



Optimal Capacity Utilisation through Networking of the Machine Plant

Wächter & Wokan is counting on the greatest possible flexibility – and networking six different AXA machining centres in its own production facility

Wächter & Wokan GmbH is an owner-managed family firm in its second generation. It was established in 1981 in Eppingen by Peter Wächter and Werner Wokan. Christian Wokan has been Managing Partner in his own company since 2007.

Today Wächter & Wokan produces exclusively as a contract manufacturer in the areas of CNC machining technology, CNC tube bending technology, welding technology, pressing and sample and series production. Various materials are processed.

If the focus was originally in the printing machine sector it has now shifted. The company produces for customers in the plant engineering, classical engineering and medical technology sectors as well as for tool manufacturers.

Customer satisfaction as the primary goal

In 2004 a customer from the printing sector was looking for a solution for the processing of printing press components. Wächter & Wokan was not able to fulfil the requirement with the existing machines and needed a machine that could offer the greatest possible flexibility.

Wächter & Wokan knew of AXA and began discussions regarding the necessary investment. "We never had the impression that AXA just wanted to sell us a machine. The discussions always revolved around finding the optimum solution." AXA cooperated with W & W to produce a concept tailored to their needs that offered the required flexibility.

The machine plant grew to four AXA machining centres by 2012 – three VHC 2 and one VHC 3. The 5-axis machine VHC 3 with swivel head and integrated rotary table and a longer travel path of X = 3000 mm or 2 x 1250 mm can be used in pendulum mode or as a long bed for large parts thanks to its two machine tables. The XTS changeover magazine has a chain with 48 places SK40; but can be expanded to a maximum of 96 places and can be fitted at any time during machine operation.

Because of the market success a further AXA machining centre was purchased in 2014 – the VCC 1200 from the smallest AXA machine series. The VCC was originally intended to ease the burden on the other machines. But it was soon working to capacity itself and is now processing small series of 10-30 pieces a day.

The highly flexible machine design, the same clamping devices, tools and programmes that can be used throughout, tool and workpiece measuring on the machining centres and the networking of all machines mean that minimal set-up times can be achieved.

Central networking for maximum flexibility

Wächter & Wokan processes widely varying workpieces in its work as a contract manufacturer. However each machine does not have a certain workpiece allocated to it. Thanks to the networking of all AXA machining centres it is possible to process every

workpiece on every machine. All the processing programmes are located centrally on one server and the operator of every machining centre has access to them. This enables all the machines to work to capacity and allows the eradication of waiting times during production. Repeat orders can be processed on different machines without problems.

The fact that the machine park comprises exclusively AXA machining centres means that all tools are compatible. In this way 300-400 tools can be used in every machine readily and immediately.

Good advice to acquire an AXA machine park

The high technical quality and reliability of the AXA machining centres means that a total of six have been purchased to date. Christian Wokan values the ability of the machines to retain their value. Even though the acquisition costs are sometimes quite substantial, the durability and precision of the machines speak for themselves. "AXA also ensured the highest level of precision for the delivery of the individual machines. The installation of the machining centres is well planned and trouble-free every time."

Christian Wokan sees AXA as a reliable partner that sells not only machines but rather individual solutions.

Just like Wächter & Wokan GmbH, AXA Entwicklungs- und Maschinenbau GmbH is also a family firm. Established in 1965 with its headquarters in Schöppingen, the company employs approximately 370 staff for metal-cutting machining centres in travelling column and portal designs.