

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Because of its employee-centric efforts and forward-thinking strategies, the Dutch company 24/7TailorSteel, grew its profits by 45% last year, no small feat for a fabricator that employs 250 people in three plants.



Carel van Sorgen

Extensive automation

One of the first things visitors notice when entering 24/7TailorSteel are the huge indoor potted trees living happily amongst automated lasers with pick-and-place robots adjacent to LVD ToolCell automatic-tool-change press brakes.

In this world, machine speed really matters, as does everything in between, from automated order entry to automated guided vehicles (AGVs) that take orders from one operation to the next. They allow operators to focus on the value-added cutting and bending tasks that 24/7TailorSteel's customers rely on.

To bend steel, stainless steel and aluminium sheet material, the company invested in twelve ToolCells, eight in the Netherlands and four in the German plant, that run around the clock. Keeping with the theme of automation, the ToolCells feature an automatic tool changing system.

The operator scans a job into the control, and the ToolCell takes over, swapping out punches and dies as the material is staged for bending. Following a 3D bending simulation on the controller, the operator bends the job. LVD's integrated



Easy-Form® Laser in-process angle monitoring system ensures the first bend is accurate every time. 24/7TailorSteel also benefits from LVD's CADMAN-B software, which automatically calculates bending solutions and stores them in the CADMAN database to which all LVD press brakes are connected.

“Delivery performance trumps price, always.”

Sophia online

Just two people in the front office handle customer service calls and manage certain credit checks. Everything else happens automatically with Sophia, short for “sophisticated intelligent analyzer,” an online portal. Customers upload a CAD drawing, be it cut flat or bent. Sophia will analyse the file and allows customers to select a material grade and thickness, then choose a quantity and ship date.

“Delivery performance trumps price, always,” founder Carel van Sorgen explains. “I created Sophia to give customers a platform where they could create their draft and, in a minute, get a quote. Because Sophia can be linked into a customer's ERP system, everything else is done for you.”

New challenges

The company pulls out all the stops to keep workers happy, healthy and secure. “There is definitely a healthy way of working,” van Sorgen says. “Our people are important to us and that's part of the reason why we get new people. Last year, we hired 65.”

The company is setting its sights on expanding into new markets. “By 2020, we want to double our turnover,” he continues. “And it's only the beginning. We're happy with those goals, but on the other hand, it's a big challenge to grow while also maintaining your quality because at this point, only the best will do. You can promise a lot, but you have to make it true.”

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