



Press News

The Neville Johnson Group nests with Homag

In 1986 Neville Johnson began creating innovative fitted furniture for the home. Since then the company has become the natural choice for high quality bespoke furniture concepts, embracing new ideas in traditional furniture design. With a turnover around £30 million, the Neville Johnson Group Limited now operates three divisions – bespoke fitted furniture, staircases and kitchen furniture.

The business is 100 percent committed to customer satisfaction and has invested in state-of-the-art machinery to achieve what it refers to as 'the Neville Johnson difference'.

The company believes that perfectly handcrafted, fitted furniture should also be affordable and to achieve this it recognised the need to invest in woodworking machinery that minimises material wastage and delivers the maximum production efficiencies available.

"Following a management buyout in 2006," explains Neville Johnson's operating director, Jeff Forrester, "we set out a very clear operating strategy. Our approach was to invest in robust, reliable woodworking equipment that would enable us to deliver quality bespoke furniture at very competitive prices.

"As all our work is for bespoke furniture that we design, manufacture and install for the customer, we wanted the production process to keep all the work pieces for a particular job together. That led us to look at nesting machines. At the time, these combination machines were relatively new to the UK market, but we were convinced that they were the best solution for our needs.

“We looked at a number of the leading players’ equipment, but the brand that stood out head and shoulders above the competition was Homag. As a Group, they could offer us everything we needed from their specialist brands and, more importantly, all their machines are extremely reliable, technologically advanced and consistently produce high quality results.

“The Weeke factory invited us over to Germany to see the nesting machines in action and I must say it is was a very impressive setup. They also arranged for us to visit a company in Ireland to witness the machines operating in a commercial environment.



“Although the investment was a considerable one – top quality machinery doesn’t come cheap – we were convinced that two Weeke BHP 210 CNC nesting machines, two Brandt 780 edgebanders with Ligmatech ZHR 15 return systems and a Bütfering SCO 213 CC sander formed the perfect package for our business.

“Previously, we had separate machines – saws, routers and edgebanders. Now, with the CNC nesting machines, each piece of a customer’s job is sawn, routed, drilled and labelled with the customer’s name on it before it comes off the machine. Then the complete job goes to be edgebanded and sanded. This gives us much better control over customers’ orders, as each job is kept together throughout the production process.”

Service With a Smile

“It has been a pleasure dealing with Homag,” continues Forrester, “From the outset, the teams at Homag UK and in Germany have gone out of their way to make sure we have got the solution we need.

“The installation and training were superbly organised and because the machines and software are so easy to operate it has really helped our business. In the past, we have struggled to find the calibre of staff who could cope with the complexities of similar machinery but now, with the Homag equipment, anyone can be trained up to operate it successfully so we no longer have a skills shortage.”

Key Benefits

Jeff Forrester then went on to explain the major benefits the Homag machinery has brought to the business. “Unlike some of our competitors, we don’t make product from stock.

“All our work is bespoke and the pieces that comprise each job are made as required. We also offer customers a very fast turn round on work and so it is imperative that we can produce all the pieces for a job at the same time.

“The Weeke CNC nesting machines have been absolutely essential in giving us the ability to achieve this and because the sawing, routing and drilling are now all done on one machine, we have been able to reduce labour costs as well.

“Another big advantage has been the optimisation of the material. The software works out the optimum usage of each sheet of wood before it is cut on the nesting machines. This eliminates a huge amount of wastage and keeps our raw material costs low.

“The equipment has also enabled us to do more complex jobs. In fact we have just purchased a third Weeke nesting machine with an automatic feed, position and discharge system. This new model allows us to do worktops on

line. Traditionally, the production of worktops is usually a very laborious process, but with the new Weeke CNC machine it is easy and again optimises the use of the wood."

Great Return on Investment

"We look to get a return on investment within two years," continues Forrester, "And the equipment from Homag has easily achieved this target. We continue to work closely with Homag to develop the machines and our facility is often used by them as a reference site, so it is a partnership that works to our mutual benefit.

"A lot of Homag's competitors will offer you a better price, but at the end of the day you get what you pay for. Since we've installed the Homag equipment we have never had a major problem or issue with any of the machines. That level of reliability is absolutely vital for our business," concludes Forrester.

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