery was carefully planned in sequence to maximise the installation time frames available. The first machine, a Holzma saw for dividing up the large boards, was delivered on time in January 2010. By March all the machinery to make up the two production lines was in place; this included Homag edgebanders and drilling machines to manufacture all the panels required for Decorative Panels’ flat pack furniture.

Geoff Rossiter again, “The installation process went very smoothly and by the end of March the commissioning process began. During this period Homag’s onsite project engineer trained our staff to operate the entire system. Considering the complexity of the facility, the commissioning and training went really well and allowed us to go live with production by the end of April. A remarkable feat when you look back at the hurdles we had to overcome.”

“We are delighted with the finished result,” adds Malcolm Forward. “Homag’s solution has met all our

business objectives. It delivers everything we specified and has met every single performance target we set at the outset. The reliability and throughput of the equipment have enabled us to produce in excess of 100,000 panels a week at the quality level we need to satisfy our customers. It has also enabled us to develop new products such as hollow-core thick lightweight panels and high gloss panels.

“The 60,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility is now running 24 hours a day, and at capacity. I cannot speak too highly of the team work between Homag in Germany and the UK that has enabled us to plan, install and get this facility up and running on time.

“Their service levels have been good from the outset and have continued with their after sales support. David Gildea, one of Homag UK sales managers worked closely with us to provide the optimum solution, whilst the engineer at Homag UK keeps a watching brief on our progress and is always at our side if there’s a need. As far as their spare parts are concerned, Homag’s service is excellent. In addition, all the machines are modern linked to Homag in Germany and this has proved to be an invaluable benefit. I would certainly recommend Homag to any serious manufacturer who wants to drive their business to the next level,” concludes Malcolm.

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