

## **HOMAG Venture 316 delivers huge productivity gains for Terry Smiths**

Based in Huthwaite, near junction 28 of the M1, Terry Smiths Limited has been manufacturing coffins and caskets for the funeral services market for over 30 years. The company, which employs 65 people in its 35,000 sq. ft. Nottinghamshire facility, has a turnover of around £4m, producing some 45,000 coffins and caskets a year.

“As you might imagine, our business is very traditional,” explains Dave Clarke, coffin factory manager at Terry Smiths. “Our customers demand quality products whether at the lower or upper ends of the price spectrum.

“Consequently, the manufacturing of our products relied on more traditional methods using cross-cut saws, spindle moulders and 1980s CNCs. This meant our processes were very labour intensive and costly.”

### **Investing in the future**

“In order to make the business more competitive and provide us with the opportunity to improve the scope and specification of our range, we decided to invest in a state-of-the-art 5-axis CNC machine. Given the machine specification



required for the business, there were really only two leading contenders which we chose to evaluate.

“We settled on the HOMAG Venture 316 for three very clear reasons:

firstly, the quality of the machine and the results it produces are second to none; secondly, the reliability of the HOMAG equipment is well known throughout the industry and we had to have a machine that would not let us down; finally, we

wanted to know that support and service was not only first class, but was also close at hand and so with HOMAG UK just down the road in Castle Donington, it was the perfect fit."

### **Help from the experts**

"I have known the HOMAG area manager, Matt Long, for many years and have come to trust his judgements. Before we committed to the machine we sat down with Matt and explained exactly what we wanted from the CNC.

"As usual, Matt went above and beyond; he not only listened, but also understood what we wanted to achieve. To prove the machine was fit for purpose, he arranged trials over in Germany and they sent back videos to us so we could see the machine performing the tasks we needed it to do."

### **Smooth installation and comprehensive training**

"The installation of the Venture 316 went very, very smoothly. The machine was ready three or four weeks ahead of schedule and we agreed to take delivery early. This enabled us to take our time and get everything set up properly before starting live production with the CNC.

"Before the machine arrived we sent our operators and maintenance staff over to Germany for three days to learn about the machine. Experience has proved this to be extremely valuable and I'm a big fan of doing this. Not only does it establish good relationships between our staff and the HOMAG engineers, but also it builds ownership amongst our guys who then feel very much part of the investment process.

"We have never had such a technologically advanced piece of equipment and yet our operators have taken to it like a duck to water which is testament to the ease of operation of the machine and woodWOP, its control software.

"To give us more production creativity, we also bought a software package, ArtCAM. This enables us to engrave names, pictures such as roses or footballs and

other details into the coffin or caskets, whether they be solid wood or veneered chipboard or MDF.”

### **The future's bright**

“The benefits the HOMAG Venture 316 brings to our business are very clear cut. It used to take four people three to four minutes to produce a coffin carcass; now one man can do it in three minutes with more consistent quality. In terms of savings to the business, we estimate that this alone saves us in the region of £85,000 a year, thus delivering a significant improvement to our bottom line.

“As a consequence, we reckon the return on investment for the Venture 316 will be 15 to 18 months which is incredible for an advanced piece of equipment such as this.”

### **Professional partnership**

“It's not, however, just about the machine; it is the amicable, yet totally professional attitude of the team at HOMAG, both in the UK and Germany. We have a really good relationship with them and that pays dividends for all concerned. The support and service we get from HOMAG UK is responsive and accountable; they have a comprehensive parts service and their response times are excellent.

“The Venture 316 ticks all the boxes for us and the HOMAG team dot all the 'i's and cross all the 't's which makes for a great partnership,” concludes Dave Clarke.

### **All inclusive high-end features deliver versatile performance**

With a range of packages and options to choose from, the 5-axis Venture 316 offers flexibility and performance. There's a choice of high-speed drilling heads with up to 17 vertical spindles and four horizontal spindles enabling fewer drilling cycles. For consistent drilling depth, even on hard materials, the 316 has a spindle locking mechanism. This patented system provides consistent and repeatable precision drilling depth.

To improve set up time, you can choose the optional LED displays which make the positioning of vacuum cups and consoles fast and simple. This option can save up to 70 percent of preparation time as it allows correct cup placing at a glance.

In addition a 14 or 18 place tool changer increases the number of tools and units which can be directly accessed, thus reducing set-up times further. A grooving saw with a blade diameter of up to 350mm can also be accommodated.

If you would like more information or a demonstration of the Venture 316 or any HOMAG CNC machines, please contact Adele Hunt at HOMAG UK on 01332 856424.

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