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VOH SA
UPDATING ALPHACAM SLASHES MACHINE SET-UPS

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Software optimises production of Swiss watch components

A Swiss company serving the microtechnology industry, including Swiss watchmakers, has improved production by updating its ALPHACAM CAD/CAM software.

VOH SA says the main focus of its products and services is the management of quality, through adapted production equipment and innovative control systems. "Watchmaking is our main sector, our source of inspiration, and the origin of our development," says Bastien Zbinden, who is responsible for the machining team.

gather all the necessary information to prepare the set-up on the machine tool." He says the programs were poorly listed, the latest version of the drawing was difficult to identify, and they couldn't tell if the previous production run had been as efficient as it could be.

"In short, there were a lot of hazards in production, and we sometimes had trouble re-machining past batches." It meant that even for repeat orders, everything was frequently recreated anew.

He also discovered another hindrance to efficient production – the fact that VOH SA is increasingly facing small, specific part batches which require considerable set-ups on the machines. As the first move in his plan to deliver the required improvements, he liaised with MW Programmation, and together they evaluated the situation, resulting in a software update and adapting postprocessors for the different machines.

"MW Programmation also proposed a 'File Manager' module, in order to group the programs, the NC codes and all related documents, together in the same database. Personalised documentation has also been created to complete the information for the machine set-up."

He explains that these new tools have considerably improved the organisation of the workshop, and increased production efficiency. "When I create a

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Bastien Zbinden
Machining Team Manager – VOH SA

Single watch movement holders are included in their wide range of tools and parts for the watchmaking industry, along with manual tools such as precision screwdrivers. For other industrial sectors, they produce complex metrology and quality control machines, and furniture accessories such as mechanical armrests.

When Bastien Zbinden joined the company, he was tasked with improving the organisation of the workshop, and increasing productivity on the company's range of CNC machine tools, including two 5-axis milling machines, three 3-axis mills, a twin-spindle single turret lathe, a 2-axis lathe, and three Swiss lathes.

They are long-standing ALPHACAM users, having been customers of the software's Swiss distributor MW Programmation, for many years. They decided to update ALPHACAM as well as a number of tools.

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new program, it's now possible to attach the clamps and tool images along with any other photos. Therefore we have a manufacturing file that's ultra-flexible and easy to set up."

Now, six months after the changes were commissioned, he says he simply searches for the drawing numbers in the File Manager module, and retrieves them easily. "Then I just need to print the personalised document, and I have all the information I need for the job on one page. It's a much easier way of starting the machine set-ups. And, as a result, there are far fewer programming issues.

"So today, the company has fully optimised the use of its ALPHCAM software to make it an even more powerful tool. Production has dramatically increased, and our operators and programmers are excited about this new way of working. They particularly appreciate that they can contact MW Programmation with questions at any time during programming."

Alexandre Mercier, who is responsible for the bar turning team in the workshop, says: "The postprocessor must be perfect. We don't modify anything manually in the NC code. If necessary, we can request modifications from the MW Programmation support team."

Bastien Zbinden concludes by looking at how they can improve production even further in the future: "We use very little machining styles today. I'd really like to start using ALPHACAM's automation tools...and the software's AUTOMATION MANAGER will be very useful for batch processing our standard parts."
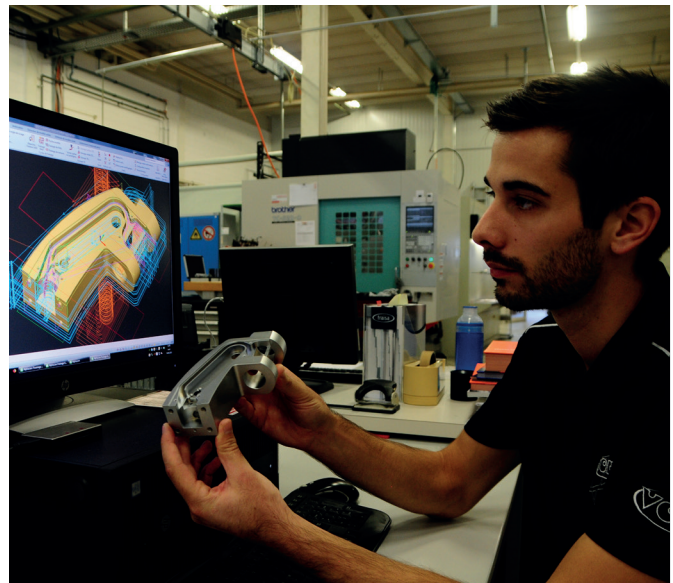
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