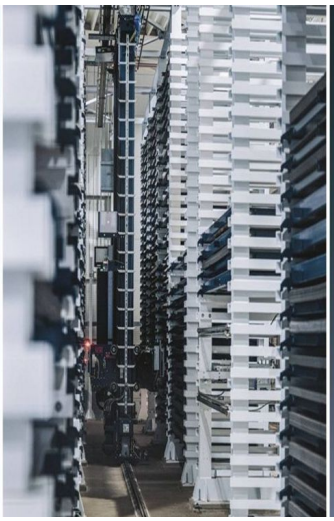

RAMONA HÖNL

TRUMPF and STOPA join forces to improve the Smart Factory

By acquiring a majority stake in STOPA, TRUMPF is strengthening a long-standing partnership. For customers, this means one thing above all – end-to-end solutions for automated sheet metal processing and fewer frictional losses. In this interview, Jörg-André Junker, Head of Product Management for Automation and Storage Technology at TRUMPF, and Edgar Mörtl, CEO of STOPA, explain the role that storage technology plays in automated sheet metal processing and the specific benefits that customers can expect.

The collaboration between TRUMPF and STOPA goes back almost four decades, and was born out of a shared desire to intelligently combine material handling and machine performance. Today, both companies develop integrated Smart Factory solutions for sheet metal processing. TRUMPF's majority shareholding in STOPA gives this partnership a new quality.

TRUMPF has significantly increased its stake in STOPA. From the customer's perspective, what is the most important benefit of this enhanced collaboration?

J.-A. Junker: The customer gets an integrated overall system. Machine, warehouse and software are optimally coordinated to ensure stable processes and predictable throughput times. Customers notice increased productivity.

Why was now the right time to take this step?

J.-A. Junker: Our customers' requirements have changed noticeably. Today, they no longer expect individual products, but end-to-end solutions – from machine to store to software. With the majority shareholding, we are creating the structural conditions necessary to consistently build on this foundation.

What does this fundamentally change about the previous partnership?

J.-A. Junker: We can drive issues forward more quickly and make decisions together. Development, product strategy and service are now becoming even more closely integrated. That makes us more powerful. Edgar Mörtl and I are already seeing many positive effects.

For Jörg-André Junker, one thing is certain – the future of sheet metal processing lies in integrated systems. The close integration of TRUMPF and STOPA should make it easier for customers to automate their production and operate more sustainably in the long term.

STOPA has been working closely with TRUMPF for decades. In your view, what is the significance of a majority stake?

E. Mörtl: For us, this is a logical next step. The collaboration has grown over many years, both professionally and culturally. Now we can contribute our storage expertise to TRUMPF's overall strategy in an even more targeted manner, and with a clear focus on customer benefits.

Where do customers still experience friction losses today, and how can these be reduced?

E. Mörtl: Often at the interfaces: different contact persons, manual adjustments and media disruptions. This is precisely where we come in. The goal is a Smart Factory where materials are automatically in the right place at the right time – controlled by software, not by shouting orders. This will, of course, continue. The entire customer experience, including service, benefits from deeper integration.

What role does the combination of STOPA storage systems and TRUMPF software such as Oseon play in this?

E. Mörtl: A very central one. The software handles planning, optimisation and control. It organises returns to storage, prioritises orders and optimises travel times – often even running automatically overnight. For the customer, this means increased transparency and less operational intervention.

Edgar Mörtl brings decades of experience in automated warehouse technology to the table. He explains the role that intelligent material handling play in ensuring stable processes, why the store is becoming the backbone of modern manufacturing, and how customers benefit from scalable solutions that grow with their needs and safeguard their investments in the long term.

Non-productive time is seen as a productivity killer. How do integrated solutions help to minimise this?

J.-A. Junker: Non-productive time is often caused by a lack of material or unplanned idle states. If the store, machine and software act as a unit, these effects can be greatly reduced. The system thinks for itself and works ahead.

You describe the store as the backbone of the Smart Factory. Why?

E. Mörtl: Because the overall efficiency of a system is only as good as its individual components. The store ensures that materials are available and processes are stable. This requires high availability, otherwise the machines' potential goes to waste.

Many customers are growing incfrementally or modernising existing production facilities. How does the joint portfolio support these scenarios?

E. Mörtl: Our systems are scalable. Customers can start small and expand their storage over the years. A store often lasts 25 years – machines are replaced several times during that period. Our solutions are designed to accommodate this. In addition, we offer our customers complete flexibility in the material handling logistics that can be implemented. Flexible small-scale warehouses and highly integrated large-scale stores with a wide variety of connections and stations.

What differentiates large-scale storage solutions from small stores?

J.-A. Junker: We are talking about two approaches to material flow here: decentralised small storage systems that supply one or two machines, and centralised large stores that serve as logistical hubs for multiple machines. Both concepts have different strengths and weaknesses, which we evaluate in conjunction with our customers in terms of processes, space and cost-effectiveness. Together with STOPA, we can offer optimally coordinated solutions for both approaches and tailor material handling precisely to each production process.

The backbone of manufacturing: Automated STOPA storage systems integrate material handling, machinery and software into a seamless process. They deliver materials exactly when they are needed, minimise travel distances, save energy and boost productivity across the entire manufacturing process.

In day-to-day production, service often makes the difference between production efficiency and downtime. What specific improvements do users experience as a result of the closer integration?

E. Mörtl: Customers have a single point of contact for all their needs and concerns – whether they involve machinery or stores. The service offerings of STOPA and TRUMPF are becoming increasingly integrated. This considerably speeds up service processes and reduces complexity.

How do automated storage systems contribute to sustainability?

E. Mörtl: Through efficient material movement, high space utilisation and optimised processes. For example, by ensuring that materials aren't transported unnecessarily through the production hall, but instead are available exactly where they're needed. Fewer shipments, less energy used per item – it pays off both environmentally and economically.

What can TRUMPF customers expect in the coming years?

J.-A. Junker: Together with STOPA, we will develop new products that can be flexibly adapted to different production volumes and requirements. The specific benefits for our customers are reduced downtime, higher machine utilisation rates, transparent material availability, and lower maintenance costs – all with the goal of sustainably increasing productivity and competitiveness.

RAMONA HÖNL

SPOKESPERSON FOR MACHINE TOOLS