

Press Release



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NEW TRUMPF PANEL BENDER IS SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME AT METALLINE

Metalline, a leading UK manufacturer of architectural metalwork solutions, has invested in a fully automated TRUMPF TruBend Center 7030. The machine, the first panel bender on site, is providing three times the throughput speed of the company's press brakes and helping this progressive business to continue its impressive growth trajectory.

With over 30 years of experience and an enviable reputation nationwide, Metalline relies on its highly skilled workforce and its state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment to deliver products on time and to exact specification. Architects and contractors specify the Cannock-based company's fabrications on a wide range of prestigious construction projects across the UK. Metalline manufactures products that include rainscreen panels, insulated panels, spandrel panels, floor-to-floor framing systems, beams, copings, fascia panels, soffits, façade cladding, perforated panels, sills and fins.

"With an extremely full order book we made the decision to invest in the rainscreen and re-cladding side of our business," says Works Manager Stuart Hoult. "Although we have a number of press brakes on site that can make our products, we did our research and calculated that investing in a panel bender would replace the work of two or three press brakes. So the idea was to make ourselves leaner, but more productive."

He continues: "We looked at two panel benders, but were drawn to TruBend Center 7030 after speaking with TRUMPF and from watching online videos of the machine in action; not demonstration videos, but actually in use at customer premises."

The fully automated TruBend Center 7030 panel bender arrived in March 2022 and is now busy manufacturing aluminium sheet into rainscreen panels and tray panels. Current batch sizes are around 400-600.

"We keep the machine fully utilised through the day and have the facility to run it 24 hours if needed," says Mr Hoult.

The TRUMPF TruBend Center 7030 features a two-axis part manipulator that positions the sheet and even enables negative bends. Complementing this is a rotary part manipulator that secures the blank and rotates it to the required position completely independently.

“We really like the offline programming software, which is really quick,” says Mr Hoult. “However, we also like the fact that we can program the machine online if needed. As a result, we don’t have to wait for a programmer, the operator can get us up and running.”

Another impressive feature of the machine is its ACB laser technology, which ensures precise angles for a first part/perfect part approach. According to Mr Hoult, this measuring device has “made a big difference”. However, the biggest differentiator between panel bender and press brake technology is surely speed, something that has not gone unnoticed at Metalline.

“The speed of TruBend Center 7030 is unreal in terms of the amount of work it can produce,” states Mr Hoult. “As it’s three times quicker than a press brake, we can increase productivity through the shop, which leads to shorter lead times.” Within the first few months after installation of the TruBend Centre 7030, we have witnessed an increase in turnover of around 20%.

Metalline also has a TruPunch 3000 (acquired in 2017) on site. This machine, which Mr Hoult describes as “bulletproof and 100% reliable”, feeds work to the new panel bender. In addition, the company has just placed an order for a new TRUMPF TruBend 5170 press brake to complement the TruBend Center 7030.

“Although the TruBend Center 7030 is best machine in the world as far as we’re concerned, we sometimes need to process panels beyond 3m in length,” explains Mr Hoult. “While we already had press brakes from TRUMPF competitors, by ordering the TruBend 5170 it will provide us with software commonality, so we can switch between the two TRUMPF machines without compromising product quality.”

Metalline sees quality as the underlying reason for its success, making it a non-negotiable factor when identifying new capital investments.

“We know that our customers want high-quality products, so we only invest in machinery that can meet these requirements,” says Mr Hoult. “Investing in the latest technology goes with the territory these days, in more ways than one. For instance, if we’re looking for young talent to join our business, new technology really helps. Younger generation people entering the labour market want a touchscreen, something that looks like an iPad, as it interests them.”

Such is the company’s workload at present that even more growth looks likely.

“We’ve already been discussing our next investments, setting out the business cases and identifying how we can offer even higher performance levels to our customers,” concludes Mr Hoult.

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