

"Savings of 30%":

Highly flexible cutting with the Power Concept

Maximum brand image – optimal goods presentation in first-class surroundings – that's what the Dortmund-based company Dula offers with its innovative shop design concepts. And they do this to the full satisfaction of their reputable customers, who come from all across Europe. To ensure that they can continue to meet the high levels of demand efficiently and promptly in future too, Dula recently equipped its plant in Vreden with a new saw-storage combination.

"Displaying goods is one thing. Presenting them in a pleasant and appealing setting is another – and that is the real art," says Frank Kottbus, Production Manager at Vreden, of Dula's philosophy. "We always consider shop design as a whole – colours, shapes, materials, light and sound, information and presentation all go hand in hand."

That this approach, conceived by Heinz-Herbert Dustmann, son of the founder's son and present Managing Director, works, has been confirmed by its great success: Since 1953, Dula has developed into one of the leading European companies in the field of shopfitting, now employing around 800 people – including architects, lighting specialists, designers and technicians.

In addition to the headquarters in Dortmund, there are now three production sites in Germany: Vreden (125 employees), Ahaus (85 employees) and Spenge (35 employees). Dula also has production sites in Spain, France and Russia and is thus able to guarantee international project management.

Its customers include department stores such as Selfridges in London, the Moscow Holding Centre and even the famous London department store Harrods; monolabel stores such as Elégance in Cologne or Puma in Amsterdam; shop-in-shop systems such as the Falk Shop in the Düsseldorf Saturn, specialist shops such as Zapateria Qual in Madrid, Daniel Hersheson in London and the 'Jewellery World' exhibition centre in Pforzheim. In addition, Dula can provide customers with help in terms of interior decoration, as it has the Ibis Hotel in Birmingham. The high quality of its services has made Dula a reliable partner even in the field of interior design for ships, with the Meyer shipyard being the main customer in this business field. And last but not least, the long list of references includes names such as BMW and Karstadt.

The high demands of such well-known customers can only be met by a company that places great emphasis on quality, efficiency and precision from the very first production stage. That's why Heinz-Herbert Dustmann has a great ambition: "Our philosophy includes not only producing the most innovative products, but also using the most innovative machinery to do this. We want to be market leaders in this respect, too."

That's why the new saw-storage combination for Vreden had to be future-oriented and state-of-the-art. Vreden is Dula's biggest plant, with a production and storage area of nearly 15,000 m². This is where the high quality shopfitting elements are produced – from panel cutting to CNC processing, paintshop and assembly through to packaging, everything is housed under one roof. Including work preparation and the logistics department.

"Our existing saw-storage combination in Vreden was no longer adequate for our current and future production requirements," says Frank Kottbus who, as Production Manager, was responsible for the planning and

realisation of the new facility. Dula had been using the same cut-to-size saw and 43 x 14 m horizontal panel store since 1993. "At some point we became too big and, through necessity, began to create storage space outside the store. In short: The time had come to increase speed and quality with new technology." The new facility should be able to cope with series production just as efficiently as with one-piece production.

After extensive research, Dula decided to work with HOLZMA and BARGSTEDT. Consulting and support were provided by KUPER, a business concern of the HOMAG Group. "We had already worked with KUPER before with positive results," reports Kottbus. "We had already purchased two CNC processing centres through KUPER as well as an edge-gluing machine from HOMAG, or rather WEEKE."

Dula then installed an HPL 380 profiLine, which is a well equipped HOLZMA stand-alone saw with Power Concept and lift table feeding system. They also procured a horizontal panel storage system from BARGSTEDT. Today, this system works in two-shift operation. Coated panels, MDF, plywood and chipboard are the main materials that are processed. Panels are cut individually or in books.

The new HPL 380 profiLine cut-to-size saw is equipped, amongst other things, with the Power Concept, an additional clamp that can be moved independently of the program fence. "This means several strips can be simultaneously crosscut into parts of different lengths," explains Kottbus. "In addition, we can also feed from the lift table while panels are still being cut at the front. This has allowed us to significantly increase our yield and the cutting speed".

