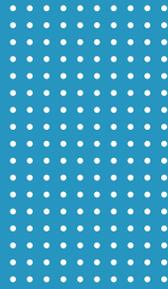


VICTOR MANUFACTURING

GETTING THE RECIPE RIGHT



Victor Manufacturing is one of the UK's top catering equipment manufacturers, designing and producing a range of stainless steel units for schools, hotels, restaurants, stadiums, and hospitals. This year Victor turns 70, and they have a lot to celebrate. Victor was recognized by the London Stock Exchange as one of the country's fastest growing small-to-medium sized businesses, out of three million candidates. This year, they're planning for 15% growth. What is Victor's recipe for success? To help us figure that out, we sat down with Phil Williams, Operations Director and Bob Morris, Production Manager.

And run you did. Victor thrived despite the economic slump, experiencing 37% increased turnover from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013. Now that the catering industry is back on track, how do you plan to continue growth?

PW: By entering new markets. Retail, for example, is a market we've just started to penetrate. Under a year ago we became the sole-source vendor to bakery giant Greggs for their countertops, tills and refrigeration units. (Editor's note: Greggs is the leading bakery retailer in the UK, with over 1600 retail outlets and serving almost 1 million customers every day.) This kind of custom work wouldn't be possible without our latest LVD Easy-Form press brakes.

How did Victor become the cutting-edge catering equipment manufacturer that it is today?

Bob Morris (BM): Originally a family owned company, Victor started out manufacturing paint cans and tea-towel dryers. As the hospitality industry in the 60's started to develop, Victor responded by producing standard hot cupboards and banqueting carts. Many of the products you see today still have the same concept, improved over the years.

What were some obstacles Victor has made it through?

Phil Williams (PW): We still cite the recession of 2008 as a difficult period for Victor. During a recession, it's logical that hospitality is an industry that suffers. We had to respond quickly, we kept all of our skilled employees and made some big investments in training and capital equipment. While some other players in the market just trimmed down, we were adding. When the recession ended, we were ready to hit the ground running.

How did your Easy-Form press brakes drive development?

PW: It all comes down to the accuracy that the Easy-Form press brakes brings. It has changed what we manufacture and how we manufacture. We are able to avoid more expensive processes like welding and secondary processes like polishing, because our bends on the Easy-Form are always consistent. Not only that, but the press brakes have enabled us to bring processes back in-house. This means we can offer a great product at a lower cost to the customer and maintain margins. It gives us a competitive advantage.

So, it's safe to say investing in leading-edge machinery is supporting Victor's overall growth. What factors came into play when you were sourcing your press brakes?

BM: We were in the market to replace

PHIL WILLIAMS

“Entering new markets wouldn't be possible without our latest LVD Easy-Form press brakes.”



our existing press brakes and integration with software had to be a part of that. There were a handful of potential suppliers, but quickly, it came down to two. In the end, we saw the *Easy-Form* as 'the whole package'. LVD offers a machine that has everything we were looking for, it would have been a compromise to go with someone else. On a visit to the LVD demonstration centre, we met some technical and programming engineers and realized LVD has all the key ingredients under one roof. We wanted to make sure that if we had an issue or we wanted to develop something, we could talk directly to our supplier, not to a third party.

Has the integration between machine and software been successful?

BM: From my point of view, the offline software from LVD is much more advanced than others on the market, it gives us much more capability and suited what we were after. It's allowed us to eliminate 2D drawings and that makes operations so much smoother, taking a nine step process down to a two. In this industry, there's been a skills gap for some time and CADMAN®-B offline software bridges that gap.

BOB MORRIS

"It would have been a compromise to go with someone else."



How has the skills gap in the industry impacted Victor?

PW: Given the aging demographics of the workforce, we have to be proactive in our succession planning. We actively support apprenticeships; we see each apprentice as the future of our business. It's been a successful initiative, we currently have seven apprentices here and a few former apprentices have risen in the company to take on technical and management roles. Not only do we train, but we encourage development and progression in the company.

Victor's first 70 years have been, without a doubt, successful. What's your secret?

BM: In today's highly competitive market, you have to distinguish yourself. By staying true to the Victor

spirit of strong investments in people and technology and always seeking to improve, we see steady, well-managed growth in Victor's future.

Profile

Company: Victor Manufacturing Ltd.

Website: www.victoronline.co.uk

Since: 1944

Works with: stainless steel

Innovation: Victor has received huge recognition for building sustainable products, including an energy savings gantry, making a huge impact for multi-site operators, saving up to €28,900 for fifty sites.

Equipped with: two LVD *Easy-Form* press brakes

Software: CADMAN®-B automatically unfolds the part and determines the optimum bend sequence, gauging positions and tool selection for minimum tool stations and part turns.

LASER TECHNOLOGY

ALC IN USE



"We recommend ALC starting from 8 mm upwards to 25 mm thick mild steel material."

Cutting thick mild steel materials? ALC or Adaptive Laser Cutting is bringing laser cut accuracy and consistency to another level. ALC technology uses continuous feedback to monitor and regulate laser power, speed and assist gas pressure - all in real time. These in-process capabilities provide up to a 10% increase in productivity but don't just take our word for it, we asked two customers using ALC for some feedback.



Thorsten Paul,
Director,
Wiropa, Germany
www.wiropa.de

"At our facility in Germany, we've installed a 12m by 3m *Impuls* laser system with ALC. **Wiropa** specializes in products for areas such as shipbuilding, wind turbines, bridges, and ski lifts. We wanted to have ALC for a number

of reasons. First of all, we always want to have the very latest generation of machines and the newest technological developments on the market. By using ALC we would be able to achieve even better cutting results than we were already getting.

With the automatic compensation system we can cut faster and still achieve a higher level of accuracy. Plus, an inexperienced operator can achieve excellent results and it speeds up changeovers.

We cut anything from 1mm material up

to 25mm plate on the machine and the ALC allows you to change more quickly from thin sheet to thick plate - it helps to fine-tune the setup. It also helps to overcome problems associated with variability in material composition. We can also cut components and features that you otherwise would not be able to cut at all - you simply wouldn't be able to program them.

ALC gives us an advantage over our competitors, because we can offer something that they can't."



Geoff Cotton,
Director,
Profile Cutting
Services,
New Zealand

"PCS started out in the 1980's from our founder's garage. After growing steadily over the years, we're now operating

three shifts. When we were considering our next laser purchase, we wanted new technology, to increase our capacity and to do something a bit different. We went for an *Impuls* 12m by 3m for our site in Oakland and a 6.5m by 3m for Christchurch, both with ALC. There are things on this laser that we couldn't have cut before. Now we're cutting in high-definition, which we're more than

happy about. We can put a plate on without having to worry about its condition when it comes off the machine. In the industry, you can hear horror stories about lasers that won't cut, this certainly is not the case here. ALC measures the quality of the cut and optimizes speed, so for us this is great. This is ground-breaking technology that nobody else has. Only LVD offers it."

ALC is now available as a standard feature on 4 kW *Sirius* and *Sirius Plus* and all *Impuls* laser cutting systems.