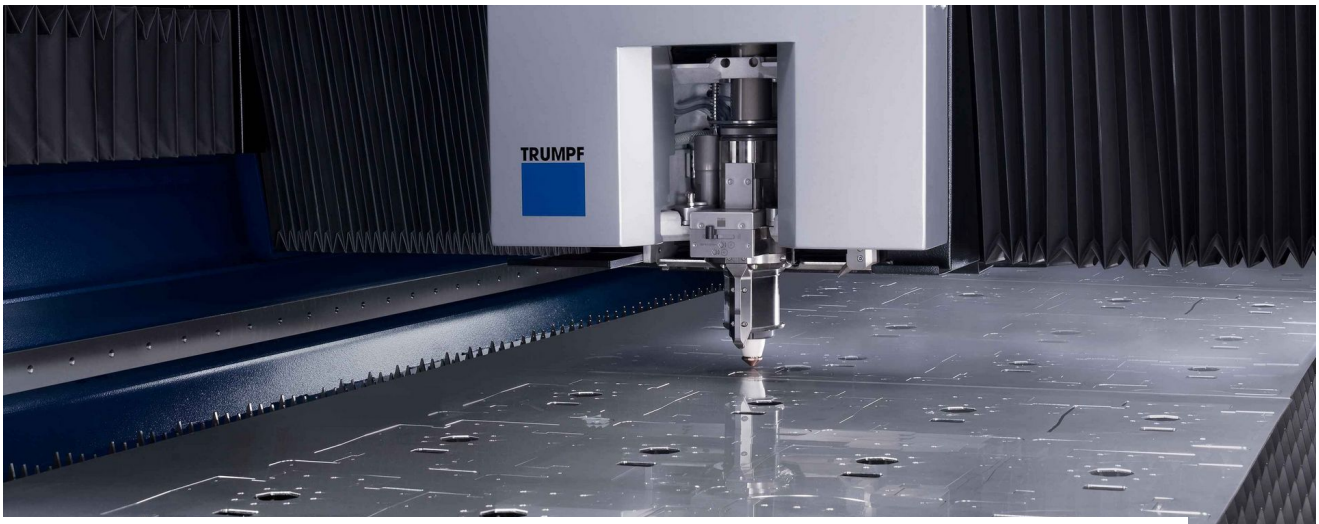

RAMONA HÖNL

Best Practice Digitalization: Swiss company becomes a sheet metal processor 4.0

How can suppliers get started with digitalization? Riguzzi AG has shown the way, working with TRUMPF as its partner. With the new TruTops Fab software, the company can now monitor, control and improve its production.

The big day had arrived and the company owner, Andreas Riguzzi, was feeling a little nervous. His flourishing mechanical engineering company Riguzzi in Felben, Switzerland, was to become a digital showcase company overnight. The self-programmed Access database was decoupled and the previously only loosely linked work processes, were connected at the push of a button. But it wasn't the new system that was causing his nerves to jangle; he had confidence in the manufacturer, TRUMPF, who had also supplied him with laser, punching and bending machines.

Preparing employees for digitalization

No, he was more worried about his employees. Would they feel comfortable standing in front of the machines with iPads and not their familiar piles of A4 paper? This concern is not unfounded, but he needn't have worried. Andreas Riguzzi and the TRUMPF experts had prepared the employees well, for example, by holding workshops. Over lunch, they discussed other advantages of this software solution. The employees soon realized that their company was better positioned for the future with this new tool.

Growth through digitalization

The change to becoming a digital company was imminent because Riguzzi AG was faced with a problem that other companies would also like to see: a growth problem. Andreas Riguzzi has always attached great importance to equipping his father's metal construction company with modern machine tools. And he quickly noticed the following: the more modern his company was, the more customers knocked on his door. For Andreas Riguzzi, this was a double reward because on the one hand, his metal construction company grew, while on the other, his customers rewarded him for his enthusiasm for technology.

The old database had reached its limits

But despite state-of-the-art TRUMPF machine tools, the company, with its 23 employees, had reached its limits as in the case of order processing, which was based on a self-programmed Access database. This does the job in most cases, but with the increased growth, more and more employees had to access the tool. The system was seriously challenged. One day, TRUMPF customer consultant Patrick Kühne was visiting Riguzzi. He saw the database and immediately said: "We have new software that could solve your order processing problems and much more, it's called the TruTops Fab."

Transparently showing and controlling the production process

TruTops Fab? Andreas Riguzzi read about it, talked to the TRUMPF experts again, and realized it was exactly what he was missing. With this modular software, he could show his production process transparently, as well as control and manage the processes from customer order through to dispatch. By connecting to the machine control systems or the laser systems, he would always be able to see the current progress of production and status of manufacturing orders. And the tool offered him many other advantages. As soon as data is automatically transferred, the error rate drops considerably, simply because there are no more typing errors.

Andreas Riguzzi (left) talks shop with an employee about the new TRUMPF system. – TRUMPF Schweiz AG

Patrick Kühne from TRUMPF (left) who supported Andreas Riguzzi on his digitalization adventure. – TRUMPF Schweiz AG

Andreas Riguzzi decided to embark on a digitalization adventure. Together with a new press brake and a new laser machine from TRUMPF, he introduced the TruTops Fab. He initially took the order processing software, production monitoring and calculation modules from the modular Fab system, or in the Trumpf nomenclature: the Quickjob, Production, and Calculate modules His advice is: "I can only recommend installing several modules at once. Once the data record has been entered, it can be used several times, which leads to considerable time savings."

50 percent savings thanks to digitalization

The work that TruTops Fab takes on is considerable for a company like Riguzzi's. Andreas Riguzzi explains: "The savings are certainly around 50 percent." He smiles and then adds: "And I first thought this software might be too expensive for an

SME". After only a short time, further modules were added: one for the management of the warehouse, one for the purchasing department, and finally, a module that visibly shifted the sheet metal processing operation into the age of digitalization – production monitoring. Since its introduction, large monitors have been installed throughout the factory hall. The orders are listed according to their priority. Each machine operator sees the next order on their monitor and can call up all the necessary data.

The digitalization of sheet metal production continues

"I'm glad that we took this step, but we're far from finished with the digitalization of our company," says Riguzzi. He will continue to rely on TRUMPF for further measures, as he was not only convinced by their machines, but also by the service they offered. He also gets on well with his personal advisor, Patrick Kühne. In addition to all that, he was able to handle the financing very easily via TRUMPF's own bank.

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SPOKESPERSON FOR MACHINE TOOLS