The new, horizontal BARGSTEDT panel storage system has an area of 53 x 14 m, so it has grown somewhat. "Despite the big new storage area,

we still have an intermediate storage facility as before," says Frank Kottbus. "However, this is no longer due to a lack of space, but to the fact that we store very large quantities of material in an intermediate storage facility in order to compensate for long delivery times from the manufacturers."

The offcut return is also much more efficient than before. Previously, a worker had to return the panel manually into the storage facility, whereas now, he can transport the offcut from the front machine table via air tables and belts to the area for offcuts. From there, they are automatically returned to the store.

The saw stands directly next to the storage facility and is fed from there via roller tracks. Alternatively, automatic feeding is also possible directly via the lift table, or parts can be fed manually from the front. This flexibility is very important for Dula: "If, for example, it should become necessary to supply additional parts during installation, we must be able to produce these individual parts spontaneously." In addition, it's possible to process a large order by feeding directly from the lift table without first having to bring the panels into the storage facility. However, this does not dispense with the need for automatic storage management.

In terms of optimisation too, Dula decided on a HOLZMA product, the PROFESSIONAL version of its Cut Rite software: "Based on the cutting patterns we submitted, the HOLZMA consultant calculated a potential saving of up to 30%. This increase in efficiency has also actually materialised in practice," comments Kottbus with satisfaction. "The data connection between Cut Rite and our ERP system also works smoothly, as well as the forwarding of data to the store and to the saw."

The result?

Dula can now produce much more quickly, be it small batch sizes or even asymmetric cuts in series. In addition, the finished cut on the workpiece can be made at any time. The automatic supply of the material from the storage facility to the saw reduces the number of manual tasks and therefore also the amount of waste.

Dula today records significantly less waste. Frank Kottbus attributes this to various items of equipment on the saw such as the turning device for head cuts, but also crucially to the HOLZMA Cut Rite optimisation software. Kottbus sees further advantages in the improved safety of the overall system and in its easy, intuitive operation.

To sum up: Dula is very satisfied with the saw-storage combination and is currently in the process of installing a second system with nearly the same equipment in the plant in Ahaus.

The future?

Dula wants to continue to grow. So, in Vreden, the plan for the coming years is to further expand production and also introduce production control technology. An important basis for this expansion is of course one of the guiding principles of the Managing Director, Dustmann: "Our aim is to increase sales while maintaining the current employee figures, thereby sustaining and constantly increasing our international competitiveness, in order to be able to guarantee healthy growth in the long term."

Information box

The panel cut-to-size saw of the Dula-Werke Dustmann & Co. GmbH in Vreden HOLZMA HPL 380 profiLine

Model	HPL 380/43/22 profiLine
Cutting length	4300 mm
Lift table	4300 mm x 2200 mm
Feeding from the rear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lift table with working load of max. 7t and stopper feet- Two 7t heavy-duty roller tracks
Saw blade projection	95 mm
Saw carriage speed	up to 130 m/min
Details (abstract):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Power Concept- Trim stops- "Postforming" option- Turbo-grooving- Cut-out/stress elimination cut- Labelling- Anodised aluminium table tops with air jets- Power package- Extended air table- Tilttable air table- Moveable air table- Optimisation with Cut Rite PROFESSIONAL- 19" TFT flat screen monitor with touch functionality

Pictures



Picture 1:
Frank Kottbus, Production Manager of Dula-Werke Dustmann & Co. GmbH



Picture 2 (left) and 3 (right):
On the left, next to the saw, is the large, horizontal panel storage. Other intermediate storage facilities can also be found outside this storage facility. The saw is connected to the store via roller tracks and can be fed both via the store and directly with forklift truck.



Picture 4 (top), 5 (middle), 6 (bottom):

The rear machine table of the saw. Here, you can see one of the special features of the saw: the Power Concept, the additional clamp which works independently of the program fence. In this case, it is painted red, as this is the trade fair machine which was exhibited at the 2007 LIGNA fair and on which the unique new Power Concept was presented for the first time.



Picture 7:
In front of the saw



Picture 8 (top), 9 (bottom):

On the right, access to the store for manual storage, e.g. of offcuts. Easy material handling via the air table with air jets.



Picture 10:
The manual offcut store.

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