

Press Release



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TRUMPF MACHINES HELP PUREX BRING FABRICATION IN-HOUSE

Purex, which can boast over 30 years of supplying fume extraction systems unlike any other in the industry, has adorned its new production facility in Brough near Hull with a new TRUMPF TruLaser 2030 fiber 4kW laser cutter (with BrightLine technology) and two TRUMPF TruBend 3066 bending machines. The major investment came about after the company decided to rethink its previous outsourcing strategy for stainless steel enclosures and bring fabrication in-house.

The beauty of Purex fume extraction systems is that they recycle clean air back into the workplace after passing through an integral patented filter. As a result, the systems can be moved around as and when production lines are reconfigured. This concept contrasts greatly to a conventional fume extraction system, which is normally fixed into position as it needs to vent air externally. Moreover, no pipework or ducting is required with a Purex system, while the environment is also a clear beneficiary.

Typical applications for the Purex range of intelligent fume extraction units include food production lines, laser marking and cutting processes, electronics manufacturing plants and dental lab manufacturing facilities, to list but a few. Alongside a strong domestic market, the company exports worldwide. Indeed, a US subsidiary was opened in 2006.

Although operational since 1985, Purex received a major boost when it was acquired by Andy Easey and Trefor Jones in 2015.

“When we bought the company, there were 41 employees helping to generate a turnover of circa £8 million,” says Andy. “However, in just four years, we’ve grown to 68 people and will almost certainly turn over £12 million in 2019.”

There are many reasons for this impressive growth spurt, not least investment in the sales team and more presence at industry trade shows. However, a big factor is the decision of Purex to invest in its own manufacturing capacity, with the company opening a new fabrication facility at Brough in 2018.

“For the past 12 years Purex had been sourcing all of its stainless steel cabinets from a supplier in Italy,” explains Andy. “However, with the company’s growth in recent times, our supplier struggled to keep pace. We therefore decided to visit a number of subcontract laser-cutting services based here in the UK, but could not find any that could match our existing supplier on price. We subsequently decided to take another route and, after a risk assessment, borrowed £1 million to open our own fabrication plant.”

The next step for Purex was to source some suitable machines, namely a laser cutter and two bending machines.

“I had worked with TRUMPF machines around 20 years ago and always remember their reliability,” states Andy. “We did look at other suppliers but I had it set in my mind that the machines would be TRUMPF. This was confirmed when we made contact. They were very professional from the outset, providing a lot of good advice without any sales pressure. We visited the TRUMPF showroom in Luton and decided on the TruLaser 2030 4kW laser cutter. It’s a fantastic piece of kit and only the second of its type in the UK.”

As is often the way, the capability and versatility of the new TRUMPF TruLaser meant it has fulfilled a slightly different role than was originally anticipated.

“Although we are running stainless steel cabinets on the machine, we’ve probably only taken about 25% of the business from Italy,” explains Andy. “The reason is that we’ve found the machine to be excellent for new product development, which has opened up a number of new markets that are now taking up capacity.”

Previously, Purex would design a new product in the UK, send it to Italy for producing a sample, which would then be sent back to the UK for review, before being returned to Italy for another prototype, and so on. The process in its entirety could take months.

“Contrast this to using the TRUMPF TruLaser and the difference is plain to see,” says Andy. “We design it, make it, correct it and make it again. Our time to market is now just two weeks for a typical new product introduction, which is a huge competitive advantage. The laser is very easy to use, exceptionally fast and produces high-quality finishes.”

Although many of the products produced by Purex are thin gauge, typically 1.2 mm, the inclusion of TRUMPF BrightLine technology on the TruLaser 2030 makes it possible to change from thin to thick sheet processing on a single machine platform without any loss of quality. In fact, up to 25 mm thick steel, stainless steel and aluminium can be cut with excellent edge quality.

“In tandem with the new TRUMPF bending machines we’ve been able to re-engineer many of our components, removing cycle time and cost,” states Andy.

The new TRUMPF TruBend 3066 bending machines on site at Purex offer a press force of 660 kN and a bending length of 2040 mm, while the multi-touch control provides a user interface that is greatly appreciated at Purex.

“The on-screen programming facility is ideal for new product development,” confirms. “It makes programming complex parts highly fool-proof, and even shows which way round the material should be placed. It’s impossible to bend parts upside down or inside out. I had the training myself and managed to produce a batch of 15 filter cases without any problem.”

In the full 12 months since installation, Purex has experienced absolutely no issues whatsoever with any of its new TRUMPF machines, and business has never been better.

“We’ve been hitting £2 million turnover for the past two consecutive months, which is very pleasing,” concludes Andy Easey. “We know that factors such as quality and reliability are a big part of our success, which is where the TRUMPF machines can provide essential support. Rapid turnaround is also vital as we offer a short, seven-day lead time on any of our fume extractors.”

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